



Improvement Plan  
2021-2022 School Year



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The Montessori School of Aberdeen has a school improvement process to help facilitate and enhance student achievement and school growth. This document is a tool that will enable us to drive decision making, interactions, activities and planning process to further the goal of student achievement.

### **School Profile Plan**

Montessori School of Aberdeen is located at 515 8th Ave, Northwest, Aberdeen, SD. The school is situated on 10 acres. Montessori School of Aberdeen consists of a large outdoor area with of several play structures, bike riding areas, raised bed planters, a pollinator garden, nature exploration area, a peace garden, and a field for playing soccer and baseball. The interior of the building has a pre-primary classroom for children 18 months to 3 years of age. These children eventually transition into our Primary 3–6-year-old classroom where the kindergarten children attend in a mixed age setting. The students have access to a gymnasium, library, lunchroom and afterschool classroom. This property has recently been purchased by the Montessori School of Aberdeen which has allowed our school to expand our vision.

Our kindergarten class this year is not as diverse as it has been in previous years. Previously, we have had up to 9 kindergarten students with various cultural backgrounds. We have had children from India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Cameroon, as well as Native American students. This current school year 2021-2022 enrollment is 4 students, 2 girls and 2 boys, all of whom are Caucasian. The rest of the class is more culturally diverse than the kindergarten group. Typical class size is approximately 20 students. The kindergarten students are a part of the Montessori 3-6 primary classroom. The third year of Montessori allows our kindergarten students a leadership role, a time to develop strong executive functioning skills, intrinsic motivation for learning, and an opportunity to show mastery of the cognitive lessons as they demonstrate their knowledge to younger students.

### **Site Planning Team**

Tim Waldner	School Principal
Susan Dalager	Head of School/K.Teacher
John Dalager	Corporation Secretary
Kelli Malsom	Teacher/Parent
Haana Vander Vorst	Parent
Caleb Caton	Parent



### **School-wide Planning Summary**

All meeting attendance rosters, and copies of agendas and outcomes are kept at our Montessori School office. Our ultimate plan is to assist our students in meeting the South Dakota state standards for kindergarten and beyond.

### **Mission Statement**

Montessori School of Aberdeen aims to provide a quality, comprehensive education that fosters the child's love of learning, building strong executive functioning skills, and addresses the whole child academically, emotionally, and socially.

### **Our Visionary Goals:**

- To enter partnership with parents in the education of their children.
- To lead children toward mastery of the individually identified intellectual, social, physical, and daily life skills.
- To foster in the children, deep and persistent curiosity that will lead to lifelong pursuit of knowledge.
- To help children develop self-confidence and intrinsic motivation.
- To assist each child to develop the habit of order, coordination, concentration, and independence to foster in each child respect of self and others in this world.
- To instill in each child a sense of personal responsibility for the world in which we live and to spark in our children, wonder, imagination and joy.
- To meet school improvement targets in the areas of math and reading.
- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff.
- Promote active partnerships within the community.

### **Academic Goals:**

All kindergarten students will improve their ability to read, write, and comprehend a variety of literacy texts in all curriculum areas to meet the kindergarten state standards.

All kindergarten students will use hands on Montessori manipulative materials to internalize the scientific concepts, procedures, and computation skills to solve problems and meet the South Dakota state math standards.



### **Montessori School of Aberdeen Reading Goal**

**Goal:** The goals for the kindergarten students were determined at the annual board meeting. It was determined that all kindergarten students will improve their ability to read, write, and comprehend a variety of literacy texts to all curricular areas in alignment with the SD state standards.

**Objective:** Increase the percentage of kindergarteners reading at grade level or beyond.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Monthly Star Reading test, Star Early Learning Literacy tests and Waseca reading tests.
2. Auditing State Standards and matching them to curriculum.
3. Implementing effective teaching strategies to engage learners.
4. Identifying students who fall into basic and below basic categories and implementing teacher directed accommodations to help them experience success.
5. Tutoring.
6. Assist students in obtaining reading from print by promoting comprehension activities.
7. Teach making text connections to world, self and other texts.
8. Utilize Star Reading tests to track student proficiency as compared to national norms.
9. Integrating technology.

#### **Assessments:**

1. Monthly Star Reading Program formative assessments.
2. Criterion Referenced Test data will be examined by classroom teachers to evaluate student achievement.
3. DIBELS will be used to monitor student progress throughout the year.
4. Teachers attend team meetings where they discuss possible additional help for struggling students.
5. Star Reading and Star Early Literacy tests will be given monthly, Waseca tests weekly, and teachers will review the scores in-depth in January during teacher in-service.
6. Students who struggle will be provided with tutoring opportunities afterschool. Student progress and results are shared with parents during parent teacher meetings, kindergarten meetings and weekly reporting through the Brightwheel app.
7. Parents in the Montessori School of Aberdeen may visit the school at any time and discuss progress with the teachers. Parents also receive reports in October and March during parent teacher conferences. There are progress updates each week as a part of our communication application, Brightwheel. These messages are sent to parents to show the lessons their children are engaged in.



### **Montessori School of Aberdeen Math Goal**

**Goal:** All kindergarten students will use hands on Montessori mathematics manipulative materials to internalize the scientific concepts, procedures, and computation skills to solve problems.

**Objective:** To increase student proficiency in performing math/science skills beyond the kindergarten levels for all the students.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Align curriculum to standards, math terminology.
2. Provide problem-solving opportunities by using cognitively guided instruction.
3. Implement cooperative learning strategies.
4. Promote understanding of mathematical terms through vocabulary development.
5. Staff will provide students with opportunities to apply math concepts in daily problem-solving activities across the curriculum.
6. Students will use Montessori math manipulatives daily to create new strategies in problem solving.
7. Students are given the opportunity to explain their own math strategy used to solve problems.
8. Students' number sense will be tested against the SD state standards curriculum.

#### **Assessments:**

1. Individual teacher assessments using a variety of Montessori materials to assess learning and levels of abstraction.
2. Review individual progress based on weekly and monthly assessments.
3. Identify mini- assessments to monitor progress/performance for immediate feedback.
4. Provide more problem-solving opportunities using cognitively guided instruction and assessing the students concrete to abstract levels.
5. Promote understanding of mathematical terms through vocabulary development.
6. Students are given the opportunity to explain their own math strategies used to solve problems.
7. Staff will provide students with opportunities to apply math concepts in daily problem-solving activities across the Montessori curriculum.



### **School Improvement Timeline**

2016-2017	Fundraising for new building/seeking new location for school
2017-2018	Moved to new location in a rental capacity.
2018-2019	Installation of Fire and Sprinkler System \$100,000.00
2019-2020	Distance learning implementation due to COVID – 19. March-May. Designed Summer Program for option of 12-month enrollment. June 1st start.
2020-2021	Initiated new COVID-19 Protocol for new school year. Started before/after school program to meet the needs of working parents. Implemented free lunch program for all students – catered by Kesslers. Reduced tuition to encourage enrollment.
2021-2022	Purchased Building/Land to expand program Implemented two additional reading programs to supplement current curriculum. Star Reading Program, Star Early Literacy tests, and Waseca Reading Program

### **Highly Qualified Staff:**

The staff in the Primary Montessori classroom:

Two SD certified teachers and two support staff members. Susan Dalager, Beth Lopes, Kelli Malsom, and Elizabeth Kiesz.

### **Extra-Curricular Staff:**

Elizabeth Santos Kiesz instructs our students in Spanish, which is incorporated into our daily lessons.

Christina Dulik is the riding instructor at Quaking Aspen Equestrian Center. The kindergarten students take riding lessons once a week during September, October, and November, April and May.

Jennifer Deutch is the instructor at Next Generation Gymnastics Center where the kindergarten students take classes once a week during December, January, February and March.

### **Parent Involvement:**

Montessori School parents are provided directions to access the School Improvement Plan through the [www.montessoriaberdeem.com](http://www.montessoriaberdeem.com) website, in the Parent Handbook and occasionally in the monthly newsletter. In addition, the Montessori School Improvement Plan is discussed at Staff meetings, Parent meetings, and School corporation/Board meetings.

### **Ongoing Program Development:**

The school improvement plan is part of a dynamic process with periodic evaluation needed to assess progress towards meeting goals. The school improvement plan will be evaluated annually and revised as needed. Future revisions in the plan will be made according to data obtained from assessment results, surveys, state mandates, and student needs. A log will be kept on file of the periodic reviews and revisions.



### **Transition Processes:**

The preparation process for incoming Kindergarten students begins when they first visit for the school tour when they are 3 years old, if not before. The Montessori Primary experience is a three-year commitment with the third year being the kindergarten year. We hope that every family would consider Montessori kindergarten for their child as the third year is the culmination of all that has been learned in the past 2 years. A kindergarten parent meeting is held each year for Montessori parents, the curriculum is presented and the alignment to the South Dakota curriculum standards is discussed. Parents are required to provide the school with a kindergarten application form, birth certificate, updated immunization records, FERPA, and waiver forms for horseback riding and gymnastics. At any time of year, we offer prospective kindergarten parents the opportunity to tour our school and present information regarding the expectations for kindergarten. Kindergarten students spend the summer with us for Summer Program and continue their academic studies until we officially start school in September. In the Fall, the kindergarten students are introduced to an individualized lesson work plan so they can be involved with keeping track of the lessons they have been assigned. The transition process into first grade consists of the student visiting the new school, having lunch, visiting with the principal, or counselor. The kindergarten class also visits the playground for each of their classmates and we take photos of the kindergarten group and give them the photo to take with them. We always extend an invitation for previous kindergarten students to come back and join us for the following Summer program so they can share their experiences and we can evaluate what we can do to improve.

### **Monitoring and Support:**

Students who experience difficulties with speech and language are referred to the Aberdeen Public School district for services. Any student who exhibits negative behavior problems that impacts the wellbeing of others, will be recommended for assessments or evaluations with Behavior Care Specialists. Teacher/parent meeting will be held to evaluate ways to help rectify the problems identified. Recommendations may include behavior management plans, and/or further assessments. If problems tend to persist, the student may be referred for formal evaluation of academic and/or psychological needs. Recommendations may include special education services, professional counseling, and/or alternative placement of the child. The School Improvement Committee will review the plan quarterly during the 2021-22 school year to analyze.





### **School Enrichment Activities:**

The school offers a variety of activities to enrich and strengthen all aspects of the school. Our staff members use methods and instructional strategies that strengthen the academic program in the school; increase the amount of quality learning time; and help provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum to provide a well-rounded education, such activities include field trips to concerts, plays, and other fine arts events, school musical performances in December and May, Mother's Tea, Singing for the Seniors at Aberdeen Senior Center. We have various special topic speakers such as Native American tribal leaders, Dacotah Prairie Museum special history visits, monthly STEM visits from the NSU Biology/Chemistry department, and Cultural presentations. We also have visits from firefighters, police officers, local gardeners, and beekeepers. Besides participating in horseback riding and gymnastics, our children get to experience Jiu Jitsu and yoga lessons through experienced instructors.

The gardening and outdoor experiences are another aspect of our program that sets us apart. The children have a seed growing station in the school that teaches the children many lessons on growing plants for our gardens. The raised bed planters on the playground become something to nurture daily. Our kindergarten students attend school during the summer, so they plant, water, nurture, and harvest these crops. The school butterfly/pollinator garden is also a wonderful place to care for, observe, measure, and collect our own caterpillars to watch go through metamorphosis. This experience will be expanded in June, by our parent/child activity of planting 650 flowering plants and grasses for our new nature area south of our playground and soccer field.

Throughout the year, we hold evening parent meetings and offer childcare as we discuss developmental stages, parenting skills, and explain the Montessori theory, philosophy, and curriculum so we can partner together to create a strong foundation for the children and families.

Our school holds a Cultural Night where the families bring items from their cultural backgrounds to display in the gym. The children help create the display tables from the classroom cultural items from around the world and lessons they have been learning from each of the continents.

As a non-profit Private School, we are dependent on school tuition, grants, and fundraising opportunities. We hold several fundraisers throughout the year, with our annual Golf Tournament being the most financially beneficial. The kindergarten golfing lessons preceding the tourney are also a beneficial enrichment activity.

The above strategies and activities will be evaluated for effectiveness by gathering feedback from students, staff, and parents, monitoring participation rates, noting academic improvement for some activities, and observing student outcomes. We use Survey Monkey to gather information.