

Montessori Community School

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2016

Concept Statement

Montessori Community School (MCS) is a not-for-profit learning community of children, parents, faculty, and staff, working in concert to create Montessori environments and use Montessori methods to support the healthy, holistic development of life-long learners and peaceful global citizens.

Strategic Vision

The overall vision for MCS in 2016 is that of a Montessori school for approximately 300 students from toddler to early adolescent years (eighth grade) continuously striving for excellence as a Montessori model educational environment on a functional and aesthetically pleasing enlarged campus. Being good stewards of all that constitutes our environment, both physical space as well as relationships within and outside of our community, will be embraced as a fundamental part of our curriculum and values.



Let's excel, create,
nurture & sustain,
and innovate!

Strategic Planning Makes a Great School Even Better!

Let's excel!

Goal 1:

To uphold the high standards of our Montessori education and to continuously strive to improve our educational program, MCS will

- Assure a strong and dedicated faculty by expecting and fostering a mindset of openness and professional growth in all faculty, and by providing strong salaries and benefits, continued administrative support, a strategic Board of Trustees, and a supportive parent-teacher relationship,
- Continue to address areas of Montessori philosophy and practice amongst faculty in a collaborative manner
- Make environmentally conscious learning a priority by creating outdoor extensions for all classrooms, and by incorporating the wetlands and age-appropriate community service components into the educational program
- Integrate all of the specials (art, music, language, and PE) into the curriculum in the best possible way consistent with the Montessori philosophy
- Hire additional faculty as needed to improve the educational program
- Explore possibility of late-day option for primary students in a designated location other than the classroom
- Enhance after-school opportunities for arts and athletics with special emphasis on 6th to 8th graders

Goal 2:

To create a functional and aesthetically pleasing school environment that integrates all components of our enlarged campus, MCS will

- Create and implement a Campus Master Plan for the enlarged campus that addresses all buildings and grounds
- Complete construction of the Fine Arts Center
- Build new facilities using environmentally conscious construction to support our program, namely a new adolescent building, enhanced administrative space, and, later, a full-size gym/auditorium/performance space

Let's create!

Goal 3:

To strive to be good stewards of all that constitutes our environment, both physical space as well as relationships, MCS will

- Develop a long-term comprehensive facilities and maintenance plan and provide budgetary means for implementation
- Foster good relationships among all members of the school community
- Develop plans for increasing financial and cultural diversity and provide the financial means for implementation
- Foster good relationships with our greater environment: alumni, neighbors and local community, and the international Montessori community
- Develop a new Mission Statement that more clearly states who we are and what sets us apart
- Strengthen the marketing of our school and create an administrative position that will focus on Communications, Marketing, and as resource to the Board Development Committee

Let's nurture & sustain!

Goal 4:

To integrate safe and efficient use of 21st century technology into the daily operation of the school, MCS will

- Improve use of current information technology and systems in administrative procedures and communication, including website presence and maintenance; consider employing a relational database management system
- Educate teachers in relevant use of computer and web-based technology and provide parent education about use of school web-site and safety aspects of computer and internet use for children and young adolescents
- Enhance technology support for campus-wide computer maintenance and safety
- Investigate the costs and advantages associated with creating a virtual library (catalog)

Let's innovate!

The Strategic Planning Process

In June 2007, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was charged with the task of drafting a new strategic plan. MCS's last plan was adopted in 2002 and designed to encompass approximately five years. The Board and new Head of School, Dave Carman, observed that the plan should continue the school's long-standing commitment to being an authentic model Montessori community. A retreat facilitated by Dave Carman was held in August 2007 and attended by Board of Trustee members, faculty, and a select group of parents. Thorough analysis of MCS's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats led to the drafting of updated goals and visions.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the SPC solicited ideas and priorities from all parents, faculty, and friends of the school. Surveys, open forum gatherings and smaller meetings were conducted. Simultaneous to the SPC's work, the faculty was also involved in a self-study, required for our reaccreditation by the American Montessori Society (AMS) in February 2009. As the self-study process progressed, recommendations for school improvements emerged and were communicated to the SPC to be incorporated in the new strategic plan. The data gathered from parents, teachers, and administration showed that there is a remarkable consensus on many of the issues currently facing our school.

The benefits of close collaboration between the two groups for the strategic planning process led the SPC to recommend that the Board synchronize future strategic plans with the school's reaccreditation process which is on a seven-year schedule, as per the AMS's guidelines. Therefore, we recommend the current strategic plan be an eight year plan so as to start the next self-study process during the fall of 2014, somewhat ahead of the strategic planning process in spring 2015. This means the self-study and strategic planning processes will be completed in time for reaccreditation by AMS in spring 2016. However, the SPC realizes that implementing an eight-year plan will necessitate a reevaluation of the current strategic plan by the 2012-2013 school year with adjustments made as necessary.

The SPC decided to generate three different versions of the Strategic Plan: The first one listing the basic goals and strategies and also containing background information will be distributed to all members of the MCS community in print. The second version includes the first one and expands on the basic goals by listing more specific sub-goals, major strategies and measurable outcomes. This version will be helpful for all faculty, administrative staff, and parent volunteers and will also be part of the material to be submitted to the AMS for reaccreditation. In addition, it will be made available to all interested audience on the MCS website (www.mcsdurham.org). The third version including a detailed timeline, the financial strategic plan, and assigned responsibilities will guide the work plan of the administration and the Board of Trustees.

As you read, you will see that our goals are realistic, necessary, and interconnected to one another. The MCS Board of Trustees is strongly committed to follow AMS guidelines for authenticity as a Montessori school as well as to adhere to the guidelines of Independent School Management (ISM) regarding finances and governance of our school. We hope that our vision of a strong and long lasting Montessori Community School has been made clear. We ask that you join us in this educational journey.

With respect,

The Strategic Planning Committee

THE JOURNEY FROM TODAY TO TOMORROW

MCS Today

Our current mission statement states, that **Montessori Community School (MCS) is a not-for-profit learning community of children, parents, teachers and administrative staff, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. Adults work in concert to support the healthy, holistic development of children as active, peaceful, life-long learners and global citizens.**

MCS is a financially solvent school that has a strong and stable Board of Trustees and provides education to the child from the toddler years through the early adolescent years (see figure below). In addition, the school currently offers early morning care and after school care for Children's House and elementary students, and has several after school program offerings for elementary and adolescent students (team sports, jazz dance, yoga, chess, art classes).

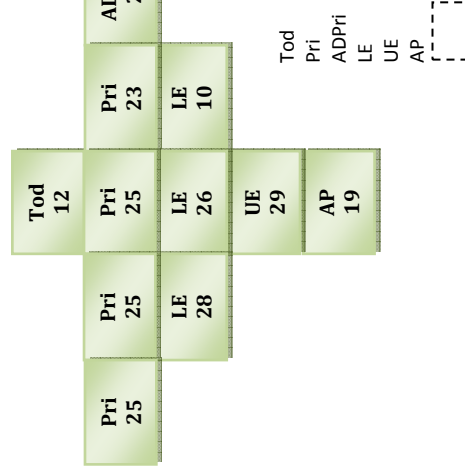
As part of our reaccreditation process, the Steering Committee responsible for the AMS Self Study has developed a **Concept Statement** containing three parts which describe distinctive features of our school: who we are, what we do, and what we endeavor to achieve:

Concept Statement for MCS:

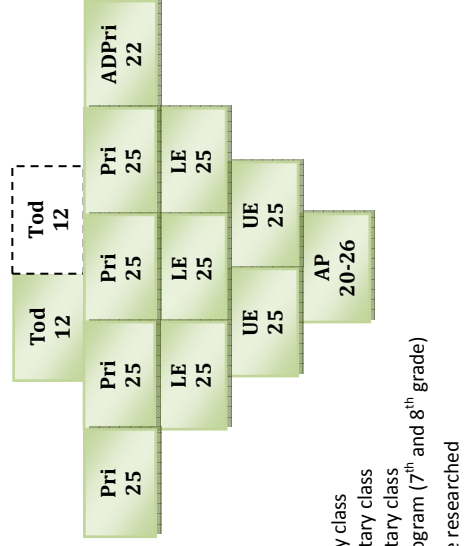
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This Concept Statement might serve as a starting point for improving the mission statement.

MCS today
248 students total



MCS in 2016
300 students total



Basic to our vision of MCS in 2016 is a picture of future enrollment. Our current addition of a lower elementary classroom will likely necessitate adding a second upper elementary class by 2011. Depicted below is an outline of MCS as it is today and the Committee's vision for enrollment by 2016.

MCS Tomorrow: The Strategic Vision

The overall vision of MCS in 2016 is that of a Montessori school for approximately 300 students from toddler to early adolescent years (eighth grade) continuously striving for excellence as a Montessori model educational environment on a functional and aesthetically pleasing enlarged campus. Being good stewards of all that constitutes our environment, both physical space as well as relationships within and outside of our community, will be embraced as a fundamental part of our curriculum and values.

Achievement of this vision involves MCS continuing to be a financially solvent school and having a stable and strategically thinking Board of Trustees, adhering to the guidelines as set forth by the Independent School Management (ISM). Within the context of this vision MCS will add a second upper elementary classroom thus requiring construction of a new building to house the adolescent program. Concurrently the school will create a timetable for construction of a full-size gym usable also as auditorium and performance space.