

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 offers 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.

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.