

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School



Strategic Plan 2020-2023 DEFINING OUR FUTURE

CMES BOARD OF DIRECTORS | FALL 2019

Creating the Strategic Plan

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School was incorporated in 2011 as a tuition free public charter school and started with two lower elementary classrooms for children in grades K through 2. Over the next four years Cornerstone expanded each year to serve an additional grade in additional classroom spaces. The 2015-16 school year found us fully enrolled as a K-6 Montessori Elementary School with our first class of graduating 6th grade children. CMES now serves children ages 5-12 in all-day Kindergarten and Elementary Montessori environments in a 10-month school year program, authorized by the University of St. Thomas (UST).

While the school achieved its initial goals, including growing the school's enrollment to capacity in some grades, the board also matured from a founding board to one prepared to focus on a longer-range strategic vision for CMES. To create this vision, throughout the 2018-19 school year, the CMES board conducted focus groups with teachers, learning specialists, support staff, administrative staff and parents to better understand ways in which Cornerstone is succeeding and where there are opportunities for improvement. This data was synthesized by the board and it confirmed that CMES has a sound Montessori foundation with a curriculum and teaching staff dedicated to the principles of the Montessori pedagogy. Additionally, there were major areas identified for improvement which will be addressed through four key initiatives:

- Access
- Equity
- Community
- Sustainability

For each initiative the remainder of this report contains a rationale and key areas that will be addressed. As task forces are created by the board to address these long-range goals, individuals from the school and community, including Montessori Center of Minnesota staff, will be invited to participate to ensure that all voices are heard.

We also look forward to greater engagement with the St. Paul charter school community via the University of St. Thomas, our charter school authorizer, and the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. We appreciate UST's continual support as we consider growth opportunities and programming changes.

Together with the CMES community we are eager to grow and improve, and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue providing a Montessori experience for families and their children on St. Paul's east side.

CMES Board of Directors

Marcus Almon
Jean Melancon

Carolyn Ganz
Maisah Outlaw
Alyssa Schwartz, Head of School

Jess Goff
Julaine Roffers-Agarwal

Access

RATIONALE: To fulfill CMES's mission we will provide families the opportunity to experience the best possible AMI accredited Montessori environment. To do this we will review our program and its offerings and assess opportunities for growth.

- Create more programming and extracurricular opportunities for enrolled children.
- Increase student interaction with nature and the outdoor prepared environment.
- Establish a long-range vision for the size and grade level offerings at CMES.
- Attract and retain enrolled children and families in accordance with our mission.
- Increase staff diversity, retain exceptional personnel, and provide opportunities for professional growth.

Community

RATIONALE: CMES is intentionally situated in St. Paul's east side and seeks to be firmly interwoven into the greater community. We also aim to provide a welcoming environment for our families at CMES. We will do this through intentional integration into the community and by examining methods for involving enrolled families in CMES activities.

- Embed CMES in the neighborhood community of St. Paul's east side.
- Incorporate opportunities from the culturally diverse neighborhood to enrich programmatic offerings.
- Invigorate parent/family involvement within the school community.

Equity

RATIONALE: In order to address the needs of every enrolled child and family, we will transition from a mindset of equality to one of equity.

- Engage in personal and professional growth around topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Implement an equity plan that establishes a framework for individuals, the organization, and the community which will ensure:
 - a. A just, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environment that meets the developmental needs of all children.
 - b. Policies and procedures that model a standard of equity and inclusion.
 - c. All families feel welcome to participate in and belong to the school community.

Sustainability

RATIONALE: CMES desires to be a sustainable organization with long-term potential. CMES must ensure financial and organizational health to achieve sustainability.

- Ensure physical space reflects the needs of the children, staff, and program.
- Develop supplementary revenue sources through strong relationships with funding partners.
- Explore strategic relationships with other institutions for programming and community enrichment.
- Maintain and improve best practices for school governance.
- Advocate for Montessori pedagogy and charter school education.