



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: Indiana State Board of Education
From: Office of School Accountability
Date: June 1, 2022
Subject: Accreditation Petition for The Montessori School at WPC

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the school in its petition for performance-based accreditation and the final recommendation from the Indiana Department of Education (Department) regarding the accreditation of The Montessori School at WPC.

Background & Demographic Information

The Montessori School at WPC is a student-centered learning center for children ages 18 months to 9 years. The school and its educators work to provide a loving and nurturing atmosphere where children are encouraged to grow and learn through meaningful work.

The Montessori School at WPC has been in operation for over 60 years. The school recently transitions to a Montessori school offering full-day, full-week programs for students ages 1.5 through 6. The school will offer full-day, full-week Montessori options for students ages 1.5 through 9 beginning with the 2022-23 school year. The school operates strictly in-person and uses technology in the classroom as a learning tool.

The Montessori School at WPC is a Registered Unlicensed Ministry with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. Additionally, the school is a member of the United Montessori Schools of Indiana and is currently seeking membership with the American Montessori Society.

The school projects that it will enroll 10 students ages 1.5-3, 30 students ages 3-6, and 6-8 students ages 6-9 during the 2022-23 school year. Over the next five years, the school intends to expand its student population to include ages 9-12 and increase overall enrollment to 75 students.

Operations

Facilities: The Montessori School at WPC is located at 123 West Hill Street, Wabash, Indiana. The school is co-located within the Christian Education building of The Presbyterian Church of Wabash. The facility has demonstrated compliance with applicable building codes, fire prevention codes, local zoning codes, and health and safety requirements.

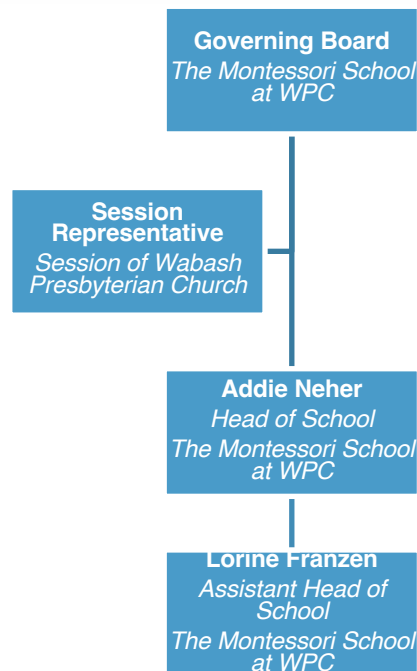
Tuition: Annual tuition and fees for The Montessori School at WPC total \$6,000 for the lower elementary (ages 6-9). The Montessori School at WPC intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.

Staffing: The administrative structure for The Montessori School at WPC is as follows:



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The governing board is composed of seven members that are church members, community representatives, and parent representatives. Decisions for the school are proposed by the school leadership and approved by the governing board.

Addie Neher serves as the Head of School for The Montessori School at WPC. Ms. Neher holds a Master of Education from Loyola University, an “AMI” Primary Diploma from Montessori Northwest, and a Bachelor’s in Accounting and Peace Studies from Manchester University. Ms. Neher has served in her current role for three years.

Lorine Franzen serves as the Assistant Head of School for The Montessori School at WPC. Ms. Franzen holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Purdue University and an “AMS” Primary Diploma from Northeast Montessori Institute in Maine. Ms. Franzen has nine years of experience in education.

The Montessori School at WPC has eight staff members. All teachers and guides interacting with elementary-aged students must have qualifying education, including AMI or AMS Montessori training, a bachelor’s degree, or Indiana state licensure in Elementary Education. Additional staff are anticipated as the school adds an upper elementary classroom.

Academic Programming

Lower elementary students are provided with in-person instruction in the subjects of practical life, mathematics, language, cultural studies, science, and social studies. Students are given individual and group lessons when they indicate readiness by mastering a lesson. Lessons are structured to meet Montessori standards and Indiana Academic Standards. Guides and teachers



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have the freedom to alter the lesson to meet the individual needs and desires of students to meet the students where they are.

The Montessori curriculum also includes “Grace and Courtesy” for all students at all ages. This component focuses on the independence of self and how to navigate community in order to support the natural growth of emotional and social-emotional development.

Constant, informal assessments based on observation are inherent in the Montessori curriculum. Guides and teachers keep an “observation journal” to record information and determinations on comprehension and overall readiness of students for the next lesson. Each area also has periodic “capstone” work that are specific lessons to show comprehension.

All classrooms take frequent walking trips to the library and spend at least 30-45 minutes outside daily. Monthly day trips to Asherwood Nature Preserve and ACRES property occur to inspire scientific observation. Additionally, all primary and elementary classrooms will attend at least one cultural field trip outside of the classroom per year.

Department Recommendation

Each petition for nonpublic school accreditation is reviewed and scored based on an established rubric where a school may earn a score between 0.0 and 4.0. The Department recommends for approval a petition receiving a final score of 3.0 or higher. The Montessori School at WPC received a final score of 3.1 out of 4.0 possible points. Therefore, the Department recommends that The Montessori School at WPC be afforded full state performance-based accreditation as a nonpublic school in Indiana.