

Guiding Principles of the CVMS

Many of the following statements address issues that are decided by school district staff. However, the CVMS will advocate for the following principles as we believe they will foster a positive Montessori learning environment.

- **Multi-grade grouping** is a core principle of the Montessori philosophy. In consultation with the Montessori teachers, classes should be formed of multiple grades whenever possible.
- **Late Entry Students:** Learning in a Montessori manner is a skill that takes time to learn and is built on year after year. Therefore, new students to Montessori should be limited to a 1:6 ratio. Just like you would not place a student who has never taken math before into a grade 3 math class, you cannot expect a student to have Montessori learning skills without Montessori experience. Bringing new students into the system takes extra time and effort on behalf of the Montessori Directress/Director and the new student's classmates. Therefore, only a few can be taken on at a time. Any new students into the Montessori program should only be accepted after the Montessori Directress/Directors have been consulted regarding the needs of the classroom. New students should also only be accepted on a trial basis. The trial should be pre-determined and finite in length. The purpose of the trial is to insure that the new student is capable of successfully functioning in the classroom as determined by their parents, Montessori Directress/Directors and the school based team.
- **Re-entry into Montessori:** In the unfortunate situation where students need to leave a Montessori class due to staffing levels, the students who are asked to leave need to have priority for getting back in. These students, regardless of their home school, need to have priority over other students on the waitlist. Because these students have not had the benefit of developing the skills unique to a Montessori classroom in the year(s) prior, they will be included as 'new' in the 1:6 ratio.
- **Class size:** Despite the fact that there are waitlists for Montessori, classes do not necessarily need to be filled to the class size maximum. Any consideration of adding children from the waitlist need to be made in consultation with the teaching team, keeping in mind the needs of both the current students, the needs of the potentially new students, and available supports.
- **Growth of the Program:** The CVMS is committed to growing a program that provides for students throughout their entire elementary years. When a family commits to a Montessori education for their children, they want a program that will be able to accommodate their child for many years. Therefore, if a choice needs to be made between adding a second classroom of any existing grade or expanding the grade levels served by one year, expanding the grade level needs to be chosen first. For example, in September 2009, a second kindergarten classroom should not be considered until the program is expanded to include grade 4 students.