

**Proposal for a**

**Montessori Elementary School**

**in the Arlington Public School System**

**April 9, 2008**

Prepared for APS Superintendent Dr. Robert Smith by a working group of the  
Arlington Montessori Action Committee\*

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\* AMAC is an active and growing organization of over 100 Montessori parents and educators whose primary goal is to promote and expand Montessori education in Arlington County. [www.arlingtonmontessori.org](http://www.arlingtonmontessori.org)

## Preface

Arlington Public Schools' Montessori program has the proud distinction of being one of the first publicly funded Montessori programs in the country. Since being established in 1971, the APS Montessori program has grown from a single classroom at Drew Model School to a program that now serves more than 500 students countywide. Montessori primary classrooms span 10 Arlington elementary schools, while eight Montessori elementary classrooms operate at Drew Model School. During the last 37 years, the Montessori program has experienced increased enrollment, increased funding of programmatic needs, the establishment of a highly qualified and credentialed teaching force, and strong community support.

Given the rapid expansion in the Arlington Public School Montessori program, and the increasing demand for public Montessori education across Arlington County, the time has come for the vibrant and diverse APS Montessori program to fully realize its potential with the creation of an Arlington Montessori Elementary School.

**Goal:** To establish an APS Montessori Elementary School to meet the following objectives...

## Objectives

**Objective 1:** Create an entire elementary school community that fully reflects and supports the Montessori educational philosophy.

- Montessori is a well-established and unique educational philosophy that must extend beyond the classroom into the school community and administration.
- Leading public school Montessori expert Tim Seldin, as well as consultants paid by APS to evaluate the Early Childhood program in 2006, indicate that public school Montessori programs work best where they are in a single-focus school<sup>1</sup>.
- Parents and teachers advocated for a single-focus Montessori school during the South Arlington boundary process, citing concerns about the lack of a programmatic match at Drew. Drew Model School is the only elementary school in Arlington where two different programs still share one building.

### *Measurables:*

- 1.1: Extend the Montessori "prepared environment" beyond the classroom, to every aspect of the school environment, such as specials, playgrounds, and hallways.
- 1.2: Employ Montessori-trained administrators: (1) a Montessori Specialist to oversee and coordinate the APS Montessori program<sup>2</sup> and (2) a Montessori-trained building principal to administer the new APS Montessori Elementary School.
- 1.3: Ensure that all school administrators, teachers, and staff understand and follow the "Arlington Public Schools: Montessori Best Practices", and that APS administrators evaluate the program and staff based on practice indicators<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.4: Maintain the uninterrupted 3-hour Montessori work period.
- 1.5: Configure the physical space and layout of the Montessori classrooms and school environment to meet the specific needs of the Montessori learning environment.
- 1.6: Create a school mission/charter, written by the administrators, teachers, parents, and students, that reflects the core values of the school.

<sup>1</sup> Presentation by Tim Seldin at AMAC meeting, March 27, 2007, Arlington, VA.

<sup>2</sup> See Attachment 1: "2007 Early Childhood Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations"

<sup>3</sup> See Attachment 2: "Arlington Public Schools: Montessori Best Practices"

**Objective 2: Establish a school that will continue to build on the progress of the APS Montessori program in meeting and exceeding federal and state achievement standards for students in all racial and economic groups, with a goal of eliminating the achievement gap for identified groups.**

- New rigorously controlled scientific research confirms there are significant positive impacts of Montessori education – as contrasted with traditional education methods – on student academic and social performance<sup>4</sup>.
- Montessori education teaches systemic thinking and integrated learning across subject areas, making Montessori teaching a natural fit with *Teaching for Meaning*<sup>5</sup>, which emphasizes integration across subject and skill areas to motivate students and decrease achievement gaps.
- Montessori educated children have been found to have substantial advantages in *executive function*, a factor researchers find “a better predictor of success in school than a child’s IQ”<sup>6</sup>.
- Increasing the availability of primary Montessori in Arlington will increase opportunities for children from identified groups to attend preschool and achieve kindergarten readiness.

**Measurables:**

- 2.1: Centralize Montessori admissions administration and adhere to admissions policies that continue to ensure a diverse student body that represents the cultural, economic, and geographic diversity of Arlington County, and actively strive to maintain that diversity through the elementary level.
- 2.2: Collect centralized data on the APS Montessori program to measure the performance of students from different economic and ethnic groups on standardized tests.
- 2.3: Track the number and performance of children from identified groups who complete three years of Montessori primary education, and continue to track their progress over time as they continue their schooling.

**Objective 3: Expand access to Montessori education to meet demand and to help reduce APS elementary school overcrowding by creating a new choice school.**

- The growing interest in Montessori education in Arlington can be measured by the hundreds of children on waiting lists for APS Montessori and the attendance at APS Montessori Information Night: over 400 people attended this event in 2007 and again in 2008.
- The strong base of approximately 550 students enrolled in primary Montessori in Arlington County – counting children from 17 APS primary Montessori classrooms and four private Arlington Montessori preschools -- feed growing demand for the Montessori elementary program, but Drew Model School is facing a near 100% utilization rate which hinders the future growth of this popular elementary program.
- A new choice school could help to reduce APS elementary school overcrowding, including projected overcrowding at Drew Model School, without the need to redraw boundaries<sup>7</sup>.

**Measurables:**

- 3.1: Create a new school that would have capacity for at least 500-550 Montessori primary and elementary students. The added primary capacity serves the APS goal of increasing access to preschool education, especially for lower income families.
- 3.2: Collect centralized data on students enrolled in the new Montessori Elementary School, including the neighborhood schools they would otherwise attend.

<sup>4</sup> Angeline Lillard and Nicole Else-Quest, *Science*. 29 Sept 2006: Vol. 313. no. 5795, pp. 1893-1894.

<sup>5</sup> Knapp, M.S. (Ed.). (1995). *Teaching for meaning in high-poverty classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see NPR story: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=76838288>, accessed 3/25/08.

<sup>7</sup> See Attachment 3: An APS Montessori School: An ECCC Solution

## Proposal

### Where we are now: the APS Montessori program in 2008

- Montessori serves a racially, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse set of students and families. The demographic breakdown of the elementary Montessori program is: 33% white, 26.5% black, 26.5% Hispanic, and 14% Asian/other ethnicities.
- Two-thirds of spaces in Montessori primary classrooms are reserved for students from families with lower income levels.
- There are 17 primary Montessori classrooms in 10 (of 22) Arlington Elementary Schools, serving over 370 children.
- Lower (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>) and Upper (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) Elementary Montessori classrooms were added at Drew in the mid-1990's; a total of 8 classrooms serve about 130 children today.
- The Montessori program in APS is already the size of an elementary school. Countywide it has over 500 students, more than all but 4 of Arlington's 22 elementary schools.
- The APS Montessori program employs Montessori certified teachers in every classroom, but has no Montessori-trained administrators to coordinate and oversee the program.

### Where we need to go: expanding public Montessori education in Arlington County

- Hire an APS Montessori Specialist by August 2008. Fund the position by adding one full-tuition paying student in each of the 17 APS primary Montessori classrooms.
- Create a dedicated APS Montessori Elementary School to open in Fall 2010.
- Look to APS staff, with input from interested parties, to determine the best transition process and classroom structure for the new school.
- Populate the new school by growing the program at a temporary annex location in the interim.
- The school would consist of primary classrooms, lower elementary classrooms, and upper elementary classrooms, with the inclusion of middle school also a possibility.
- Continue to provide primary Montessori classrooms in several Arlington Elementary Schools throughout the county. Ideally have a minimum of two Montessori classrooms in any given elementary school to foster collaboration between Montessori classroom teachers and students.
- Continue to operate as a countywide choice program with countywide transportation.
- Continue to serve an economically and culturally diverse set of students and families, with spaces in Montessori preschool classrooms continuing to be reserved for students from families with lower income levels. Actively strive to maintain this diversity in the elementary program.

## Request

We respectfully request a directive to APS staff to plan for a dedicated Montessori Elementary School to open its doors in the Fall of 2010 as a solution that would meet numerous goals and objectives of the school system. As an initial step in 2008, we request the hiring of a full-time Montessori Specialist in the APS Office of Early Childhood to oversee and coordinate the APS Montessori program.

## Checklist of specific requests:

### HIRE AN APS MONTESSORI SPECIALIST

- Plan to admit one additional full tuition paying student in each of the 17 APS primary Montessori classrooms in the 2008-2009 school year lottery. This extra tuition income will cover the cost of hiring the new Montessori Specialist to be hired by August 2008.
- Hire a new full-time Montessori Specialist to serve in the APS Office of Early Childhood, to oversee and coordinate the APS Montessori program. The Montessori Specialist should be required to have Montessori teacher certification in both primary and elementary levels and have program administration training and/or experience. The hiring of a Montessori Specialist is a critical and immediate need of the APS Montessori program and has been recommended for two years in a row by the Arlington County Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) and the Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI).

### COLLECT CENTRALIZED MONTESSORI PROGRAM DATA

- Request the Office of Early Childhood review the draft survey prepared by AMAC to measure interest in an APS Montessori Elementary School (See Attachment 4).
- Distribute the final survey in backpack mail to all current APS Montessori students, and as a link through an APS School Talk email in late April or early May 2008.
- Direct the Office of Early Childhood to begin in 2008 to centrally collect data from the APS Montessori program on:
  - Waitlist numbers for each APS school with a Montessori classroom. Separate statistics should be kept on the number of students on the 1/3 vs. 2/3 waitlist, and the waitlist numbers from each school should be rolled up to one total waitlist number, with duplicate names removed.
  - SOL scores by group.
  - Matriculation of students from APS primary Montessori classrooms at schools other than Drew into lower elementary classes at Drew.
  - Number of students who stay in Montessori for their Kindergarten year at Drew and at other APS elementary schools with primary Montessori classrooms.

### PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

- Provide greater visibility for the APS Montessori program on the general Arlington Public School website.
- Create more parent education opportunities for current and potential Montessori parents so parents can better understand the Montessori program (e.g., Montessori Math Night, etc).

### PLAN FOR THE SCHOOL

- See Attachment 5: Arlington Public School Montessori Growth Plan Timeline

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2007 Early Childhood Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations
  - 1.1: Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public Sector (as endorsed by all major U.S. and international Montessori organizations)
  - 1.2: Montessori Program Implementer Job Description
2. Arlington Public Schools: Montessori Best Practices, 2006
3. An APS Montessori School - An ECCC Solution
4. Draft survey to measure interest in an APS Montessori Elementary School
5. Arlington Public School Montessori Growth Plan Timeline (Spring 2008 – Fall 2010)

# Attachment 1

## 2007 Early Childhood Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations

**2007 EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** February 7, 2007

**TO:** Arlington School Board  
**FROM:** Early Childhood Advisory Committee  
**SUBJECT:** End-of-Year Recommendations and Report

**I. Committee Members**

The Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) has four citizen members (3 returning; 1 new): Alicia Guajardo, Nathalie Hernandez, Monique O'Grady and Sandra Redmore, committee chair.

Our APS Staff Liaison is Michelle Picard, Early Childhood Supervisor. The committee would like to thank Michelle for all her invaluable assistance and input this year.

**II. Background**

ECAC provides input to the ACI, APS staff and the School Board regarding programs for children in preschool through grade two. Although a small committee, its dedicated members have brought input from parents throughout the APS community to the table as we studied areas of continued interest. Our focus narrowed as much that we had advocated for in previous years came to fruition, including the district-wide adoption of the Investigations curriculum and the passing of several preschool budget initiatives (see Recommendation I). We applaud the School Board's strong support of early childhood education in the Arlington Public Schools.

APS currently has two preschool programs, serving 650 three and four year old students: 17 classrooms in the Montessori program, and 25 classrooms as part of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), which uses a more traditional approach. Both programs enjoy strong interest from the community, with significant waitlists. There is ample research to support the educational benefit of preschool experience. Kindergarten children in APS who had attended preschool had significantly higher pass rates on the K-PALS than children who did not attend preschool.<sup>1</sup> The difference in pass rates was most pronounced for at risk children, which is consistent with numerous longitudinal studies that have demonstrated preschool for at risk children results in such

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<sup>1</sup> Children who attended APS preschool had a pass rate of 87.5%; non-APS preschool, 86.3%; no preschool, 57.4%. Further, those students who qualified for Free Reduced Lunch Programs preschool had a pass rate of 84.4% when they had attended APS preschool, 71.1% when they had attended a non-APS preschool, and 47.5%, when they had not attended preschool. Office of Early Childhood Evaluation Report, October 2002.

benefits as significantly higher high school graduation rates, lower rates of placement in special education and lower rates of being retained in a grade.<sup>2</sup> These at risk children who benefit most from preschool make up a significant portion of APS preschool enrollment, as 2/3 of the slots in the Montessori are reserved for families who make less than \$77,400 and all of the slots in the VPI program are for families who make less than \$62,000. The ECAC believes that ensuring high quality, accessible APS preschool programs is critical to the goal of rising achievement for all.

### **III. Recommendations**

The ECAC offers 2 recommendations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

APS should maintain its current level of support to its preschool programs by continuing to include preschool children in school planning factors, to provide transportation for most preschool children, and to offer preschool extended day at some sites.

#### **Rationale:**

The FY2007 budget dramatically increased support to preschool programs: transportation was increased to include four year olds in the division; school planning factors were increased to include all preschoolers; and extended day for preschoolers was offered for the first time. When financial constraints tighten and there are competing demands for more limited resources, newer additions to the budget can be the most vulnerable. Yet these budget initiatives are significant improvements to the quality and accessibility of APS preschool programs, and ECAC feels strongly that it is important to maintain these recent gains for our youngest learners.

Increasing school planning factors to include preschool enrollment has ensured that equipment and materials for preschoolers are adequately provided, a basic need for a healthy program. It has also meant that preschoolers now receive art, music, physical education and library assistance from trained specialists. Such specialists not only provide important learning opportunities for children and support to teachers, but also ensure that arts instruction is appropriately included in the preschool curriculum and that the organized physical activity that can help increase students' capacity for learning is provided. Beginning specials in preschool is also a way to provide responsive education and to support rising achievement in the arts and in health and wellness from the time children first enter the Arlington Public Schools.

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<sup>2</sup>Schweinhart, I.J., Weikart, D., et al (1993). *Significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 27*. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation No. 10. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation; Campbell, F.A., Ramey, C.T., et al (2002). *Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian project*. Applied Developmental Science, Volume 6, Number 1, pp. 42-57; Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., Robertson, D.L. & Mann, E.A. (2002). *Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers*. Discussion Paper no. 1245-02. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

While including preschoolers in school planning factors improves the quality of APS preschool programs, providing transportation and extended day increases access in a straightforward way. Providing bus transportation for all four year olds makes APS preschool a reasonable option for a greater number of families. We take it as given that children who do not live in reasonable walking distance to school should be provided transportation by the school system; the need is no less for younger children. Likewise, extended day for preschoolers increases access to the program because it allows children with working parents to attend. Although an issue for many families, this factor can be particularly critical for those with the lowest income levels; these are the families for whom preschool can have the biggest impact.

Increasing the proportion of children completing preschool and demonstrating readiness for learning in kindergarten, and decreasing the gap in the proportion of children in identified groups completing preschool and demonstrating readiness for learning are important objectives in reaching APS strategic plan goals of rising achievement and eliminating the achievement gap. Maintaining high quality, accessible preschool in the APS directly supports these goals, and the ECAC strongly recommends that the School Board continue a high level of support to early childhood programs by maintaining current levels of funding.

**Budget Implications:**

This recommendation is to maintain current level of funding for preschool programs, so there would be no additional cost to the budget.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

APS should continue to dedicate resources to expand and strengthen the APS Montessori preschool program by adding a Montessori specialist to the Early Childhood Office.

**Rationale:**

This year Montessori education celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A century ago Dr. Maria Montessori created a successful school to educate poor children who spent much of their time playing in the streets of Italy. She fashioned an educational program that put children at the center, with engaging materials to help them learn. Today Montessori education still stands as a proven educational model across the world and across America.

The Arlington Public School system is a U.S pioneer in Montessori education. Thirty-six years ago Arlington was among the first school systems in America to launch public Montessori education - choosing it to educate its preschool children. Today APS has 17 preschool Montessori classrooms at 10 different Arlington County schools serving 374

preschool and kindergarten students. APS has also expanded its Montessori elementary program, now at 8 classrooms educating 130 first through fifth graders.<sup>3</sup> Arlington is also finishing a three-year long program to consider adding a Montessori middle school program.

Interest in Montessori education here in Arlington continues to intensify. Last year's Montessori Information Night was the largest ever – an estimated 250 people attended. Publicity and research are fueling the intrigue. New data published in the *Science Magazine* shows that underprivileged preschool children outperform their non-Montessori counterparts and that older children have social gains beyond their peers.<sup>4</sup> A recent story in the *Washington Post* shows that more African Americans are attracted to a Montessori education than ever before.<sup>5</sup>

The Montessori Program has enjoyed immense support from the Early Childhood Office. Staff has helped develop a best practices document, a Montessori newsletter for Arlington families, more Montessori-specialized teacher training, and they are in the process of developing an APS Montessori web page. Even with that support, the Early Childhood staff also lack Montessori training.

Arlington still lacks one major component identified as essential to make sure that the Montessori program is the strongest and most successful program possible. It needs an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as a Montessori specialist to coordinate the program between 10 different locations and among 25 different teachers and 24 assistants.<sup>6</sup>

As ECAC mentioned in the 2005-2006 mid-cycle report, committee members continue to hear concerns from teachers and parents about the lack of this central resource. The absence of a specialist ultimately has an adverse effect on the overall quality, cohesion, and consistency of the Montessori program. ECAC also mentioned in the same mid-cycle report the hope that Drew Model School, where 13 of the Montessori classes are housed, would enjoy a new principal with a Montessori background. That was not accomplished, further stressing the need for a specialist. In fact, no principal at any school where Montessori classrooms are housed has a Montessori certificate.

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<sup>3</sup> APS elementary schools hosting Montessori classrooms are: Ashlawn (1), Barrett (1), Campbell (1), Claremont (2), Drew (5 PK/K; 8 elementary), Glebe (1), Hoffman-Boston (2), Key (2), McKinley (1), Jamestown (1).

<sup>4</sup> Lillard, Angeline and Else-Ouest, Nicole. "The Early Years: Evaluating Montessori Education" *Science Magazine*, 29 September 2006, Vol. 313. no. 5795, pp. 1893 – 1894. The study shows that five year old Montessori students in the Milwaukee public Montessori schools scored higher in reading and math assessments and in a number of other significant areas considered important for life and careers. A summary of the study is available at <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/summary/313/5795/1893>.

<sup>5</sup> Mathews, Jay. "Montessori, Now 100, Goes Mainstream." *Washington Post*, 2 January 2007, p. B01. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/01/AR2007010100742.html>

<sup>6</sup> During the 2005-2006 school year national consultants Jonathan Wolfe and Michael Dorer supplied APS with a document endorsed by various Montessori associations that details the Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public Sector. A copy of this document is located in the appendix.

Unfortunately that puts principals without Montessori training in the position of evaluating classrooms, hiring teachers, and determining whether their Montessori employees are performing their duties. A Montessori specialist could assist principals and the Early Childhood Office in performing these duties. This would be especially helpful as the Early Childhood Office hopes to increase the number of preschool children it serves by about 45 percent.<sup>7</sup> Montessori is unique. Arlington Public Schools requires its Montessori teachers to be certified, however it does not require the teachers' superiors to hold certification, or even receive training.

ECAC appreciates the strong commitment of APS to invest in its preschool program. APS should continue to dedicate resources to expand and strengthen existing programs including the Montessori preschool program. The addition of a Montessori-trained specialist to the Early Childhood Office would play a key role in ensuring that the program has the support it requires and deserves. Securing this position would also provide a key element in successfully meeting the objectives enumerated in the APS 2005-2011 Strategic Plan including Objective 1.4 "The proportion of children completing preschool and demonstrating readiness for learning in kindergarten will increase." Overall, the Montessori program meets several of the goals in APS 2005-2011 Strategic Plan, including rising achievement for all students (Objective 1.4), eliminating gaps in achievement (Objective 2.3), and responsive education (Objectives 3.3, 3.4, and 3.6).<sup>8</sup>

The need for a Montessori specialist in a public school setting is not new. The Montessori Foundation based in Alexandria, VA suggests that public schools establishing Montessori programs hire an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as a curriculum coordinator.<sup>9</sup> Specialists are part of the Montessori fabric in other public school systems that value giving students access to a Montessori classroom. The job description for a Montessori Program Implementer in the Milwaukee Public Schools includes a page and a half of duties that cover everything from curriculum coordination to inventory of supplies, overseeing some training, parent education and program promotion and planning.<sup>10</sup>

Program coordinators already exist in Arlington. The Spanish Immersion program was able to grow and thrive with the help of a specialist. APS Montessori currently has 550 spots - capacity as great as our largest elementary schools. Immersion enjoys a full-time Foreign Language specialist position. This position is a resource to the two elementary Immersion schools (and Gunston Middle School) with principals highly qualified to meet their students' unique educational experience. This position also supports the foreign language programs throughout the division. The current specialist estimates that about 60 percent of her time is devoted to the Immersion program including the summer programs.

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<sup>7</sup> This increase in the number of preschool children is based on the possibility that APS would become the Head Start replacement grantee.

<sup>8</sup> The Arlington Public Schools 2005-2011 Strategic Plan can be found at <http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schoolboard/strategicplan/StrategicPlan.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Excerpt from document detailing steps for establishing Montessori Programs in Public Schools. See appendix. Written by The Montessori Foundation. More information can be found at <http://www.montessori.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> A copy of the Montessori Program Implementer job description is found in the appendix of this report.

Arlington should lend the same consideration and resources to the Montessori program. ECAC understands that Arlington is facing tight budget constraints, but still believes this is a worthwhile expenditure – one that ACI has endorsed for two years in a row<sup>11</sup>.

**Budget Implications:**

A full time T-scale position costs \$81,000 or half-time would be \$40,500. These figures include 30 percent fringe benefits.

ECAC would like to remind APS that the Montessori preschool program is a tuition-bearing program. Acknowledging budget constraints the committee determined that with the addition of one more child paying full tuition in each of the 17 preschool classes, APS could generate \$119,000 more each year. APS could then afford to hire one full time T-scale Montessori specialist. The funding could be secured by changing one non-paying preschool student in each class to a child paying full tuition, or by adding a full tuition-bearing child to each preschool classroom. Traditionally, half-time positions are harder to fill. Therefore, ECAC would recommend filling the position with a full-time T-scale specialist.

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to Early Childhood Advisory Committee Report 2004-2005 and Staff Response; Early Childhood Advisory Committee Report Without Recommendations April 2006. Reports can be found at [http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory\\_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood2005.doc.pdf](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood2005.doc.pdf)  
[http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory\\_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood05sr.pdf](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood05sr.pdf)  
[http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory\\_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood2006.pdf](http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/advisory_groups/aci/reports/EarlyChildhood2006.pdf)

## Appendix A

### Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public Sector

#### Montessori Teachers

- Employ Montessori teachers who have Montessori credentials for the levels they teach
- Maintain an active and open recruitment for Montessori credentialed teachers.
- Budget for future Montessori teacher education for non Montessori-credentialed teachers.
- Provide professional Montessori in-service by experienced credentialed Montessori educators.
- Contract for on-going internal and periodic external Montessori consultation and/or professional support as follow up to Montessori teacher education.
- Employ one paraprofessional per classroom, each having received Montessori orientation for that role.

#### Administration

- Employ an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as curriculum coordinator.
- Employ a building principal/educational leader who has knowledge of Montessori principles and curriculum through Montessori coursework, Montessori Administrator Credential and annual conference exposure.
- Maintain commitment to the core Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.
- Sustain the support of the central administration through high profile communications about program development.
- Recognize that the best implementation process is to begin with the 3-6 age group and add one age at a time for gradual progression.

#### Recruitment/Parent Education

- Provide Montessori parent education programs that promote understanding of Montessori principles and curriculum.
- Develop and admission process that informs parents about the nature of Montessori and seeks the necessary commitment to the program.