



MODERN MONTESSORI

charter school

Modern Montessori Charter School Annual Report

School Year 2019-2020

Board Approved November 18, 2020



Who We Are

Rooted in Montessori principles, we offer an authentic Montessori experience with a modern twist, interweaving aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Modern Montessori Charter School has approval from the Minnesota Department of Education to operate a preschool, elementary and middle school program, authorized to encompass Pre-K through eighth grade.

Mission

We are a collaborative learning community rooted in Montessori principles integrated with current technology through an innovative, child-centered approach.

Vision

To develop leaders of tomorrow with an intrinsic desire for life-long learning and independent thinking to become citizens who better our world.



Year Opened

Our first operational year was the 2019/2020 school year

Grades Served

Pre-K through 5th Grade were served in the 2019/2020 School Year

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Executive Leadership Team

Board Chair: Valerie Blanco - valerie.blanco@mm-cs.org
Director: Shawna Heller - shawna.heller@mm-cs.org
Instructional Coordinator: Kristy Fehr -
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Authorizer

Innovative Quality Schools (IQS)
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Phone: 651.234.0900
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Purpose of the Report

This report is set forth to meet the requirements in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivisions 4, 11 and 14 regarding Minnesota charter schools publishing a yearly annual report for authorizers and stakeholders. This report must be approved by the district Board of Directors and is a public document under Minnesota Chapter 13.



School enrollment

On June 9, 2020 there were 83 students enrolled at MMCS.

Student attrition

MMCS began their inaugural school year with 79 students starting school in September of 2019. The school continued to add students throughout the year growing to a peak of 84 and ending the year with 83.

It should also be noted that, per Executive Order, school transitioned to a full-distance model in March of 2020 due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

Modern Montessori was on a waitlist for Kindergarten, but was able to clear this throughout the year thus entering the open enrollment period with openings in all grades for the following year.



Governance and Management

MMCS was governed by a six-member Board of Directors for the 2019-2020 school year. This was MMCS' first year of operations with students. The school's authorizer is Innovative Quality Schools. The school is managed by Shawna Heller, the school's Director and Kristy Fehr, the school's Instructional Coordinator. Board meetings are held monthly on the third Wednesday of each month.

Staffing

The school had 8 full time teachers, six grade level teachers, a special education teacher, a STEM teacher and a physical education teacher. The school had a full-time administrative assistant, two full-time general education paraprofessionals, one part-time general education paraprofessional and two part-time special education paraprofessionals. The school's technology needs were supported by a part-time technology coordinator and volunteers.



Finances

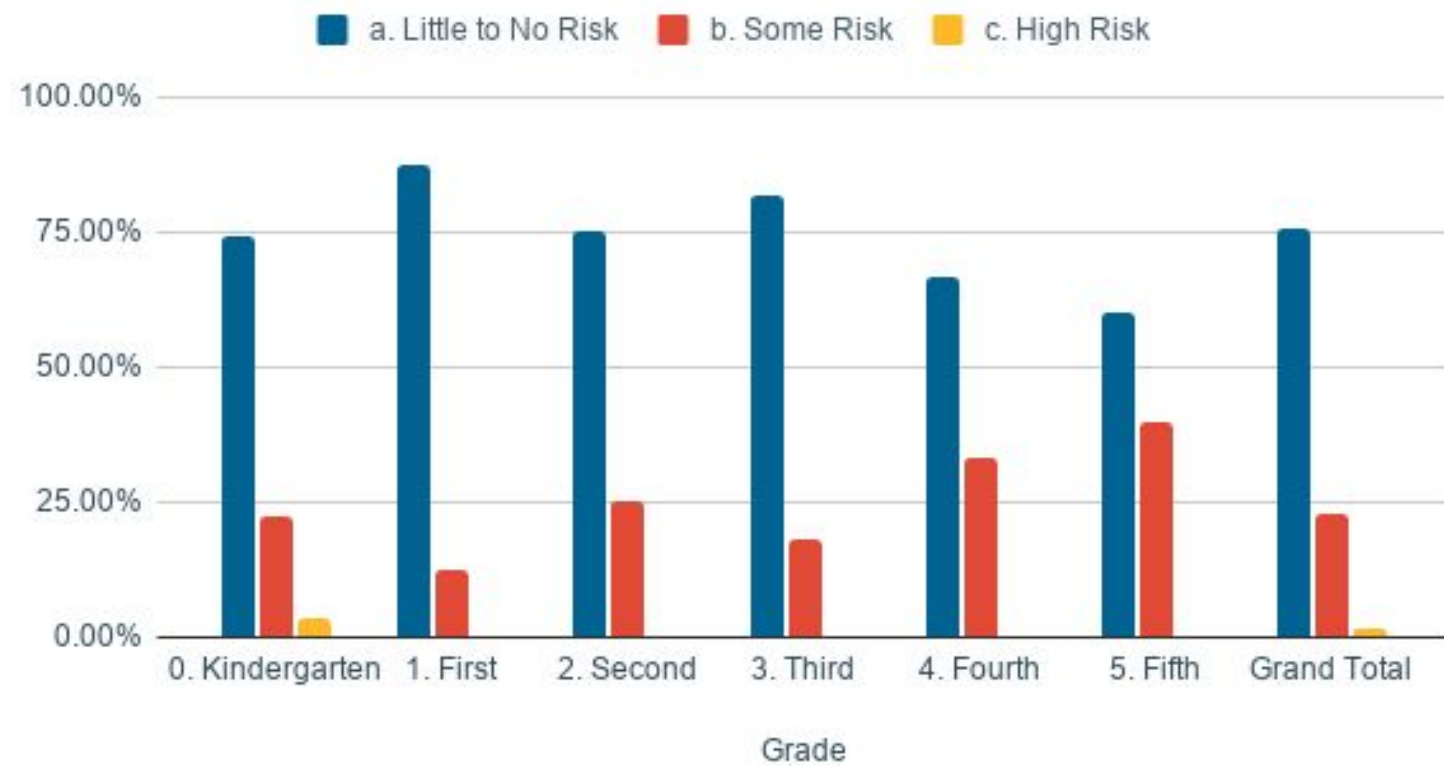
MMCS finished its first full year of operations with 83 students enrolled and a weighted ADM of 67.58 students in grades K-5. The majority of the school's funding is based on enrollment, which grew throughout the year, and the Federal CSP Grant.

The increased enrollment as well as conservative spending allowed the school to end the FY19-20 school year with an unaudited fund balance of 8.3%.

One of the number one measures of financial stability in charter schools is fund balance. As the state withholds 10% of state generated revenues every year, a fund balance of 15-30% is generally recommended by financial service providers, auditors and authorizers.

MMCS will strive to achieve this 15% fund balance goal by our fifth operational year. MMCS is pleased to have overcome a large projected deficit based on the starting enrollment and end the year with a positive fund balance.

Math Assessment Data



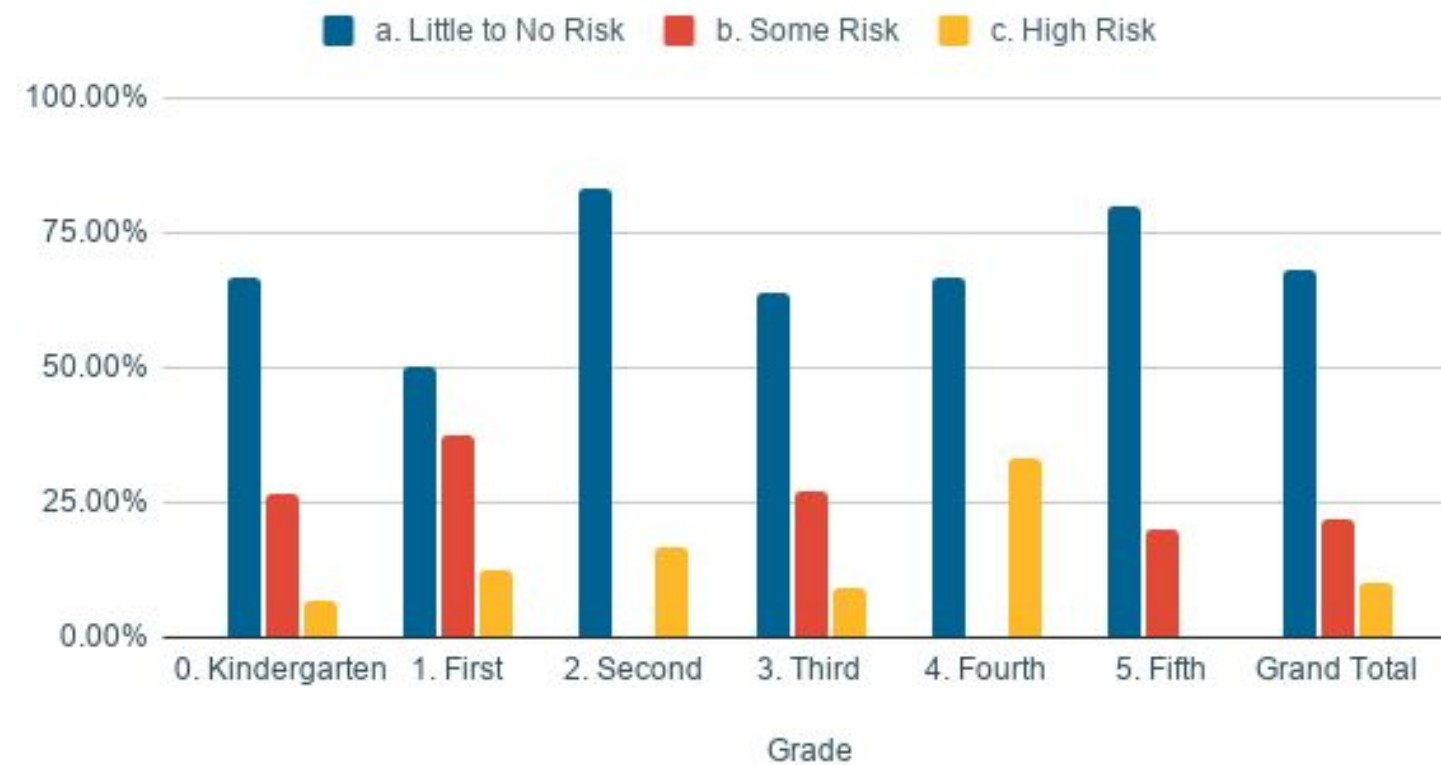
Academic Performance

The school did the FastBridge assessments in English Language Arts and Math one time during the 2019-2020 school year.

The first assessments establish a baseline of targets for the students and staff as goals. Targets are established based on how students did in their first Fastbridge assessment each year.

As a general practice, the school intends to administer the FastBridge assessments three times per school year. This first operational year was hindered by delays in new technology setup in the fall and the Covid pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home order in the Spring thus resulting in only one data point for the year.

Reading Assessment Data





Innovative practices and implementation

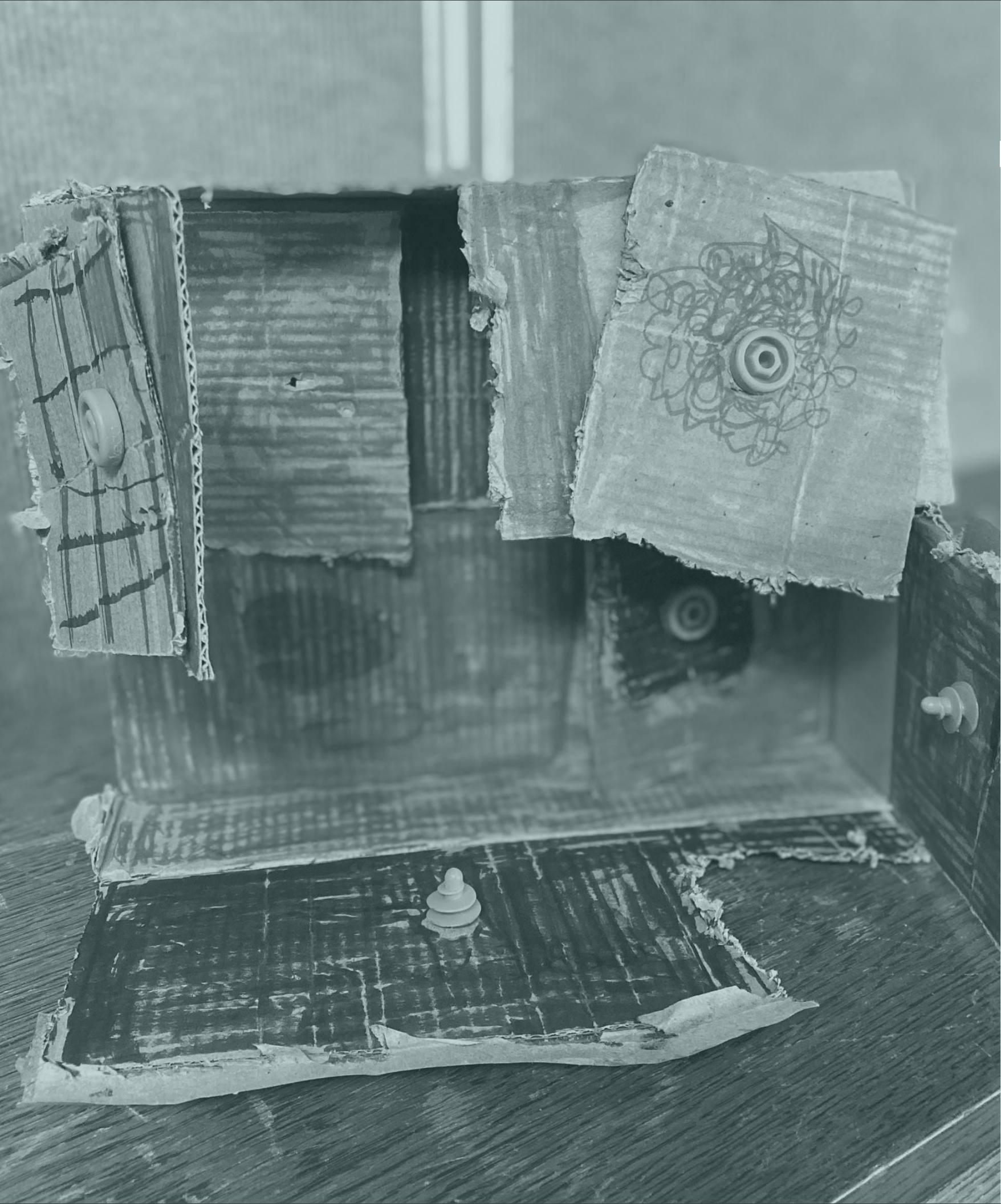
The Montessori Approach

Modern Montessori Charter School is grounded on the research-based Montessori model of instruction. This method has been in practice since 1907 and has continually shown great success among students. It is designed to lead children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and become eager, self-directed learners. Using a carefully prepared environment, teachers are guides utilizing self-correcting, hands-on learning materials and purposeful activities that allow children to learn at their own pace through discovery. This type of meaningful work in an orderly environment fosters concentration, encourages responsibility, independence and confidence, and results in children who love to learn.

In the classroom, Montessori curriculum includes specific, purposeful materials called “works.” These materials are designed with a control of error, or way for the child to check his/her work, to give the child the opportunity to master each skill at his/her own pace. The child is allowed to discover, explore, and master each lesson before moving onto the next work. This gives each student the ability to progress as needed and to spend extra time with each lesson as needed. The teacher observes the student, assisting when needed, and in this way is able to understand where each individual student is in his/her learning style and level for each subject.

Students will benefit from multiage classrooms where an environment based on respect is at its core. Students will become leaders when given the opportunity to be teachers themselves and assist younger students in the classroom. Younger students will build an intrinsic desire for learning when observing the more challenging work of their older peers.

Montessori education has traditionally been a low- or technology-free environment, but MMCS feels this is an important skill area in which our students need practice and instruction. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) integration will allow students to become proficient with current technology while enriching learning opportunities.



Innovative practices and implementation

Montessori + STEM

Montessori education is well known for its hands-on, student-directed approach to learning. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) also encourages hands-on, active participation from students. Both Montessori and STEM encourage problem-solving, creative thinking, and learning through discovery, which results in children who love to learn.

Modern Montessori Charter School’s innovative technology is carefully—and sometimes invisibly—integrated. Today’s college and business environment rely on educational technology or “edtech” to inform, enlighten and educate and it’s our job to prepare our students.

Modern Montessori looks like students learning how to use valuable technological devices without becoming dependent on them. MMCS students will leave our school equally comfortable navigating an old print encyclopedia as they are accessing information on the Internet. They will be proficient with basic computer skills, keyboarding and word processing. They will know how to operate a variety of technological devices and software programs. Children will receive lessons that encourage engineering, creative thinking and scientific reasoning. These technologies will be integrated seamlessly throughout the day.



Future Plans

Modern Montessori will seek out connections within our community for instructional partnerships and innovative opportunities. Such connections may be local nature centers, STEM related facilities, farms etc. Anything that will enhance our learning opportunities.

The school is also seeking to attain a Parent Aware STAR Rating for our preschool program which we feel would drive up overall enrollment.

Modern Montessori has had incredible teacher retention thus far at over 90% and will strive to maintain strong working relationships and high levels of job satisfaction amongst our staff. We anticipate the need to hire additional staff again next year as we plan for additional growth in the areas of Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary.