

# Montessori Private Academy

*“2020 Vision”*

## Strategic Plan 2017 to 2020

### Our Mission

*is to enlighten young people by nurturing their interests and independence, inspiring them to reach their full potential and lead extraordinary lives in our global community.*



## Our Whole School Strategic Planning Process

Every three years, the MPA Board of Directors, staff and parent community review the overall Strategic Plan, to ensure we are meeting the highest standards of the American Montessori Society (AMS).

The main strategic driver of our mission is the original vision of Dr. Maria Montessori, “Follow the child.” To meet the needs of every child, there are certain things we must absolutely get right. Some of those include: beautiful classrooms with the finest Montessori materials, experienced and Montessori-certified teaching staff, updated infrastructure, expert staff for Spanish and music, strong after school programs, a balanced yearly budget, financial aid for those in need, full enrollment, as well as adequate space to serve our entire student population, now and in the future.

As we near the year 2020, it is wise indeed to know where we have been and where we are going. With this bilateral goal as a guide, the MPA community embarked on this Strategic Plan. We hope you find the information helpful and inspiring, and if you have any additional questions or comments, we encourage you to reach out to our administrative team.

### Our Key Values

- Independence** From toddlerhood through ninth grade, children become self-directed individuals.
- Confidence** Children are confident in themselves, at school, and in the world.
- Empathy** Children understand they are part of a greater whole, with a love for all life.
- Curiosity** True exploration gives children opportunities to pursue their life’s work.
- Happiness** When children love to learn, their joy leads to greater achievement.



*“One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child.” Dr. Maria Montessori*

## Programming and Curriculum

Students at Montessori Private Academy have a reputation in the Rockford region of being exceptionally well-prepared in academics. Students often leave MPA well ahead in mathematics and language compared to their traditionally educated peers. While we are pleased with those results, our ultimate objective is, and always will be, the education of the *whole* child. This means the holistic development of a child’s personality and psyche, in other words, his mental and emotional maturation to meet life’s many challenges. MPA’s teachers are uniquely trained to foster this type of development, in addition to guiding many other academic areas, such as practical life, sensorial, botany, zoology, physical sciences, geography, cultural subjects, geometry, art, music, and Spanish.

MPA opened its doors in 1983, and since that time, its commitment to Montessori’s vision has grown more and more deeply rooted. Nevertheless, we have more opportunities to expand upon her original ideas. **Below are additional programming and curricular goals for the next three years:**



### Only the Universe Is Enough

*“If the idea of the universe be presented to the child in the right way, it will do more for him than just arouse his interest, for it will create in him admiration and wonder, a feeling loftier than any interest and more satisfying.”*

--Dr. Maria Montessori



Upper elementary students working together to evaluate various types of wedges in their science class

## Full “STEAM” ahead

- Computer science skills, including coding, for upper elementary and middle school students
- A healthy living and well being course for upper elementary and middle school students
- Expanded immersive Spanish experiences for all ages, preschool through ninth grade
- Art programs during school day, such as drawing techniques, once per month
- A school van to transport older children from MPA to other physical education opportunities and venues

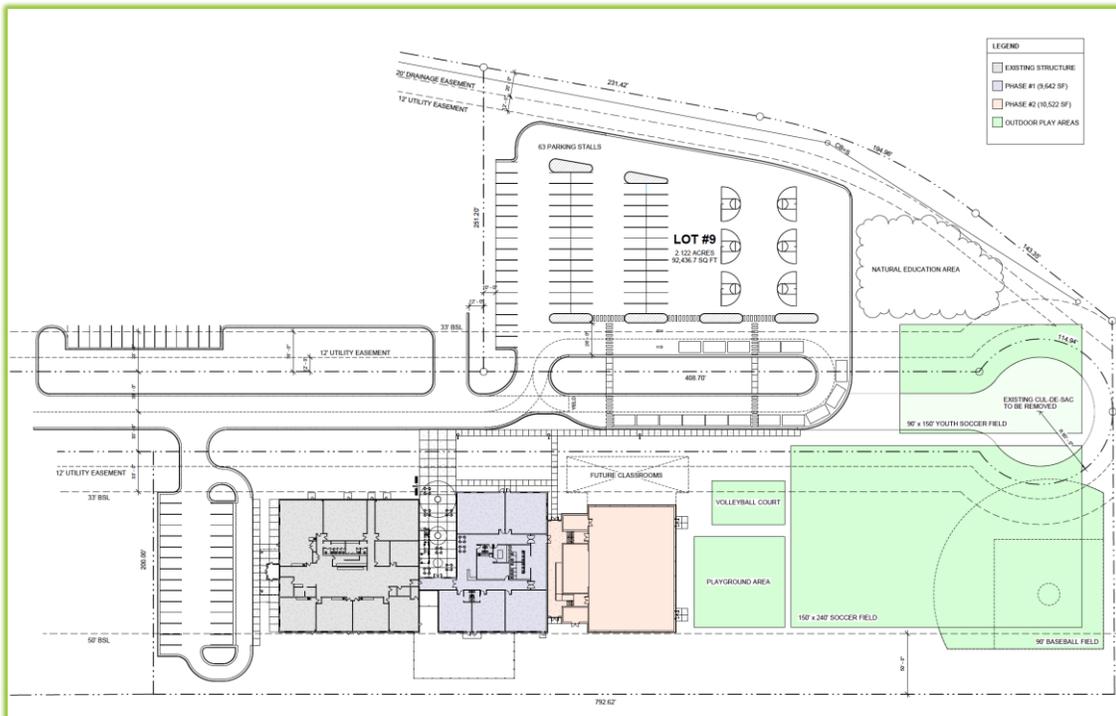
## Facilities and Expansion

After years of renting, MPA constructed its current building in 2009, and it has served us very well. But in order to offer more enrollment and continue to improve, we will need more space, for drama, music, sports and other after school activities. In 2016, we hired Cord Construction and McClellan Blakemore Architects to design two new buildings, one with classrooms and office space, and one as a gymnasium and multipurpose area. We then purchased an extra lot across Sayer Road in 2017 to help lay the groundwork for this expansion. We also took ownership of the eastern end of Sayer Road. This gives us another three acres of land for our future buildings, parking lots, and recreational spaces.



*“There is no description, no image in any book that is capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all the life to be found around them....Something emanates from those trees which speaks to the soul, something no book, no museum is capable of giving.”  
Dr. Maria Montessori*

Our plans include increasing enrollment for toddlers by 16, early childhood by 27, and adding another 16 for lower elementary, as well as larger spaces for both upper elementary and middle school classrooms. The new classroom building will also house breakout spaces for art, Spanish, music and drama. The middle building’s vestibule will adjoin with the existing building and the new gymnasium, which will have space for indoor basketball, volleyball, as well as presentation space for drama and musical performances.



## MPA Support and Services

As we continue to expand, MPA is determined to meet the various developmental needs of not only its current children, but all families in the Rockford region who are interested in the Montessori method.

MPA plans to hire a part-time reading and dyslexia specialist, trained in the Wilson Reading Program, to assist potential struggling elementary students.

In addition to providing the names of support professionals, we are seeking the assistance of a licensed professional to assist MPA in-house to diagnose and help remediate children in need.

We will continue to seek out partnerships with strong after-school programs, and act as a springboard for community activities outside of school. Current after-school programs include a large Chess Club, Young Rembrandts Art Club, Spanish Club, Yearbook Club, and Science Club. We will continue our support of the Boy & Girl Scouts, as well as sports leagues sponsored by the Boys & Girls Clubs.

And because private schooling also requires tuition, MPA is dedicated to allocating a greater percentage of its budget to financial aid. In 2017, more than \$30,000 in financial aid was extended to families, up from \$20,000 in 2012.

### SPECIAL SERVICES GOALS

- A part-time language specialist to formally assess and help remediate struggling readers, including those with dyslexia
- A part-time occupational therapist to assess and help remediate preschool children with sensory issues
- A broader array of after school clubs on site, or off site, for all ages
- A larger percentage of the budget set aside for financial aid, along with a broader network in the Rockford region to reach out to families in need
- Continued research into digital aids, particularly in the early childhood classrooms, to supplement literacy and numeracy, which we will share with the AMS Montessori community



## Financial Stability

Debt repayment continues to be a focus for MPA. Our goal is the complete payoff of our existing building by 2024. To that end and whenever possible, we will continue allocating extra principal each month, to help accelerate our mortgage. At the same time, our goal is to accrue \$350,000 in allocated cash for our new buildings, for which we have instituted a capital campaign.

While we are committed to a strong standard of living for our teaching staff, we are also determined to keep tuition as low as possible for our current parent community, as well as for future families. Each year at its December meeting, the MPA Board of Directors approves next year's tuition rates. Over the last five years, we have raised tuition a modest 3% annually to keep pace with inflation.

We are also using our existing cash for important remodeling projects to expand our existing building, enroll more Montessori students, and build up our cash flow. Since 2012 our enrollment has increased from 148 to 182, a 23% increase. This has enabled MPA to not only pay for the remodeling with cash, but to purchase items such as new classroom carpeting, new classroom furniture, new athletic equipment, and other modest upgrades.

Each month our financials are compiled by the local accounting firm, Beggin Tipp Lamm, which helps ensure our tax-exempt 503(c) status. Two bedrocks of our strategic plan are the fiscal health and capital reserves of MPA. Montessori Private Academy's first parents would be proud of what their early financial support created, as well as the sustained excellence of an important institution in the Rockford region since 1983.

### STRATEGIC GOALS

- Extra principal to accelerate mortgage repayment
- \$350,000 in our building fund
- Cost of living adjustments for our incredible teachers
- Continued healthy enrollment to supplement cost of new buildings and gymnasium
- Continual upgrades to current infrastructure, including new furniture, equipment and computers



### NEW BUILDING GOALS

- Purchase additional land needed for new buildings
- Refine architect's vision for new spaces
- Tax exemption for new land, as part of our 503(c) corporation
- Detailed future analysis and cash flow to show support of the new buildings, which will cost > \$2.5 million