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CORNERSTONE

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Spring 2020 Newsletter

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Mission Statement

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School's mission is to support children from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds living in or near St. Paul's East Side through a rigorous and high-impact Montessori program that empowers them to make positive decisions, develop self-discipline, and create a true sense of responsibility for themselves and others in their community.

FastBridge Math Assessments



Building on our great success with the DIBELS assessment tool for reading, we began using the FastBridge Learning



Armed with this information, our staff can better target challenges the children may experience and work with them to improve

assessment program for math at the start of this school year. The program is designed to be minimally disruptive and to help us see not just whether our children can add and subtract, but, more importantly, how they think about math - how fluent they are with facts and how they approach and solve multi-step problems, for example.

their math proficiency. We are absolutely delighted to have Liesl Taylor, Director of Elementary Pedagogy, leading this effort.

Implementing Our Strategic Plan: Equity

The CMES Board launched a three-year strategic plan this fall, based on input from parents, staff, administration, and other key stakeholders. “Equity” was one of four key initiatives (along with Access, Community and Sustainability) identified as a way to address some of the areas with growth potential at CMES. Part of this initiative involves engaging “in personal and professional growth around topics of diversity, equity and inclusion.”

As mentioned in our last newsletter, author and poet Sun Yung Shin has been leading CMES staff in conversations about equity, representation and literature this year. Our staff and Board have participated in talks about the challenging and often painful issues brought forth in her book, *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*. As a public school committed to serving all children, continuing to engage in these important discussions is vital to our mission.

We were also pleased to have Alicia Sojourner back with us for our February 24th Parent Partnership event. Alicia conducted a very well-received three-part workshop on “How to Talk with Kids About Race and Racism” earlier this year. This year Alicia shared with our community how to support children in conflict resolution and how to be advocates for social justice.

Donations and Grants

We are very excited to have received several generous donations from foundations and individuals locally and nationally this year. In addition, we were thrilled by the community’s support on “Give to the Max” day in



November.

These funds are so important in helping CMES address specific projects or needs as well as supplementing our general operating funds. If you or someone you know would like to donate to CMES, you can click the “Donate” button here which will take you to Give MN, or just write us a check! We are also establishing a brokerage account for those who would like to donate securities. Developing supplementary revenue sources is part of our Strategic Plan’s “Sustainability” initiative.

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What's on our Horizon?

Although it is too early to report anything specific, we do want you, our Friends, to know that the Board is in the very early stages of exploring a potential expansion of CMES. We will be looking at horizontal expansion - adding classrooms - and vertical expansion - adding grade levels. As you would guess, there is a lot involved in this process, from facilities to staffing, but we are committed to broadening access to high-fidelity Montessori such that our own children can continue to grow and flourish and we make room for more children to learn in this amazing way.



From Maria Montessori

In this environment, which should be very beautiful, the children develop a power of living together in society; they make social contacts. So this environment, full of social contacts, makes as it were a little world on its own plane.

The Four Planes of Education

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