



 **Montessori**  
Regional Charter School

# Strategic Plan

**2024-2027**

# A Message from Mark



In 2018, the Montessori Regional Charter School launched a five-year strategic plan that outlined several future goals. During that period, MRCS made significant strides in achieving those goals, such as acquiring our current campus and expanding to include 7th and 8th grades, among other accomplishments.

As we remain committed to continuous improvement, it became necessary to reassess our organizational goals and establish a vision for the coming years. To facilitate our strategic planning process, we partnered with Decision Associates, an Erie-based consulting group.

The process began in February 2024, with surveys distributed to MRCS families and staff; community stakeholder interviews were also being conducted at this time. The results were compiled, reviewed, and analyzed, leading to the formation of focus groups with teachers and families. These sessions provided valuable insights for the strategic planning committee.

Input from the MRCS Board of Trustees, families, staff, and community was instrumental in guiding the strategic planning committee. Over the course of three months, the committee thoroughly examined all the gathered data and information. Through numerous meetings, the team developed several strategies for MRCS to pursue over the next three years.

The 2024–2027 strategic plan is a direct result of the information and feedback from MRCS stakeholders. Your support and input have set the course for the coming years and will have a lasting impact on our students and community. With well-defined goals and a clear mission, vision, and values, the future holds limitless opportunities for MRCS!

I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in this process. Your time, energy, and dedication to improving our organization were evident in the overwhelming responses we received. It's clear that our families, staff, and community members are deeply committed to the Montessori philosophy and are eager to see our students achieve their fullest potential.

Best Wishes,

Mark Zielinski

## Introduction

Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning which enables students to be both independent and self-reliant and fosters a love of learning. The Montessori Method views the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. It attempts to develop children physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. Montessori classrooms are beautifully crafted environments designed to meet the needs of children in a specific age range. Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that experiential learning in this type of classroom led to a deeper understanding of language, mathematics, science, music, social interactions and much more.

In Montessori classrooms, children make creative choices in their learning, while the classroom and the teacher offer age-appropriate activities to guide the process. Children work in groups and individually to discover and explore knowledge of the world and to develop their maximum potential.

The school was born of Montessori Children's House of Erie, a private, nonprofit school that had operated in the region since 1978. As a private elementary school, there were limited opportunities to provide these unique, hands on, quality education as a choice for the Erie region. When Pennsylvania charter school law was introduced in 1997, the teachers, families and board of the Montessori Children's House saw this as an opportunity to expand their reach into the community and break the economic barriers. The Montessori community applied for a charter which was approved in the fall of 2003.

Montessori Regional Charter school opened its doors as a tuition free charter school in the fall of 2004 servicing 120 Kindergarten through 6th grade students, reaching 9 districts in Erie County. Now in its 20th year, the school is recognized as the premier Montessori program in the region, with a highly trained Montessori teaching staff and an array of programs, including PIAA sports programs and afterschool activities, to serve our 650 Kindergarten through 8th grade students and their families.

Led by a Board of Trustees and guided by a faculty that holds both Pennsylvania teaching credentials and rigorous Montessori training, the school is committed to contributing to the Erie region's high quality academic choices.

# Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences.



# Vision Statement

MRCS will embody the Montessori philosophy through innovative programming, teacher preparedness and student achievement. In turn, MRCS will cultivate a strong, vibrant and authentic environment by actively engaging with stakeholders in the Greater Erie community.



# Outcomes

1. Program development
2. Academics/student achievement
3. Educational differentiation
4. Enhanced climate and culture
5. Community relations/partnerships
6. Financial sustainability

# Guiding Principles

- To encourage independence and self-reliance
- To honor, respect, and value individual differences
- A commitment to multi-age, multi-ability, and multicultural classroom environments
- To provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials
- To maintain a highly qualified staff and administration
- To recognize parents role in our educational process
- To be a resource for our community as a center for Montessori training, observation, and awareness

# Values

1

**student centered**

Decisions are made with consideration as to how they will impact our students and the goal to foster independent thinkers who love to learn

2

**montessori philosophy**

We believe and practice an independent focus for each student and prepare our teachers through advanced education to foster a love of learning

3

**safety & security**

Providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for students is a top priority

4

**respect**

We value, honor and recognize that each individual perspective and contribution from students, staff members, families and stakeholders is well intentioned and worthy of thoughtful consideration. We encourage, embrace and celebrate individuality, diversity, and creativity in the classroom and school community.

5

**achievement**

We celebrate and recognize individual and team successes to foster a culture that embraces high performance and self-fulfillment

6

**team/community focused**

We value, honor and recognize that each individual perspective and contribution from students, staff members, families and stakeholders is well intentioned and worthy of thoughtful consideration

# Strategies

1

Embrace the Montessori Method in all aspects of student development and achievement.

2

Enhance internal and external stakeholders' understanding of who we are and what we do.

3

Expand our presence in the Greater Erie community by partnering with organizations with shared interests and missions to increase opportunities for our students.

4

Foster a welcoming culture within the campus environment where the focus is on personal growth.

5

Develop the MRCS Foundation to create a sustainable fund development model that supports enhanced educational opportunities.






# Montessori

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