

So many ways to Montessori

**Big, small, rural,
 urban, and
 all points
 in between**



SARA SUCHMAN

This issue highlights some of the many ways districts, schools, and individuals are working to bring more Montessori to more children. District schools, magnet schools, charter schools, and vehicles that aren't schools at all: There's far more than one way for Montessori to get started, take root, and thrive.

Starting with the largest scale of implementation, **Why Not More Montessori?** by Katie Brown summarizes her co-authored and recently-published study looking into why district leaders don't include Montessori in their district's portfolio of schools. The finding is not that they've never heard of Montessori, or that they need more research. They're often familiar with the model and understand its benefits. Instead, they wanted to know more about what launching a new school or changing over an existing one would look like, in detail. Will they need a new building? What about our current employees? How will families react? What will this do to the bus schedules? They know intuitively and rightly that a successful launch is more than just flipping a switch.

On the other end of the spectrum, **Remote Montessori in Crawford** profiles a 25-year-old program in extremely rural Crawford, Colorado—population 403. What does Montessori look like when class might be interrupted not by the ice-cream truck's music through the windows, but by a

cattle drive down Main Street?

In between we have so many different models. **Hands-on in the Elementary** comes from Creative Montessori Academy in Michigan, one of four Montessori schools serving nearly 1500 students supported by Choice Schools Associates, a Michigan charter management organization (CMO) working with 16 schools in all.

In **Transitioning from tuition to public funding**, you can read the story of a private, tuition-based school in Portland, Oregon, that has moved to enrolling almost exclusively families supported by Oregon's patchwork of universal and not-so-universal pre-school and daycare funding streams.

In **Montessori innovations roll ahead**, the Montessori Collective works in the Denver, Colorado area, helping schools with existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms convert them to Montessori by removing barriers such as funding for training, materials, and professional development. Meanwhile, Montessori on Wheels operates a bus-turned-Montessori-environment, driving from site to site offering enrichment and after-school experiences, gently introducing children and families to the model.

Montessori growth: Who are we missing? is our round-up of new schools this year, including two schools representing different paths to growth. Last spring, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) was awarded a \$15M grant from the US Department of Education's Magnet School Assistance Program. This fall, FCPS' Bucknell Elementary School will add a Montessori track to the existing program.

Applying for the grant was an enormous undertaking, and after the money was awarded, dedicated outreach

with existing stakeholders such as families and teachers was needed for everyone to understand the process and the benefits to the community. Money is necessary, but the full story always includes the people.

In Cincinnati, Bramble Nature Campus will become Bramble Montessori after the long-running Montessori Lab School at Xavier University announced this past fall that it would be transitioning away from Montessori. Families negotiated with Cincinnati Public Schools to add the program to CPS' portfolio of district schools, and the new school will be open in the fall.

Three more new programs are profiled in the article, along with 20 schools celebrating their 25th anniversaries! If your school, public or private, is not on the Census, please reach out and let us know. We need you to help the movement grow!

As we celebrate these stories of ingenuity and growth, we also know that each and every one of you has your own story of challenges and triumphs. We celebrate you—your service, creativity, and dogged determination to do what is best for children.

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