



SJMS

**St. Joseph Montessori School
Columbus, Ohio
Profile for Head of School Candidates**

**St. Joseph Montessori
School
At-a-Glance**

www.sjms.net

Grades: Pre-K through 8

Founded: 1971 as St. Joseph Montessori
Institute; Established in 1865 as
St. Joseph Academy

Current Enrollment: 276 students

Total Faculty/Staff: 37

Trustees: 16 voting, 5 nonvoting

Campus: 3 buildings on 3½ acres adjacent
to Sacred Heart Church

2009-2010 Budget: \$2,800,000

2009-2010 Tuition:

Children’s House ½-day	\$6500
Children’s House	\$7500
Primary	\$7500
Middle	\$7550
7 th and 8 th	\$7900

Accreditation:

- Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association (OCSAA)
- State of Ohio Charter School

Affiliations:

- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- Catholic Diocese of Columbus
- National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)

Introduction

The Board of Trustees of St. Joseph Montessori School (SJMS) of Columbus, Ohio, is excited to announce the opening for a Head of School to begin July 2010, and is accepting applications from interested candidates. The Head of School will report to the SJMS Board of Trustees and is expected to serve as the overall education and administrative leader of the school. The individual will supervise a talented and accomplished staff, many of whom have 20 or more years of experience at the school.

THE SCHOOL

Mission and Philosophy

St. Joseph Montessori School is a Catholic Montessori school community committed to a learning environment that respects the uniqueness of each child in reaching his or her full potential. As the longest operating Montessori school in the area, SJMS represents 40 years of excellence in Montessori education in the nation’s fifteenth largest city.

Enrollment ranges from preschool through eighth grade and reflects a diverse cross-section of families living within a 30-mile radius of the school’s location in Central Ohio’s historic Italian Village. SJMS is governed by a nonprofit Board of Trustees elected and appointed by the school community and has an historic affiliation with the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, yet honors all religious faiths.

The educational methods of Dr. Maria Montessori form the foundation for the school’s philosophy. SJMS believes that, “as a result of the program provided in the school, each child will become a confident, competent person—possessing self-knowledge, independence, concentration, inner discipline, and a spirit of joy—exhibiting care and respect for self, for others, and for the world around—exercising initiative and persistence in completing learning tasks—exhibiting sensitivity, curiosity, creativity, and a spirit of discovery in his or her approach to life and learning.”

Achievements and Recognition

As evidenced in the school's mission and vision statements, St. Joseph Montessori School is committed to a learning environment that respects the uniqueness of each child in reaching his or her full potential. SJMS's vision is to be a school of choice sought out by central Ohio families attracted to the power of the Montessori method of educating children applied in a diverse, engaging, and compassionate community. Accordingly, the school has been recognized with several significant awards and designations throughout its history.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the Blue Ribbon award to St. Joseph Montessori School twice: first in 1993–1994, and most recently for the 2004–2005 school year. Considered by many to be the highest award a school can achieve, less than 4 percent of American schools ever achieve it—and only a handful win it multiple times.

In August 2009, SJMS's Children's House was recognized with Nickelodeon's Parents' Picks Award for Best Preschool in Columbus. As these awards give evidence of the quality of the education happening in the classroom, many of SJMS's teachers have also won individual awards and have been recognized for their individual accomplishments.

SJMS students too tend to be an award-winning group, distinguishing themselves in areas that span the spectrum of academic and extracurricular activities. Notably, the fifth grade class of the 2005–2006 school year wrote and published a book called, *What Do You Call a Rhyming Riddle? A Hinky Pinky!*, which was the grand prize winner of Scholastic Books' Kids Are Authors competition.

Statistical evidence points to the high level of academic preparedness SJMS graduates have as they move on to the next phase of their education. Recent standardized test scores indicate that SJMS eighth grade students are achieving college freshman–level competency in reading, language, and math. St. Joseph Montessori School graduates go on to attend some of the finest high schools in Columbus. Last year, all five 8th grade boys who applied to St. Charles Preparatory School were accepted, and three of the five merit scholarships given by Columbus School for Girls went to SJMS graduates. Beyond secondary school, SJMS graduates go on to excellent colleges and distinguish themselves in a wide variety of professions. Additionally, as evidence of the perceived quality of the school, many SJMS alumni are now parents who have chosen to send their children to their alma mater.

History

In 1865, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur first opened the doors of St. Joseph Academy (SJA). More than a century later in 1971, the Montessori philosophy was incorporated into the toddler and elementary levels. Declining enrollment forced the closing of SJA's 7–12 grade program in 1977. Parents interested in continuing the Montessori program worked with the Sisters to incorporate a new private nonprofit institution which was later renamed St. Joseph Montessori School.

In 1986 SJMS moved to its current campus on Hamlet Street in the Italian Village area of Columbus. The 3.5 acres of land on which the school stands was bequeathed to the Catholic Diocese with the instruction that the property be used solely for educational and religious purposes. The property, along with select common areas, is leased by SJMS from the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, under the singular oversight of the presiding pastor of the Sacred Heart Church (also housed on the property). In the spring of 2007, the SJMS Board of Trustees renewed and extended the school's lease until the year 2037.

Student and Parent Population

Today, SJMS's student body is quite diverse, with an average minority enrollment of about 20 percent. The multi-sensory educational approach has enabled SJMS to meet a wide range of student needs, resulting in a 12 percent enrollment of student with specific disabilities. In 2008 SJMS celebrated the 40th year of the Montessori legacy, with more than 200 families as members of the community and an enrollment of approximately 300 students. Many of these families have been at the school for generations, with family surveys suggesting that the major reasons for both initial and return enrollment are the intangible "greatness" of the teachers and the powerful effect of the Montessori program. SJMS parents volunteer as teacher's aides and function as room parents, planning field trips and other activities that enhance the learning experience. Other parents serve on the Board of Trustees and as chairs of standing and special committees. SJMS parents bring their expertise, experiences, and creativity to creating, planning, and hosting special events for the school.

Curriculum and Staffing

As a Catholic Montessori school, SJMS has integrated programs that span from preschool through eighth grade. The school offers a traditional, age-appropriate Montessori curriculum enriched by special offerings. The Children's House curriculum for ages 3 to 6 emphasizes individualized development in the practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, and cultural areas. The elementary and middle school levels deepen exploration and learning in mathematics, language, and cultural subjects. The Erdkinder program builds on a strong Montessori foundation through practical work in the classroom and the community. Erdkinder students experiment as individuals and alternate academic studies with practical life experiences. They learn to set challenging goals and become masters of their own time in preparation for success in high school.

SJMS has a curriculum open to the study of all faiths. Participation in the study of Catholicism is not required; however, the school provides the diocesan curriculum for parents who want their children educated in Catholic doctrine, including (optional) sacrament preparation.

The special subject and extracurricular offerings include Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Bell Choir, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and Power of the Pen, as well as Chess Club, Ski Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and philanthropic and environmental clubs.

SJMS's popular eight-week summer camp for children ages 3 through 12 consists of week-long day camps in art, science, music, robotics, Aikido, geography, and more. This opportunity to experience Montessori ideals in a relaxed, fun, and stimulating summer learning environment appeals to many families.

A priority of the school has been expanding the pool of Montessori-trained educators. With the support of the SJMS-based COMET, an accelerated two-year program for training educators in the Montessori method, over 90 percent of the faculty at SJMS are certified in the Montessori method.

Governance and Administration

The SJMS Corporation is formed as an Ohio nonprofit corporation. Its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws set forth the governance structure of the institution. Each parent/guardian, faculty member, and full-time employee is a member of the institution and has a single vote on issues submitted to the members for a vote, including the annual election of members of the Board of Trustees.

The overall strategic management responsibilities and oversight of SJMS are the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Trustees, with daily operations, factors for accreditation, and curriculum oversight performed by the school’s leadership.

The bylaws call for a Board of Trustees made up of sixteen voting members and five nonvoting members. Each year, the community elects four new Trustees to three-year terms and the Board of Trustees appoints four new Trustees to serve one-year terms. The Board of Trustees selects its officers—President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The institution’s Head of School, two faculty representatives, the Development Director, and the President of the SJMS Family Association are the five nonvoting members.

The current eleven standing Board Committees include: Executive, Development, Facilities, Finance, Nominating, Personnel, Policy, Planning, Grievance, Tuition Aid, and Technology.

The Catholic Diocese provides administrative guidance and support in maintaining accreditation with the State of Ohio. The school is accredited by the Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association (OCSAA) and is affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA).

Strategic Planning

In March 2009, the SJMS Board of Trustees adopted the SJMS Strategic Plan. Created with input from across the community as the result of over two years of careful committee work and community planning, the Strategic Plan will serve as the framework to guide the school over the next three-to-five years. The plan contains flexible yet descriptive goals and priorities for the institution, relating to processes, culture and engagement, and community, relationships, and reputation.

Finances, Fundraising, and Financial Aid

The school functions on a sound financial footing. While the 2009-2010 school year budget is based on a deficit there are strong enough reserves to carry the school through these harder economic times and still maintain the quality of education that SJMS parents expect. The 2009-2010 expense budget is \$2,800,000, based on an enrollment of 275 students.

2008–2009 Financial Summary

Revenues	
Tuition	\$ 2,400,000
Financial Aid	\$ 105,000
Contributions	\$ 115,000
Summer program	\$ 108,000
Fees	\$ 48,000
Investment Income	\$ 14,000
Other	\$ 438,000
Total	\$ 3,228,000

As an “affiliated” school of the Catholic Diocese, SJMS does not receive the majority of its financial support from the Catholic Diocese, as do parish schools. As with most independent schools, the majority of the school’s income comes from tuition. The additional operating funds required to sustain the school’s programming come from annual fund contributions and donations.

The Annual Fund is the cornerstone of fundraising at SJMS and specifically targets the gap between tuition and the operating cost of educating each child school. Other fundraising events are held throughout

the year and are designated for specific purposes: technology equipment, the Tuition Assistance program, school events, and special projects.

SJMS families are primarily middle class and a significant number of parents are professionals. However, tuition aid allocations have assisted the school in extending enrollment to families less financially comfortable. For the 2009–2010 school year, approximately \$80,000 was given in financial aid.

Campus Facilities

The financial viability of the institution, along with the desire to grow the school, has led the institution to major points of infrastructure development and reorganization. Many of these details are outlined in the school's Strategic Plan. Beginning in the summer of 2008, SJMS undertook a facility expansion and renovation project to accommodate more elementary level students, improve the functional space, and relocate the library.

Location

From exceptional schools to outstanding healthcare, great restaurants to diverse neighborhoods, major league sports to first-rate arts and entertainment, Columbus offers them all. Add Midwestern values and a welcoming diverse population, and it is easy to see why Columbus is such an attractive place to live. The Columbus regional website www.liveworkplaycolumbus.com offers additional information about the amenities of living and working in Columbus.

FUTURE LEADERSHIP

Sister Ann McCarrick—who traveled to Bergamo, Italy to study the Montessori philosophy first hand—served as the school's first Directress from 1968 to 1979. A set of short-term and interim directors led the school in the early- and mid-1980s. Ms. Donna Barton then served SJMS as Principal for over two decades, from 1987 through 2009. During this period, the school's enrollment and reputation notably expanded. Ms. Barton's promotion of the founding principles of the Montessori philosophy and the building of a talented and devoted faculty are but two of her lasting legacies.

As the SJMS Board started a national search for a permanent head of school in 2009, Lenn Turner, an experienced school administrator from the Columbus area, assumed the role of Transition Coordinator. This summer, SJMS lead teacher Carolyn Thomas was named Interim Administrator. Ms. Thomas and Ms. Turner form the interim administrative team and are continuing to provide leadership and guidance through the 2009–2010 academic year.

SJMS is strongly positioned to prepare its students for the challenges of life in the 21st century with a Head of School who can lead and build upon the following strategic priorities:

- ensuring a superior education grounded in Montessori principles;
- providing a school facility and environment that reflects the highest ideals of the Montessori philosophy;
- maintaining and improving school operational and management practices to reflect a leading edge approach to private Montessori school administration;
- attracting, embracing, and retaining a diverse group of families committed to nurturing positive, independent, confident, curious, and respectful human beings;
- building community and a culture of philanthropy through an energized network of stakeholders;
- cultivating informed parents who are advocates for Montessori education and SJMS; and
- strengthening relationships throughout the wider SJMS local neighborhood, and Central Ohio communities.

Preferred Candidate Profile

SJMS seeks a progressive, strategic thinker who embodies the spirit, values, and practices of Montessori education in his or her daily life. He or she should be a collaborative educator with extensive Montessori education experience, certification from the American Montessori Society, and an advanced degree. The unique composition of SJMS requires an individual who is a practicing member of the Catholic faith, who can thoughtfully steward the Catholic tradition of the school while embracing the diverse religious views that make up the school community.

In addition to his or her educational leadership, the ideal Head of School is an artful and passionate fundraiser with a proven ability to inspire others to action. Secure and self-aware, he or she is a keen listener and master communicator with a reputation for building productive relationships with and between students, staff, parents, board members, and the community at large. His or her success will rest upon effective delegation and sound decision-making abilities, based on a solid understanding of strategic, operational, human resource, and budget planning and management practices. Finally, the preferred candidate is a lifelong learner and effective advocate of ongoing parent education and continuous staff development.

SEARCH PROCESS

Interested candidates should submit electronically a cover letter expressing interest, a statement of educational philosophy, a current resume, and the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of five professional references to dick@accesseduc.com. Please, no calls to the school.

Anticipated Search Schedule

November 15, 2009	Initial deadline for applications
December, 2009	Semifinalists' interviews
January, 2010	Finalists' visits
July 1, 2010	Anticipated start date

Pay and benefits are competitive. Support with relocation expenses or educational debt are options for discussion.

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