



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

**To:** Indiana State Board of Education  
**From:** Office of School Accountability  
**Date:** June 26, 2023  
**Subject:** Accreditation Petition for Montessori Science Academy

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This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the school in its petition for performance-based accreditation and the final recommendation from the Indiana Department of Education (Department) regarding the accreditation of Montessori Science Academy.

## **Background & Demographic Information**

Montessori Science Academy currently operates in New Palestine, Indiana and serves students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school operates in-person. Montessori Science Academy opened in the 2013-2014 school year. The school serves students from Indianapolis, Greenfield, New Palestine, Shelbyville, Wannamaker, and Beech Grove. MSA is affiliated with International Montessori Council (IMC).

MSA provides students and families with an alternative model and resource for academically rigorous education. Montessori Science Academy follows the Montessori educational principles of providing child-directed, individualized, hands-on learning within a prepared environment with special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The school seeks to educate the social, intellectual, and emotional needs of each child; and to generate a sense of community among children, teachers, and families.

MSA currently has 59 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten to grade 8. The school projects that it will have 92 students enrolled by year five of having accreditation.

## **Operations**

**Facilities:** Montessori Science Academy operates at 4147 S 600W, New Palestine, Indiana in a 5,500 square foot building. The building includes five classrooms, and two developmentally age-appropriate playgrounds outside. The building is annually inspected by the Indiana Department of Health and State and Local Fire Marshal.

**Tuition:** Annual tuition and fees for MSA's pre-kindergarten is \$6,100 and tuition and fees for kindergarten through grade 8 is \$7,100. Grades 6 through grade 8 also have a \$100 technology fee. There is a \$4,000 total revenue in annual fees for all students for robotics club. MSA indicated that it intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.

**Staffing:** The administrative structure for MSA is as follows:

Advisory Board: Consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Montessori Science Academy Director.



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MSA's founders are directly involved with the operations, acting as directors and lead teachers. There is a lead teacher for grades 1-8 with two teaching assistants. There is another lead teacher for pre-kindergarten with four teaching assistants. MSA plans to hire an upper elementary teacher (grade 3 through grade 5), lower elementary teacher (kindergarten-grade 2) and a teacher for grade 6 through grade 8. MSA plans to hire a licensed teacher to administer assessments.

## **Academic Programming**

MSA uses a student-centered, STEM focused Montessori curriculum. Each student has an individualized plan that works best for their learning style, created with student, parents/guardians, and teachers input. Students work at their pace through the curriculum that is mapped and tracked to the Indiana Academic Standards. Students will learn English/language arts, math, social studies, and science. Physical education, health, robotics, archery, and other electives are also offered.

MSA utilizes traditional Montessori materials for hands on learning and blend those with other resources like Khan Academy, Edmentum, Prodigy, and project-based models. The Montessori environment allows students with special needs the flexibility to customize their learning plan to best meet their learning needs.

The students are assessed using Exact Path three times per year, daily observations, lesson progress of the child (assessed through observation and presentations) and Control of Error within the materials (automatic feedback for the child). MSA assured understanding of the required state assessments.

## **Department Recommendation**

Montessori Science Academy has been in operation for the last nine school years, with their enrollment growing at a reasonable pace. In addition, Montessori Science Academy has plans for steady reasonable growth for the future. Based on the submitted petition and accompanying materials, Montessori Science Academy has a fair understanding of the requirements of being an Indiana performance based accredited school. Therefore, the Department recommends granting Montessori Science Academy provisional state performance-based accreditation as a nonpublic school in Indiana.