



Making Montessori
Meaningful
MA State Validation
Project Process

Our MSM Mission

The mission of the Montessori Schools of Massachusetts* is to promote knowledge and understanding of the Montessori methods of education in Massachusetts and to provide a framework for communication and cooperation among Montessori schools within Massachusetts and other New England states, and between these school and other private and public schools, government agencies and organizations concerned with education.

*Established 1987

Validation in MA

- Agreed upon baseline, threshold criteria to implement a Montessori program.
- A process of “self-regulation” providing accountability that benefits schools, families, and state agencies in MA.
- Providing an agreed upon “definition” that identifies schools implementing baseline, threshold criteria of Montessori programming.
- Based on the Essentials established by the Montessori Public Policy Initiative of AMI & AMS:
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6e8b98_2ee478a725ee4ff2979dd14273fd4a74.pdf
- Schools accredited by AMS and those recognized by AMI are automatically validated.

The MSM Validation Project Timeline

- **2018-2019 – Testing the Waters**
 - Survey MSM member schools to establish “buy-in” and communicate about the project.- December 2018
 - Establish Handbook and training materials for Primary/Children’s House programs
- **2019-2020 – Solidifying a Foundation of Support**
 - Engage a review process which includes MPPI, MSM and EEC.
 - Participate in MPPI Conference
 - Formally present to EEC – obtaining support by our state agency.
 - Establish a multi-year budget to support Advocacy and Validation.
 - Hire a part time Project Coordinator.
 - Identify & Train Coordinator and Verifiers.
 - Identify schools for pilot.
 - Develop a feedback system for the Validation Pilot.
- **2020-2021 - Implementation**
 - Pilot 3-5 volunteer schools.
 - Role out Validation for all Montessori Schools in MA.
- **2021-2022 - Expansion**
 - Implement validation for other age groups.

Validation Survey Results as of 12/12/18

1. A Montessori classroom implements a philosophical approach that is consistent with the methods and areas of instruction as recommended by Dr. Maria Montessori and national organizations (AMI, AMS, IMC, MEPI).

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

2. Each classroom in a Montessori school has a lead teacher with a credential from a MACTE accredited teacher education program, or an AMI teacher training program, at each level.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	33	91.6%
Disagree	3	8.3%
Total	36	100%

3. Each classroom has a developmentally appropriate mixed-aged group of students based on the planes of development and consistent with teacher education programs/practicums and national organizations.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	35	97.2%
Disagree	1	2.7%
Total	36	100%

Validation Survey Results continued

4. A Montessori classroom implements a Montessori curriculum, and areas of instruction.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

5. A Montessori classroom has the full complement of the research-based Montessori materials.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	32	88.8%
Disagree	4	11.1%
Total	36	100%

6. A Montessori classroom uses a system of observation/formative assessment and documentation used to implement the program for each student.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

Validation Survey Results continued

7. A Montessori classroom has a daily schedule that provides an uninterrupted work period of 2-3 hours (with 3 being the ideal). Enrichment programs and transition times are scheduled to accommodate this work period.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

8. A Montessori school has a Montessori credentialed staff member who contributes to administrative decisions on policies and procedures related to Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

9. A Montessori school meets all federal, state, and local regulatory and statutory requirements for the health and safety of the students.

	Number of responses	Response Ratio
Agree	36	100%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Total	36	100%

In Review

- MSM Validation Handbook: School Self Study
 - The Project descriptions and forms necessary for a school's self-assessment of its Primary Program.
- MSM Validation Project Handbook: Verifier Guidebook
 - All that is necessary for training verifiers.
 - Project coordinator and verifier team check lists.
 - Rubrics for self-study assessments.
- **Huge thanks** to MPPI, Maryland, Colorado, Tennessee, Pacific Northwest, Indiana, consultant Christine Lowry and each hardworking member of the Advocacy Committee!

Who

- Project Coordinator- to organize and schedule.
- Verification Teams- experienced volunteer Montessori educators to review self-assessments and perform the on-site visits.
- Approval Committee- 3 volunteer Montessori Educators/Administrators who review Verification team's recommendation and gives final approval for the Certificate of Validation.
- Peer coaches – volunteers to help schools establish a plan to meet criteria.

How

- A school completes the online application and pays a nominal fee.
- Receives and completes a self-study Questionnaire.
- An on-site visit by experienced, credentialed Montessori teachers.
- Validation acceptance by the MSM Approval Committee.
- School receives certificate of Validation or can request a peer coach.
- Term of Validation: 4 years with annual checklist.

Project Coordinator Checklist

- ***Validation Application Received***
- ***Self-study Packet Verification***
 - The Validation Self-Study received & complete.
 - Copy of certificate of administrator or consultant is included.
 - There is completed classroom questionnaire, copies of teacher certificates, and material checklist for each listed classroom.
- ***Verification***
 - Team leader & members identified
 - Verification team non-compete form returned (one for each team member).
 - School team assignment & non-compete sent.
 - School non-complete received.
 - School & Classroom self-study sent to Verification team.
 - Site visit report received, sent to Approval Committee who will contact school with result.
 - Process Verification Team reimbursements, if any.
- ***Validation of Approved School***
 - Archive self-study packet
 - Track annual reporting

Verification Team Checklist

- ***Verification Planning***
 - Verification team non-compete form received/sent (one for each team member).
- ***Verification Team Approved***
 - Team leader & members identified
 - The Validation Self-Study received for school
 - Verification visit date set
- ***Verify Validation Self-Study Packet***
 - Reviewed and verified by team
- ***Verification Visit***
 - For each classroom being verified, complete on-site classroom observation report
 - Observed items in rubric
 - Verified material checklist
- ***Team Meeting***
 - Verify completeness of self-study (includes all required copies of credentials).
 - Review and compare classroom observation reports.
 - Complete validation recommendation form.
 - Send entire packet, including this checklist, to Project Coordinator.
 - Submit any reimbursement requests to Project Coordinator.

Advocacy Committee

- Establish a relationship with the state's new Commissioner for the Department of Early Education and Care.
- Broaden our committee by inviting interested Montessori School leaders to join our advocacy team.
- Advocate for Montessori using the Validation tool for: exceptions in the regulations, QRIS levels, and Latticing.
- Consider other areas of advocacy within our state.
- Consider collaboration with other states to advocate and support Montessori in the United States.

Questions,
Comments,
Curiosities?

Thank you!

We've enjoyed our time with you today and thank you for your interest in the Montessori Schools of MA process of advocacy within our state.

Huge thanks to Josh Oboler (MSM - MD) Mary Moore (PNMA), Martha Teien (CMA), Jaime Yeager (MAT – TN), Brenda (UMSI – IN), Denise Monnier and Wendy Shanks of MPPI, Christine Lowry of Montessori Now, and all the hardworking members of the MSM Advocacy Committee: Martha Torrence, Deborah Jernegan, Robin Bigwood, and Laurel Zolfonoon.