



February 4, 2020

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of Private School - Allium Montessori Elementary School

Recommendation:

That the School Committee approve Allium Montessori Elementary School, located at 1555 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts as a private school, in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 1.

Description:

Under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 1 (compulsory attendance law), the School Committee has to approve private schools. The School Committee's approval under the statute means that children attending the private school may do so without violation of the compulsory attendance law. In giving an advisory opinion of the law as it relates to the committee's liability, the Massachusetts Department of Education has stated, "...that the School Committee's liability would be circumscribed by the fairly limited approval function that G.L. Chapter 76, Section 1, prescribes as long as the School Committee acts reasonably and in good faith."

The plan is to open the school in the month of February 2020, as a school for children for age 6 (first grade). It will add an upper grade each year becoming a first-sixth grade school in 2024-2025.

Enclosed is a written report from the school detailing various aspect of the school according to the suggested guidelines from the Department of Education.

Supporting Data: M.G. L. Chapter 76, Section 1

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KS' or similar initials.

Kenneth N. Salim
Superintendent of Schools



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Allium Montessori School Proposal

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Allium Montessori Elementary School

School Philosophy and Objectives

Allium Montessori is part of [Wildflower Schools](#), a decentralized network of independent schools that follow a shared approach to learning and organization. Wildflower is an open-source approach to Montessori learning developed in partnership with the Social Computing Group at the [MIT Media Lab](#). It aims to be an experiment in a new learning environment, blurring the boundaries between home-schooling and institutional schooling, between scientists and teachers, between schools and the neighborhoods around them.

In 2019-2020, Allium aims to open its doors at 1555 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA as a school for children in first grade. It will add an upper grade each year becoming a first - sixth grade school in 2024 -25.

Allium plans to empower students to tackle complex problems with creativity, courage, and humility through a rigorous elementary Montessori curriculum that values diverse identities.

1. An Authentic Elementary Montessori Experience

Allium embraces the authentic Montessori approach providing a combination of freedom and adult guidance that allows each child to meet their highest potential.

The core components of an authentic elementary Montessori classroom include a group of children with a three to six year age span, trained Montessori teachers and a carefully prepared environment that provides a wealth of learning opportunities. These opportunities mirror the interests of elementary age children, which can range from exploring how the solar system was born to baking bread to writing a play about ancient Egypt. Children want to explore all areas of knowledge, including those often not explored until high school such as chemistry, geometry and physics. They are ready to begin to do research and to develop creative ways of processing, exploring and expressing their knowledge.

The children consult a list of the Cambridge school system academic requirements for their grade level and understand that they are responsible for covering all of these topics during the course of the school year. The children find that after completing the required work, there is time to further explore their areas of personal interest. Teachers support the children in moving through the curriculum by giving sequenced lessons in all areas, keeping careful records of each child's individual progress and supporting children in keeping their own records of their work. Through this practice, children develop focus, self-discipline and effective time management skills. An uninterrupted three hour morning work cycle allows the children to explore topics in depth and to get into what neuroscientists call "the flow" - the deep focus and concentration that allows for optimum creativity. Children apply this creativity to all areas of the classroom, including math and science. The children work alone or in small groups. Opportunities for developing the skills of negotiation, collaboration, compassion and social awareness occur naturally throughout the day.



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*"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn."
-Albert Einstein*

2. An individualized system of education that supports the unique strengths and challenges of each child.

Montessori teachers are carefully trained observers with a deep knowledge of child development. As we observe each child, we develop a strong sense of who they are - their individual interests, learning style, sociability, level of activity and unique personality traits. We discern their strengths and challenges within these arenas and guide their learning to provide opportunities to stretch and experience success in the areas of challenge and explore the areas of strength in an unlimited way.

Children develop at different rates within each arena – social, physical, cognitive, emotional. We value and support each arena equally. We strive to help each child feel excited and appropriately challenged through the exploration of child-driven, meaningful learning experiences. We value the process of independently working through a challenge - whether it's problem-solving with a friend or unraveling a difficult math problem. Teachers carefully observe and give support when appropriate, but allow the child to experience the deep satisfaction of working through a challenge and arriving at a solution.

"The secret to good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones..." -Maria Montessori

3. The teacher/administrators view themselves as approachable, collaborative partners of the parents in the education of their children.

Allium parents and teachers are united in their belief that an authentic Montessori education provides children with the best possible preparation for life. Parents participate in the day to day life of the classroom by visiting and observing regularly, helping with complex projects, supporting the work of the teacher/administrators in myriad ways and assisting the children as they begin to go out into the community for learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Children, parents and teachers have a deep sense of community that comes from an atmosphere of trust, respect and honesty.

Teachers act as resources for families and families act as resources for teachers. We share the joys and challenges of being with children during this wonderful, calm period of middle



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childhood. Parents feel comfortable coming to teachers with parenting questions and for guidance. Teachers are honest and direct with parents, aiming to partner with them to support children experiencing difficulty in the classroom. Monthly parent education opportunities allow parents to deepen their understanding of the Montessori philosophy. Parents and teachers share the belief that learning is more than memorizing a list of facts. As beautifully stated by Montessori teacher Susan Stephenson, learning also includes -

"...how to be a compassionate friend, to express care through thoughtfulness and good manners, to identify a problem and work hard to solve it, to know how to become happy. More than facts, we can help our children develop a love of learning, an ability to make intelligent and responsible choices; to concentrate and focus, and to do one's best to complete a task to the satisfaction of oneself rather than to please someone else."

At Allium, parents and teachers work together to provide the children with an atmosphere of support that allows for this type of authentic learning.

Our Values and Norms

Allium and Other Wildflower School Value:

- Connectedness with all things and between all facets of oneself: We value and cultivate our connectedness with the world around us and the world within us as the pathway to peace.
- Growth along one's own evolutionary path, the blossoming of one's inner essence: We value and cultivate growth for children, teachers, families, all of our partners, and for the whole world.

Allium and Other Wildflower School Norms:

- Awareness: We cultivate our capacity to be authentically present, observe reality, and seek the truth, free from preconceptions and without judgment.
- Kindness: We act compassionately toward ourselves and others.
- Autonomy and Support: We foster independence in ourselves and others, and we help each other non-coercively.

Our Principles

At the core of Wildflower are the following 9 principles that define our approach. They inform our philosophy and guide our decisions at Allium Montessori School.



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Montessori: An Authentic Montessori Environment - providing a peaceful, mixed-age, child-directed environment

In identifying Montessori as our guide for Wildflower schools, we were drawn to the unique combination of a few factors. The Montessori Method emphasizes the potential of the child, if served well, to change the world. We value its intrinsic respect for that potential, its promotion of peaceful communities, and its specific pedagogical structures. As a model which prioritizes the development of the individual child, we value the balance of Montessori’s scientific approach to children’s development and its assertion that childhood is a unique period of growth to be protected at its own pace.

A Shopfront, Neighborhood-nested Design - committed to working in partnership with the surrounding community to create an environment that is healthier for children.

Inspired by the work of Christopher Alexander, Wildflower schools are shopfront schools that consist of a single classroom, with the faculty both teaching in the classroom and administrating the needs of the school. By preserving a small scale, teachers are able to make decisions in their day-to-day teaching that respond to the intellectual needs of the children, and are able to make decisions on a school-wide basis that respond to their own vision and the contextual needs of the families. The shopfront model also allows these communities to seamlessly integrate into neighborhoods. Children are visible in the community as they walk to and from school, to their local playground or garden, and to civic spaces that would otherwise be on-site in a larger institution.

Innovation: A Lab School - a research setting dedicated to advancing the Montessori Method in the context of the modern world.

Each of the Wildflower schools serves as a lab school to help us better understand and advance the Montessori Method, and to help us propose empirically-supported designs for new materials. We seek to integrate modern technologies in observation and documentation without changing the concrete, didactic nature of the classroom itself. In our work we take the time to reflect and learn from others as we constantly strive to improve our practice.

Home: A Seamless Learning Community - blurring the boundaries of home and school.

Wildflower schools look for ways in which children’s home, school, and community environments can offer more seamless experiences. Research over the last 40 years provides educators and families with a substantial body of evidence that family involvement and engagement are associated with children’s academic performance and social competence.¹ We see our work as a partnership with parents and families; we value their wisdom, invite their

¹ Why Parents Engagement is Important (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/why_parent_engagement_is_important_370120_7.pdf



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engagement, and enthusiastically share with them our Montessori methods. Similarly, families at WF schools see their roles as active supporters of the schools and teachers, rather than their customers.

Equity: A commitment - working to create diverse, inclusive learning environments that work for justice as the foundation of peace.

Allium and all Wildflower schools exist within the context of the segregation and inequity of our communities and society, and where there is no justice, there can be no lasting peace. As Montessorians, we believe children's unique capacity to adapt to their environment makes childhood the key to the long-term improvement of society and our greatest hope for a more peaceful world. We celebrate diversity and foster inclusivity. We consider the unique opportunities and challenges facing every child and commit to giving each student what they need to find their purpose and fulfill their potential. We recognize the significance of this undertaking, and we work to transform ourselves, our school communities and our broader society to bring about our vision for justice and peace.

Beauty: Inside and Out - cultivating a deep beauty in all things- in the design, culture and artistic expression within our school environments; in our interactions with one another; and in our relationship with ourselves.

Dr. Montessori wrote that schools should be aesthetically engulfing and culturally enriching for children. Allium will demonstrate a commitment to this through the choices we make about materials and classroom art. We'll cultivate an interior design that burst with beauty and communicate to children, teachers and families that they are valued. Simultaneously, our community— adults and children – explore and cultivate the beauty of our inner landscapes through mindfulness practices, and seek to carry that beauty into our relationships with each other.

Because we believe that children learn best in environments that model lifelong learning and creativity, we seek to engage artists-in-residence. We will offer an artist studio space within the school in a place that is accessible to the children, who can see them doing the work of their lives. In exchange, the artists offer their work back to the classroom weekly, teaching children about their craft and helping children to develop their own skills. Through the artist-in-residence program, we seek to increase the awareness of the inner lives of children available to artists of all kinds and to protect children's understanding that learning and creating can happen throughout their lives and beyond their formal school experiences.

A Focus on Nature - emphasizing the non-separation between nature and human nature through a unique living-classroom design and extensive time in nature



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It is both a contemporary imperative and an essential quality of our design that we think proactively about the impact of our work on the environment around us. By limiting the footprint of each school, we necessarily limit the availability of private, outdoor space. Instead, we design the interior of the school to allow children to learn to care for their living environment and to surround them with abundant plant life. We site schools near to public play spaces and work with city partners to design sustainable urban gardens for which the school and neighborhood community can care. We carefully consider the materials used in the classroom and choose sustainable, nontoxic and earth-friendly options whenever possible. Finally, we maintain nutritional standards that are earth-conscious and protect natural, healthful diets for children.

Teacher-Led: Small Learning Communities Led by Teachers - committed to remaining small, non-hierarchical and responsive to the needs of children

WF schools are organized around the idea that the same beauty and possibility we see in every child exists in every teacher as well; therefore, our core unit of change is the teacher-led classroom. We design the rest of our support structures to reinforce the role of the teacher and belief in the power of teacher leadership.

Each classroom is led by two Teacher Leaders (teachers) with equal voice and responsibility for the leadership and operations of their site. By preserving a small scale, teachers are able to make day-to-day decisions that respond to the needs of the children and school-wide decisions that express their own vision in the context of the needs of children, families, and themselves. The co-teacher-leader model provides continuity and creates a pathway to sustainability should staff transitions occur. Allium Teachers maintain autonomy in site-level decision-making while also becoming a part of the Wildflower Schools network, a vibrant peer learning community. Wildflower teachers are, in fact, social entrepreneurs. The social entrepreneur fundamentally sees opportunity in real and often systemic challenges because of “the unique set of personal characteristics he or she brings to the situation – inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude”² (Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2007).

An Open-Source Design and Decentralized Network - advancing an ecosystem of independent Wildflower schools that mutually support one another, and sharing our approaches openly for the benefit of all children

Finally, we recognize that issues of scale — including increased centralized decision-making, larger administrative bureaucracies and operational overhead — decrease the autonomy available to individual classrooms. At the same time, we value the practical benefits of a community of learners and professionals working together, and the economic efficiencies that can arise from shared resources. To balance those concerns, each school sees itself as a node in a network, maintaining autonomy in school-level decision-making while able to access the

² Martin, R.L. & Osberg, S. (2007). Social Entrepreneurship: The Case for Definition. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/social_entrepreneurship_the_case_for_definition



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resources of the network when those resources are useful and compelling to the school. Reciprocally, each school also sees itself not only as responsible for its own operations, but as responsible for helping other schools in the network, and for helping other interested family groups to start their own Wildflower schools. Social network theory suggests that one of the most powerful ways adults spread ideas and learn is through peer networks that are reciprocal, non-hierarchical, and voluntary (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011).



Curriculum and Educational Materials

The effectiveness of authentic implementation of the Montessori curriculum is supported by a growing body of research over a wide range of outcomes, including school readiness, social development, academic achievement (in language, mathematics, and science), student agency, and executive function skills.

Research-Supported Rationale for Selecting Montessori Curriculum

As an authentic Montessori school, Allium embraces the classic curriculum developed by Maria Montessori. Montessori advocates know first-hand that this curriculum supports and nurtures children's development in all areas; physical, intellectual, language, and social-emotional. Scientific research confirms that Montessori children have an advantage not only academically but also in social and emotional development.³

- Students attending Montessori schools learn more, score higher, and grow more on standardized measures of academic achievement than students attending conventional programs. A recent study conducted by the Riley Institute at Furman University analyzed public Montessori programs in South Carolina—the state with the second most public Montessori schools behind California—from 2011 to 2016 and found: “When compared to non-Montessori public school students across the state, *public Montessori students were more likely to have met or exceeded the state standards* in each of the four subjects [mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies].” [Emphasis added.]
- Students attending Montessori schools develop stronger executive functions than students attending conventional programs. Executive functions are critical for long-term success and positive outcomes. Montessori has been shown to be particularly effective for all students in fostering the development of executive functions like self-discipline, critical reasoning, and problem-solving (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Ervin et al., 2010; Lillard, 2005, 2012; Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). These executive functions help students self-regulate as their learning becomes more independent in college and in the workplace (Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989; Mischel et al., 2011; Tough, 2012).
- Students attending Montessori schools develop stronger pro-social skills than students attending conventional programs. Children in Montessori classrooms have shown better social problem-solving ability, a stronger sense of community and social justice, and more positive perceptions of classmates, and they used more positive social problem-solving strategies (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005; Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006; Lillard, 2012).

Moreover, *each of these findings is robust for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with special education needs, and who are English learners.*

³ *Does It Work? What Research Says About Montessori and Student Outcomes.*



Instructional Methods

Allium will deliver authentic Montessori education characterized by:

- *Focus on Sensorial and Tactile Development:* Beginning with the sensorial exercises first offered to children in Montessori preschools and at Allium in grade 1 and extending through the entire developmental continuum, Montessori education is grounded in exploration of concepts through hands-on learning.
- *Scaffolded Learning:* Montessori materials are engineered to be self-correcting and to support increasing complexity of concepts. This helps students develop problem-solving skills, perseverance, and independence. Also, as a child begins to master concrete tasks, s/he can naturally build on learning with more abstract tools and ideas. The ability to manipulate at the foundational level establishes brain functional understanding for theoretical mathematical processing later on.
- *Enriched, Orderly Learning Environment that Promotes Independence:* Independence is a logical outcome of a highly enriched, orderly environment supported by teachers who invite students into deep engagement with meaningful work. In a Montessori classroom, students exercise independence and responsibility as they choose their work and progress in their learning.
- *Collaborative Learning Environment:* Most meaningful work in the real world requires periods of both individual concentration and productive collaboration. Montessori encourages collaboration through mixed-age groupings, environments that accommodate free movement, and assessment that emphasizes mastery over competition.
- *Community Classrooms:* From the moment students enter their classroom, they understand that the classroom belongs to them. The combination of students wanting to engage with the materials and their understanding of the importance of the materials further enhance the student experience.
- *Montessori Classroom Materials:* Each Montessori learning material purposefully encourages self-directed learning, independent problem-solving, and analytical thinking. The concrete materials provide passages to abstraction and introduce concepts that become increasingly complex, allowing students to pursue both memorization of facts and deep understanding. For example, concrete fraction circles may introduce students to vocabulary, common denominators, and simple addition of fractions. As students progress through the curriculum, teachers exchange some materials with others, ensuring that the level of challenge continues to meet individual needs.

Research has shown that fidelity of implementation of the Montessori philosophy and method is critical to achieving improved outcomes for students. In one study, students enrolled in high-fidelity, classic Montessori programs, lower-fidelity Montessori programs that supplemented the program with conventional school activities, and conventional programs were observed. Children were tested at the start and end of the school year on a range of social and academic skills. Although they performed no better in the fall, children in classic Montessori programs—as compared with children in supplemented Montessori programs and conventional



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programs—showed significantly greater school-year gains on outcome measures of executive function, reading, math, vocabulary, and social problem-solving, suggesting that high-fidelity Montessori implementation is associated with better outcomes than lower-fidelity Montessori programs or conventional programs.⁴

Scope and Sequence

Teachers will use the scope and sequence—supported by their Montessori training and experience with the Montessori differentiation model—to know what to teach and when to teach each student. The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) has aligned the Montessori curriculum to the Common Core standards used by Cambridge Public Schools. Our curriculum is based on this alignment. We have attached these alignment documents for our language arts and mathematics curriculums. We have also attached documents highlighting how the MA Anchor Standards align with the scope and sequence of the Montessori elementary curriculum.

Through Transparent Classroom (TC) teachers will be able to connect Montessori learning materials and lessons to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF), so teachers can check for alignment and mastery of standards as they plan future opportunities for each child. Families can also access this information online through TC.

Carefully designed and sequenced Montessori materials are an integral component of the Montessori classroom. Allium will have the full complement of materials for 6-9 year old children and will add the appropriate materials as we add grades. The materials are organized by curriculum area and are available to the children on child-height shelves. Child sized chairs and tables are available to the children as workspaces. The tables allow for individual and small group work.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

One of Allium's key design elements is Montessori in an Enriched Environment, which emphasizes culturally sustaining pedagogy. Allium will embed social and racial justice teachings into the curriculum and offer culturally responsive materials.

Culturally relevant pedagogy has ignited a body of research and is assuming an increasingly important role in teacher education, inspiring a generation of teachers to enter the classroom with a renewed commitment to affirming students' cultural, racial, and ethnic identities. Ladson-Billings and her colleagues argue for certain practices to fully enable a culturally responsive environment. Those practices include:

- Ensuring a pluralistic, representative curriculum

⁴ Lillard, A. (2012, June). Preschool children's development in classic Montessori, supplemented Montessori, and conventional programs. *Journal of School Psychology, 50*, 379-401.



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- Creating opportunities for students to see themselves in the curriculum
- Helping students to develop and maintain a positive academic self-image
- Connecting learning opportunities to the real world
- Providing learning opportunities that enrich students' present and future lives
- Providing learning opportunities that allow students to explore their personal and peers' socio-cultural and racial identities
- Creating a welcoming, positive, and accepting school and classroom culture.
- Creating a culture of success
- Supporting diverse learners' communication and learning styles
- Inviting counselors and mentors into the school and classroom
- Nurturing strong relations between home and school
- Ensuring equitable access to learning and social resources and supports

Allium believes that students' ability to engage in culturally responsive content coupled with students' belief in themselves as capable learners not only builds academic skills and concepts but also develops lifelong learners who can flourish in our diverse economy and global community. Allium teachers will review all materials to ensure that they are culturally sustaining and anti-bias/anti-racist. They will develop a process to review existing materials and create or purchase materials in the pre-opening period. Teachers can access resources to review materials as well as materials from Montessori for Social Justice (whose mission is to "support the creation of sustainable learning environments that dismantle systems of oppression, amplify voices of the Global Majority, and cultivate partnerships to liberate the human potential"), the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, and the broader Wildflower school network.

Ongoing Development, Improvement, and Refinement of the Curriculum

Allium teachers will apply their formal training in scientific pedagogy to observe and keep records of student activity and will connect their observations of student learning to standards mastery throughout the year. Allium's student data system, Transparent Classroom, will be the repository for this information. Further, Teachers will use pacing guides that they and teachers from other Wildflower schools have developed and their own formative assessments to confirm teacher observations about children's progress. Teachers will take responsibility for implementing the curriculum with fidelity (supported by an expert Montessori coach provided by WFF) and making necessary adjustments to ensure they are enabling all students to progress toward mastery. Because content area engagement and pacing in a Montessori classroom are *student- and data-driven*, a teacher's role is to introduce, observe, and assess students' needs and progress and to use that information to adapt lessons, provide additional instruction as needed, and guide the individual student toward the materials and experiences that will benefit him/her the most and lead to mastery.



Student Performance: Assessment and Student Records

An Overview

Primary assessment tools in Montessori schools include observation and documentation. When a student enters Allium, the teachers spend time working with the child to determine where the child is working within each of the curriculum areas. The child is then introduced to the curriculum at the appropriate place within the sequence of lessons for each curriculum area. After the initial assessment, teachers give new lessons as they observe mastery of the previous lesson. Teachers maintain precise records of the lessons presented and each child's individual mastery of the concepts presented. In alignment with our goals of empowering conscientious learners, beginning in first grade, children learn to keep work journals where they record what they have worked on and keep track of their daily lessons and follow-up work. Students meet with a teacher on a weekly basis to go over their journals, assess their time management skills and plan for the following week.

Measuring and Reporting Performance and Progress

Our aim is to select and implement assessments that facilitate all stakeholders to assess student academic performance on the same scales used by public institutions. We aim to take a deep look into students' development of critical lifelong learning skills, such as literacy and executive functioning (e.g., concentration, strategic thinking). The assessment systems will inform instructional strategies and professional development needs.

For all academic assessments, Allium will conduct baseline assessments at the beginning of the school year and goals with students and family input will be developed to emphasize growth, rigor, and excellence. To keep track of students' growth and progress over time while guiding students through the scope of the Montessori curriculum, teachers will combine the daily use of observation with the collection of data from multiple sources, including those described in the chart below:

Selected Assessments				
	Assessment Focus	Aligned to CCSS?	Grades	Frequency
ELA	Montessori: Daily Progress Reporting and language standards	Y	1-6	Recorded daily in Transparent Classroom
	Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark literacy assessment or DIBELS	N/A	1-5 (as needed in 6)	3-4 times/year
	NWEA MAP	Y	1-6	2 times/year



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Math	Montessori: Daily Progress Reporting	Y	1-6	Recorded daily in Transparent Classroom
	NWEA MAP	Y	2-6	2 times/year
Science	Montessori Science	Y	1-6	Recorded daily in Transparent Classroom
	NWEA MAP	Y	2-6	2 times/year
Executive Function and Social and Emotional Development	Montessori Observations	N/A	1-6	Recorded daily in Transparent Classroom
	Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)	N/A	1-6	4 times/year

Montessori: Daily Progress Reporting

Through observations and assessment, teachers track each child’s learning growth and gaps and determine the best instructional practices to address individual student needs (including remediation and acceleration). The TL makes notations about lessons regarding presentations, practice, and mastery. The TL closely monitors which materials the student is using and whether s/he is working with them successfully or making errors. Teachers are careful to note what they are seeing rather than opinions about what they are seeing. Based on these observations, the TL knows when to present new material and when to modify previously presented material for additional understanding.⁵ Formative assessments help teachers and students know where students are in their learning, where they are going, and how to get there.

At Allium, Teacher Leaders will track each student’s engagement with learning materials on a daily basis and make ongoing adjustments to their instructional strategy to ensure that every child is being consistently challenged and receiving the support and guidance s/he needs to master difficult learning materials independently. This observation process is supplemented through the use of Transparent Classroom.

- *Transparent Classroom*: Allium teachers will use Transparent Classroom (TC), a platform specifically designed by and for Montessori teachers to record and assess student progress on Montessori work. Using tablets, a smart phone, or a laptop, teachers will be able to record assessment observations of student work in real time and will have those observations incorporated immediately into the online database of individual and classroom assessment information. TC as implemented at Allium will include a crosswalk from Montessori standards to relevant CCSS and state-specific standards.

Early Elementary and Literacy Assessments

Assessments including *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems* and MEFS will be administered to assess development of early elementary skills (ages 6-8), development of ELA,

⁵ North American Montessori Center (2014, Jan. 7). *Formative and Summative Assessment in the Montessori Classroom*. Retrieved from <http://montessoritraining.blogspot.com/2014/01/formative-summative-assessment-montessori.html>



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math, and/or science skills (grades 3-6), and the development of executive functioning (EF) skills. Assessing the development of EF skills guides teachers in measuring the skills that make it possible for children to learn effectively and efficiently. A growing body of research indicates: “With poor EF, children have a hard time listening to instructions, staying on task, and thinking about a problem in a different angle. Indeed, research has shown that EF predicts academic achievement, college graduation, and physical and financial wellbeing in adulthood. In many cases, it was a better predictor than intelligence (IQ). EF also appears to be the key to resilience: When children experiencing extreme poverty nevertheless have good EF skills as preschoolers, they go on to read at grade level and perform well in school.”⁶ Allium teachers will administer these assessments throughout the year, initially to generate baseline data and then again to ensure growth and determine specific individual support for each student. As needed, administration will be more frequent to measure progress made after the implementation of intervention or acceleration efforts.

Social-Emotional Learning

Allium will administer the MEFS, a standardized assessment of EF skills designed for children ages 2+, to assess this essential foundation for academic readiness and achievement as well as lifelong positive outcomes. We expect our children to be creative problem-solvers and to foster peace, but we will not attempt to develop metrics that artificially define or constrain how these qualities can be expressed. In our view, it would be far preferable to do so exclusively through the rigorous, well-aligned assessment integral to Montessori education—knowing that those results are difficult to transfer or compare—than to use flawed assessments for the sake of having a veneer of comparability.

Student Homework⁷

Dr. Montessori believed that if we do not dictate the work of the child in class, then it does not make sense to dictate the work s/he chooses at home. Thus, in alignment with firsthand experience of our founding team’s Montessori experts, formal homework assignments will typically be limited. Still, Allium teachers will recognize that there are times when a student’s lack of time management during the school day means that project work does not get completed or times when a project requires work at home (interviewing a family member, for example); these situations will elicit homework. There are also times when student motivation may prompt additional homework. teachers will rely on their relationships to make informed decisions, considering that the student has spent the day in the classroom learning and may need time to pursue personal interests, interact with family, and relax. Families will also learn

⁶ Carlson, S.M. & Zelazo, P.D. (n.d.). Minnesota Executive Function Scale + Outcome Measure for Montessori Education. *Reflection Sciences*. Retrieved from <https://reflectionsociences.com/minnesota-executive-function-scale-outcome-measure-montessori-education>

⁷ Hektor, L. (2010, Dec. 9). Why Montessori school homework is minimal. *Montessori School of Lake Forest*. Retrieved from <http://www.mslf.org/winter-egg-csa>



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that we encourage activities that constructively direct a child's pursuits during home hours while nurturing their interests and building family bonds. Families will learn that many activities may constitute homework, including household tasks, and are likely to develop lifelong skills.

Reporting Performance and Progress

With respect to ongoing feedback to families about individual student progress, teachers will be responsible for developing systems and structures that work for their communities. Progress reports will be distributed three times per year and family/teacher conferences will be held three times a year to discuss the reports and parent's concerns and goals for their children. Allium's expectation will be that families feel well-informed about and engaged in their children's progress. We believe high-quality communication is essential. In addition to progress reports, teachers will make decisions regarding what level of detailed information regarding student performance and growth is available to family members in real time through a secure, online portal powered by TC.



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School Staff and Administration

The Wildflower Network Teacher-Leader Model

The Wildflower Network model allows the Allium adult leaders to be both teachers and administrators. As teacher-leaders, teachers experience great autonomy and empowerment which allows Allium to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children, families and staff.

As part of the network, the teacher-leaders (TLs) have the support of a group of gifted and experienced Montessori teachers, designers, artists and researchers. The teacher/administrators within the network regularly observe in each other's schools to give feedback and make suggestions.

While each school has the autonomy to make its own administrative decisions, a bi-weekly meeting of the heads and assistant heads of the network schools provides the opportunity for advice on educational and administrative challenges and the joint development of best practices.

Allium Montessori School

Allium Montessori School has two teacher-leaders.

Head of School, Teacher- Judith Dwyre
Co-Founder, Teacher – Jenny Tak

We are supported by the wider WF network and collaborate closely with Wild Rose and the other Wildflower schools in Cambridge. In alignment with our mission, our school has officially achieved 501c3 status and we have a board that values family input. Our school's board consists of two parents of children attending Allium, ourselves and a teacher-leader of Dandelion Montessori, Lindy McGrail.

Teacher-Leader Resumes



Allium Montessori

Elementary School

JENNY E. TAK

5 Cornell Road, Framingham, MA 01701
jennyeykim@gmail.com (949) 285-8541

EDUCATION & COURSEWORK

Lesley College, Cambridge, MA <i>Coursework in "Quantitative Methods 1: Statistics for Research"</i>	Sep. 2016 – Dec. 2016
Columbia University, Teacher's College, New York, NY <i>M.A. in English Education, GPA: 3.98/4.00</i>	Sep. 2010 – May 2011
Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA <i>Teacher Education Program</i> <i>B.A. in English, GPA: 3.74/4.00, Cum Laude</i>	Sep. 2008 – Jun. 2009 Sep. 2002 – Jun. 2006

TEACHING & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Lexington High School, Lexington, MA <i>English Teacher, Grades 10, 11, 12</i>	Aug. 2011- Jan. 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taught analytical reading and writing that begin with students' own questions, extended in discourse communities, and refined by feedback, self-assessment, and revision. ▪ Delivered a presentation on teaching revision to colleagues from a variety of disciplines. ▪ Reshaped existing Sophomore curriculum to one that is multi-genre. ▪ Utilized Twitter as a form of bibliography to gather, synthesize, and share information and ideas. ▪ Evaluated student writing samples for the Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Committee. ▪ Supervised a student teacher by collaborating on curriculum, assessment, classroom management, and communication as well as through offering classroom observation and analysis. ▪ Developed an initial proposal for the new high school writing center. ▪ Collaborated with special educators to provide scaffolding and other accommodations for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. ▪ Managed difficult conversations with parents and/or students, focused on mutual respect and student growth. 	
Pioneer Charter School of Science, Everett, MA <i>Permanent Replacement Teacher</i>	Aug. 2009 – Jun. 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designed a media literacy unit that encouraged students to be critical consumers of advertisements. ▪ Trained special-needs students in their language, communication, and interview skills. 	
Writing Department, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA <i>Teaching Assistant / Tutor</i>	Feb. 2006 – May 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created a college writing course for an English learner and guided her in writing papers in different disciplines. ▪ Strengthened student's linguistic facility through sentence construction and manipulation exercises. 	

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fulbright Grant, Seoul, South Korea <i>Fulbright Junior Researcher</i>	Jun. 2006 – May 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collected and analyzed literary representations of urban experience in Seoul and New York. 	

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

The House of Jesus: Where Love and Equipping Fuel His Message by Charles Halley <i>Freelance Content Editor</i>	Jan. 2017 – present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide feedback to improve clarity and cohesion of a book about building a culture of honor. 	
FDO Partners, LLC, Cambridge, MA <i>Client Relations/Business Development Associate</i>	Sep. 2007 – Aug. 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managed communications with clients and investment managers. 	

LANGUAGE & TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

- Korean (native fluent), Mandarin Chinese (conversational)
- Google Education Software, SPSS



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Judith A. Dwyre

700 Paddock Lane Apt#7102
Boxborough, MA 01719

Judith.Dwyre@gmail.com
415.866.0570

EDUCATION

Master of Education, Elementary Montessori, *Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola University*, Columbia, MD; September 2016

- Acquired comprehensive knowledge of Montessori theory and instructional methods for children ages 6-12
- GPA: 4.00

Master of Arts in Teaching, Elementary, *Johns Hopkins University*, Baltimore, MD; May 2012

- Maryland certification Early Childhood Education (Nursery-3) and Elementary Education (1-6)
- Coursework includes *Diagnosis/Assessment for Reading Instruction; Human Development, Learning and Diversity; Education Alternatives*
- GPA: 4.00

Bachelor of Arts, *Johns Hopkins University*, Baltimore, MD; May 2011

- Major: Neuroscience; Minor: Psychology
- Neuroscience Honors, 2011
- Bachelor of Arts with General Honors, 2011
- GPA: 3.56
- Dean's List (Spring 2008, Fall 2010, Spring 2011)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lower Elementary Teacher, *Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School*, Baltimore, MD; August 2016- December 2018

- Plan and differentiate lessons to meet the needs of 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders in a mixed-age classroom
- Collaborate with fellow teachers and families to create and implement curricular goals
- Inspire confident girls as a Girls on the Run coach
- Founding Co-Coach of the BMPCS Baltimore Urban Debate League Team consisting of 4th-8th grade students
- Founded the Green Team to initiate school-wide environmental initiatives by utilizing the strengths of parent volunteers and the passion of student members

Kindergarten Teacher, *Harford Heights Elementary*, Baltimore, MD; August 2014- June 2015

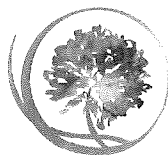
- Planned and differentiated lessons to meet the needs of kindergarten scholars
- Met weekly with fellow kindergarten teachers and biweekly with instructional leadership team to brainstorm and implement school improvements as chosen Team Lead
- Partnered with families and businesses, such as Deloitte Consulting LLP, to extend scholars' learning.

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher, *Harford Heights Elementary*, Baltimore, MD; August 2012- June 2014

- Planned and differentiated lessons to meet the needs of pre-kindergarten scholars
- Attended specific professional development seminars to continuously learn and disseminate instructional information to colleagues as chosen Early Learning Liaison

Student Intern for 5th Grade, *Swansfield Elementary*, Columbia, MD; January 2012- May 2012

- Planned and differentiated lessons to meet the needs of 5th graders
- Co-planned and co-taught with mentor teacher for all subjects and special education teachers for math and reading
- Collaborated with music teacher to mentor a group of eight students on how to meet the technical needs of the spring musical
- Co-planned and co-taught with mentor teacher for all subjects and special education teachers for math and reading



Allium Montessori Elementary School

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Judith A. Dwyre

(Resume page 2)

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Education Liaison, Hopkins Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research, Baltimore, MD; 2010-2011

- Worked with principle investigators, postdocs and Korean students from DGIST to create and run research technique seminars
- Mentored and trained a DGIST graduate student in specific research protocols

Research Assistant, Hopkins Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research, Baltimore, MD; 2009-2011

- Helped manage three types of mice colonies
- Carried out experimental protocols for further understanding of Rett Syndrome
- Collected and helped organize data while providing input on possible confounding factors
- Experience with genotyping, immunohistochemistry, PCR, RT-PCR, whole mount dissections of OE and OB, cryostat, western blots, and injections

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

On-Campus Public Relations Committee Chair and Rider, 4K for Cancer, Baltimore, MD; 2007-2008

- Planned, organized and carried out fundraising and awareness events
- Handled the designing and ordering of apparel to be worn and sold by the 25 riders on the organization's annual cross-country bicycle ride
- Cycled for 9 weeks from Baltimore to San Francisco informing communities of the importance of early detection and preventative measures, raising money to fight cancer, and inspiring hope
- \$110,000 was raised by the Hopkins 4K for Cancer Summer 2008 Team to support American Cancer Society's Baltimore Hope Lodge and Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center

Arts for Ataxia Picnic Food Committee Chair, JHU Ataxia Ambassadors, Baltimore, MD; 2009-2011

- Managed \$1,400 of a \$5,000 budget provided by a *Pepsi Refresh* grant to obtain lunch, drinks, and picnic supplies for more than 600 attendees
- Negotiated with food vendors to obtain discounts in exchange for promotional opportunities
- Promoted awareness of Ataxia, a disorder of the cerebellum
- Worked with patients at a clinic to research the benefits of dance therapy

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Association Montessori Internationale Elementary Alumni Association Member; 2016- Present
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation: Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences & Industry Infrastructure, and Impact-Baltimore City and The Chesapeake Bay; Summer 2018
- Progressive Education Summit-Creating Cultures of Thinking; Spring 2018
- The Incredible Years Program for Teachers; 2014-2015
- Instructional Framework and Rubric: Applying TEACH Key Actions to Your Practice; Spring 2014
- Guided Reading in an Effective Literacy Program: PreK-3; Spring 2014
- Early Learning Liaison Professional Development; 2013-2014
- The Works Professional Learning Communities: Math Works; 2013-2014
- An Estuary's Summer Institute: Tech Integrated and Authentic Learning Experiences; July 2013
- The Works Professional Learning Communities: Literacy Works; 2012-2013

SKILLS

- Administration and analysis of Running Records, Words Their Way, DRA, QRI5, EasyCBM, DIBELS and NWEA



Student Information

Population to be Served

For the 2019-2020 school year, Allium is open to first graders. Our four currently committed students come from Cambridge and Somerville. All of our students were previously at independent schools. We plan to have 5-6 students by the start of school in September 2019. We plan to add 5-6 students per year as we add grade levels growing to a final size of 35 children in first through sixth grade by 2024. Early childhood programs within the Wildflower Network will serve children from 3 - 6 and those children will feed into Allium for elementary school.

Allium Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Allium Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Meeting Diverse Needs

Allium seeks to create and maintain highly responsive general education classrooms that meets the needs of all students, including students requiring special education services and ELs. Allium will meet the diverse needs of its students by implementing the Montessori program with fidelity and through other elements of the Wildflower model. Allium teachers and other instructional staff will be selected based on their commitment to creating inclusive and student-centered learning environments, where teaching and support is differentiated (and because teachers will be Montessori-trained, they will have skill and experience in differentiation). Teachers will either have prior training and experience in supporting students experiencing trauma or the effects of past trauma or will participate in training prior to opening. Allium teachers will hold themselves accountable for their continued learning and growth in supporting students in trauma. Allium is committed to culturally sustaining and enriching pedagogy, and teachers will either have had training and experience in this or will seek out appropriate training such as Embracing Equity. Often one of the reasons teachers are interested in working at Wildflower is because of the express commitment to equity and inclusion.

There is strong evidence that well-implemented Montessori curriculum and instruction support the learning and growth of specific sub-groups including students with disabilities and English learners:

- Research demonstrates that the Montessori method is effective at raising academic achievement and the impacts of a Montessori education can be substantial and long lasting. Montessori's child-responsive method works for children of all backgrounds, not just those in wealthy households. In a study of public Montessori schools in South Carolina, children



Allium Montessori Elementary School

from low-income backgrounds performed better in both English and math and improved more than demographically similar non-Montessori students, and Montessori schools had higher attendance and lower suspension rates.⁸ Gains even appear to persist for many years after a student leaves Montessori; a 2007 study on long-term impacts in Milwaukee found that students who attended Montessori schools from ages three to 11 outperformed their non-Montessori peers in math and science on ACT tests in high school.⁹ A longitudinal three-year study of low-income children admitted by lottery to a public Montessori school in Hartford, CT shows that Montessori-educated children scored higher on standardized tests than children in traditional schools and that low-income Montessori students' growth trajectory was equal to their high-income counterparts, despite starting lower.¹⁰

A longitudinal 3-year study of low-income children admitted by lottery to public Montessori school in Hartford, CT shows Montessori-educated children scored higher on standardized tests than children in traditional schools and that low-income Montessori students' growth trajectory was equal to their high-income counterparts despite starting lower.¹¹ Another recent study found that Black third graders in a public Montessori magnet school outperformed their traditional school counterparts in both reading and math. When compared to other magnet students in the same district, these Black Montessori students still performed better in reading and equally in math (Brown, 2016b). Dohrmann, Nishida, Gartner, Lipsky, and Grimm (2007) found that a racially diverse group of pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students who attended a high-fidelity public Montessori program had a *pronounced advantage in high school math and science, even 7 years after leaving the Montessori program*. These students had higher scores on standardized tests of math and science and higher subject-specific grade point averages in high school than their non-Montessori peers.

- Research demonstrates that the Montessori method can increase the executive functioning, creativity, and pro-social behavior of high-needs students attending Montessori schools. Montessori has been shown to be particularly effective for diverse groups of students in fostering the development of executive functions such as self-discipline, critical reasoning, and problem-solving (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Ervin et al., 2010; Lillard, 2005, 2012; Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). In a recent South Carolina study,¹² Montessori-educated children from low-income families performed better on assessments of creativity and executive function; and in the Hartford study, students from low-income families in the Montessori programs scored higher on measures of social cognition, mastery orientation, and school enjoyment than non-Montessori peers.¹³ Executive functions also

⁸ The Riley Institute at Furman (2018). *An Evaluation of Montessori Education in South Carolina's Public Schools*. Retrieved from <https://riley.furman.edu/sites/default/files/docs/MontessoriExecutiveSummaryFINAL1.23.18.pdf>

⁹ Dohrmann, K.R., Nishida, T.K., Gartner, A., Lipsky, D.K., & Grimm, K.J. (2007). High School Outcomes for Students in a Public Montessori Program. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 22(2).

¹⁰ Ayer, D. (2017, Nov. 2). *New Study: Public Montessori Raises Achievement, Closes Gaps*. National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Retrieved from <https://www.montessoripublic.org/2017/11/new-study-public-montessori-raises-achievement-closes-gaps/>

¹¹ *New Study: Public Montessori Raises Achievement, Closes Gaps*.

¹² *An Evaluation of Montessori Education in South Carolina's Public Schools*.

¹³ *New Study: Public Montessori Raises Achievement, Closes Gaps*.



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help empower students to be agents of change in their communities. In particular, Lillard and Else-Quest (2006) found a strong sense of school community and a willingness to be proactive in resolving peer conflict among public Montessori middle school students in Milwaukee.

Financial Support

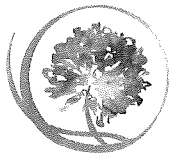
High-quality educational models all too often are limited to those families that can afford high tuition. This dynamic, coupled with the true costs of a high-quality education, lead to an increasing discrepancy in educational outcomes between families with and without resources. Wildflower seeks to address this discrepancy by limiting the financial demands of the schools by maintaining small programs, and identifying creative economic models that meet those demands, including early experiments with gift and sharing economies. In decision-making, we assess whether new structures will increase or restrict access to the programs for children across socioeconomic and other demographics. At Allium, we aim to keep our tuition as low as possible while setting aside a substantial part of the tuition base towards financial aid. Every year we plan to give scholarships to $\frac{2}{3}$ of our students. Our scholarship are a combination of full-ride and partial-scholarships to decrease the barrier of entry for middle and low-income families.

Student Services

Inherent in our values and our commitment to equity and authentic Montessori, Allium expects to welcome and support all students Children who are experiencing academic, behavioral, developmental or emotional challenges will be carefully observed and the teachers will meet with the parents to confer on a plan of support. If it is determined that the challenges can not be resolved within the classroom, the children will be referred to local specialists for evaluation and treatment. The teachers value the input of specialists and will incorporate their suggestions and strategies as closely as possible.

There will be a continuum of services through tiered support. MTSS¹⁴ will be the blueprint for Allium's delivery of special education services. Our plan focuses on early identification (through observation and assessments), tiered support of students with learning and behavior needs, and ongoing engagement with families. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rates of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including teachers and specialists. Educational decisions (the intensity and duration of interventions) are based on the individual student's response to instruction. MTSS is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

¹⁴ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (n.d.). *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)*. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/blueprint.html>



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<p>Tier 1: High-Quality Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions (80-90% of students¹⁵)</p>	<p>All students receive high-quality instruction provided by experienced teachers, ensuring that learning difficulties are not due to inadequate or inauthentic implementation of the Montessori curriculum. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and identify struggling learners who need additional support. Supports are in-class accommodations or mild modifications that are minimally intrusive. Montessori teachers are trained to provide many Tier 1 academic and behavioral supports. Students identifies as at risk receive supplemental instruction during the day (lengths vary) for no more than eight weeks through which time student progress is monitored using a validated screening system. Students showing significant progress are generally monitored in the general education program. Students not showing significant progress are moved to Tier 2.</p>
<p>Tier 2: Targeted Interventions (5-10% of students)</p>	<p>Students not making adequate progress with the supplemental instruction provided in Tier 1 are provided with increasingly intensive instruction. Tier 2 supports are even more individualized, targeting specific student needs, and can be provided in the context of the classroom (e.g., modified work plan, specific seating needs, additional time on tests or assignments). The instructional strategies matched to student needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing the instruction or intervention. Allium teachers will seek guidance and support from other WF heads of school and will consult specialists as necessary. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.</p>
<p>Tier 3: Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation (1-5% of students)</p>	<p>Without additional training and certification, even experienced Montessori teachers are not usually qualified to provide Tier 3 services. At this level, one or more specialists are consulted to provide students with individualized, intensive interventions targeting the students' skill deficits. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted Tier 3 interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 is included and used to make the eligibility decision.</p>

Note: At any point in this tiered process, IDEA allows parents to request a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. The process cannot be used to deny or delay a formal evaluation for special education.

¹⁵ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (n.d.). Massachusetts Tiered System of Support: MTSS – Academic – AM. *Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Summit*. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/presentations-pubs/academic-tiered-instruction.pdf>



Allium Montessori Elementary School

Student Learning Time

Daily Schedule

Allium will have 6 instructional hours (Monday to Friday) for a total of 1,050 instructional hours per school year, exceeding the required 900 hours. School will open at 8:30 am for breakfast; dismissal will begin at 3:30 pm.

The Montessori school day is not broken into traditional class periods that define what a student can learn and when. At Allium, children learn math, ELA, social studies, and science along with art, movement/PE, and music in their morning and afternoon work blocks. Each block is a protected time where the children can complete multiple projects, as they develop the capacity to undertake work that uses up the entire three-hour block or even extends beyond it. Teachers try not to interrupt these work periods so that students can build agency and learn self-motivation and regulation. Teachers do not define when students must focus on their language skills or their math skills; rather, a teacher-curated and prepared Montessori classroom provides a cross-disciplinary experience for students (though teachers may provide stronger guidance when children do not make good choices).

During these daily work cycles, one TL may work with a group of students on a small-group lesson and another TL may follow the progress of other students who are working independently. Lessons are delivered to small groups based on readiness, advancing them when they are ready (not pushing too fast or holding back as large-group or pre-scheduled instruction can do). Montessori teachers observe students in the classroom environment, determine if student work and activity is purposeful, and decide if they need to step in or if they should allow the children to proceed on their own, thereby gaining confidence and independence. Montessori-trained teachers actively manage the classroom without infringing on students' autonomy. As children demonstrate the ability to appropriately manage their autonomy, more is allowed. If a child does not yet have self-management skills, teachers are more actively engaged in directing their choices. Studies comparing children from Montessori schools and traditional schools found that Montessori children had higher intrinsic motivation for learning and achievement in state tests (Duax, 1989; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005).

Sample Elementary Student Schedule for a Typical Week
<p>Student Schedule Monday to Friday: 8:30-8:45 am: Breakfast and get prepared for work 8:45-11:45 am: Morning work cycle <i>Note: The work cycle typically involves mini-lessons. Some children work on self-selected materials while others meet with a Teacher Leader who provides a 1:1 or small-group lesson on a new material or concept.</i> 11:45 am-12:00pm: Mini- Class Meeting 12:00-1:00 pm: Recess/Lunch 1:00-3:00 pm: Afternoon work cycle 3:00-3:15: Read aloud/ mini-lessons (e.g., movement, meditation) 3:15-3:30 pm: Dismissal; Teacher Leader, family, and student conversations 7-hour student day</p>



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Allium will have a long, combined recess/lunch break. It is important for the students to spend significant time outside engaging with nature, exploring their physical limits, and socializing during lunch. At least one teacher-leader will eat with students. Additionally, longer weekly Friday meetings will be held during which students take turns as the leader. They use the time to make decisions about their class and discuss things that they want to change or improve and any special events they want to plan. This helps children feel ownership of their environment and helps build and maintain a strong community in the classroom and the students' ability to express themselves and work collaboratively through tough conversations and challenges.

An aftercare program will be available daily from 3:30 – 6:00pm at an additional cost and summer camps are offered through the Wildflower Network.

School Calendar

Allium's 10-month school calendar is aligned with Cambridge Public Schools Calendar and the WF primary and Elementary schools in the area. Our first day of school will be September 3, 2019 and our last day of school will be no earlier than June 16, 2020 (weather dependent). Family/ Teacher conferences and professional development for families and staff is built into the annual calendar.

2019-2020 Allium Montessori School Calendar

September

- 9/3 (Tuesday) First Day of School
- 9/11 (Wednesday) Allium Family Back-to-School Night

October

- 10/11 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
- 10/14 (Monday) Indigenous People's Day- **no school**
- 10/16 (Wednesday) Wildflower Network Family Education Night

November

- 11/8 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
- 11/11 (Monday) Veteran's Day- **no school**
- Week of 11/11 Family Teacher Conferences
- 11/28-11/29 (Thursday-Friday) Thanksgiving Break- **no school**

December

- 12/12 (Thursday) Allium Family Education Night



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12/13 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
12/23-1/3 (Monday-Friday) Winter break-**no school**

January

1/16 (Thursday) Allium Family Education Night
1/20 (Monday) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-**no school**

February

2/5 (Wednesday) Wildflower Network Family Education Night
2/14 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
2/17-2/21 (Monday-Friday) February Break-**no school**

March

Week of 3/16 Family Teacher Conferences

April

4/9 (Thursday) Allium Family Education Night
4/10 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
4/20-4/24 (Monday-Friday) Spring Break-**no school**

May

5/14 (Thursday) Allium Family Education Night
5/22 (Friday) WF Network Professional Development Day- **no school**
5/25 (Monday) Memorial Day-**no school**

June

Week of 6/3 Family Teacher Conferences
6/16 (Tuesday) Last Day of School- with no snow days
6/23 (Tuesday) Last Day of School- with 5 Snow days



Allium Montessori Elementary School

Physical Plant and Safety

Our Location

Allium has signed a lease with the Harvard Epworth United Methodist Church, 1555 Massachusetts Ave. Allium has a three year lease with options to renew. The main classroom space has a large open floor plan and is about 1,700 square feet. Windows in the front provide natural light in addition to abundant light from light fixtures. We have sole access to a kitchen during the day, as well as, a foyer for cubbies.

While we don't have our own playground, our school is well situated for recess since it is just a short walk across the street from the beautiful Alexander W. Kemp playground in Cambridge Commons. For research and literary needs beyond the classroom, the children will walk to the nearby Cambridge Public Library. We will also take field trips to nearby locations on foot, such as the Harvard Museum of Natural History, or to more distant destinations through the use of public transportation since we are closely situated to the Harvard T-Stop.

Safe, Supportive Learning Environment

The Montessori classroom elements will support teachers in providing a safe (emotionally, physically, and ethically) and welcoming setting that provides the necessary academic, as well as social and emotional supports, that all students need. The safety and health of our children and staff is our top priority. In Allium's multi-age setting, teachers have greater knowledge of students' capacities and needs; and students experience greater consistency of teacher expectations (behavioral and academic); greater comfort and security in the classroom with one set of teachers who support students' emotional health; and higher levels of mutual caring and concern. Furthermore, the presence of students of different ages creates a safer, more supportive learning environment—as older children recognize the responsibility of modeling good behavior and reinforcing behavioral expectations.

Teachers will be responsible for maintaining the social-emotional health of students, beginning on day one and continuing over each student's time in that TL's classroom. Over that extended time period, teachers and other Allium adults will build and maintain authentic relationships with students so that if they are experiencing any stress, family issues, or conflict with other students, it is addressed promptly and fully. "Studies show that students who have a strong alliance with their teacher perform better academically than those who have any sort of conflict. The key for teachers is to find a balance between maintaining strong student relationships and setting and maintaining class procedures and high expectations."¹⁶ A physically safe learning environment includes well-developed rules and procedures that students understand. In Montessori settings, classroom ground rules are rules for human behavior that

¹⁶ Chatsworth Hills Academy (2017, May 18). *The Importance of Building Close Student-Teacher Relationships*. Retrieved from <https://chaschool.org/importance-building-close-student-teacher-relationships/>



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provide limits for the group and for the individual. Classroom ground rules allow each child the freedom to choose, concentrate and create.¹⁷

Procedures and Policies

Allium will use the safety and emergency guidelines determined by the MA Department of Early Education and Care with regard to natural hazards such as snow and ice storms, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding and technological hazards such as utility disruption, power outage, water loss, heat loss, fire hazardous materials, bomb threat or a suspicious article/message. We will also follow these guidelines with regard to personal safety issues including medical emergency, missing child, response to an unauthorized or suspicious person through protective action, evacuation, shelter in place and recovery and restoration of operations.

We will follow all fire department and zoning guidelines for fire drills, alarms, emergency signage and evacuation plans. Our health and safety procedures will be evaluated by the staff yearly to ensure that we are operating in the safest way possible and meeting any updated city, state or federal regulations.

Allium will give priority to operating its building and equipment in a safe manner. Teacher/administrators will be alert to any damage and have the necessary repairs made as soon as possible. A professional cleaning team will clean the school weekly and the teachers will clean and sanitize all areas daily.

All staff will follow Massachusetts law regarding criminal background checks and will do yearly training in first aid and CPR. Children will be supervised by at least two adults at all times. Staff will follow the parent's directions on the release forms in releasing children to adults other than the custodial parents.

Additionally, we maintain nutritional standards that are earth-conscious and promote natural, healthful diets for children. We will provide a healthy snack on a daily basis and give families guidelines on providing nutritious lunches.

We will use the EEC recommended forms for emergency contacts, release forms, health, immunization, disbursement of medication and allergy records. A first aid kit will be maintained according to EEC standards and taken to the park and on field trips along with emergency information for each child.

¹⁷ Montessori Academy (2017, Feb. 8). *What is freedom within limits?* Retrieved from <https://montessoriacademy.com.au/montessori-freedom-within-limits/>



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Attachments

CCSS Language Arts & Literacy AMI Alignment:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VDKUasNUG4DSX9zSTsrz-JNX4CD0Ob8W/view?usp=sharing>

CCSS Math & Geometry AMI Alignment:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TU4NPETHUnznMgxLSFm-0K1wCp-yb5qJ/view?usp=sharing>

MA Anchor Standards Aligned With Scope Sequence and Benchmarks for the Montessori Elementary Program:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14WKCwsdGWO02USBsuJqMkF8HcUbWQa/view?usp=sharing>