Canberra Montessori School Strategic Plan
Canberra Montessori School
Strategic Plan
2013-2015

Our Mission:
To provide a learning environment based on Montessori education that fosters the development of every child in reaching their full potential.
A Welcome from our Principal

In 1981, a committed group of pioneering families formed the Canberra Montessori Society. Their legacy is a beautiful school that in 2012 was home to 250 students. The Canberra Montessori School is a leader in the Montessori movement in Australia and from our perch in Holder we are a beacon radiating the educational possibilities for students in the nation's capital, Australia and the world.

In 2010, the school spent time articulating its values and in doing so converged on several key themes that represented the highest aspirations of our community. Respect, Caring, Individuality, Independence and Community Spirit are the threads that bind the fabric of our school. They are the ideals that founded the Society and continue to be the guiding principles of our decisions and behaviour. The 2013 – 2015 CMS Strategic Plan is an attempt to capture the essence of our values as we focus on the next steps of the Society’s journey.

I am proud of the participation from parents and staff in framing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for our school. It has been a 30-year journey at CMS and a 100-year journey for Montessori in Australia. Maria Montessori was a visionary educational leader who saw a way out of the paradigm of conflict that punctuated her time. Her hope was for an enlightened society sprung from the
innocence and untapped potential of the child. I see the expression of her belief in the child every day at CMS. Maria’s gift is one that we cherish but we understand that it comes with an obligation to ensure that it is enjoyed by more children and families and that her message of Peace continues to spread. The formation of a strategic plan provides cause to evaluate our progress and celebrate our achievements as a community.

Over the past decade the school has grown to become a connected, sustainable and proud Independent Primary School. In the past three years I can see how each of the pillars identified in our previous strategic plan, Education, Business and Community, have grown stronger and how the success in each area has supported the school to become stronger and more confident. Therefore 2013 constitutes an exciting time for our school. We truly have all of the elements in place to realise our goals and if we remain true to our values, and the spirit with which our school was formed, I know this plan can be achieved.

Jack Rice
Principal
An Introduction from the Board

A primary role of any Board is to ensure that a clear vision and strategy is presented for their organisation. It has been our privilege to work with our Principal, the staff and the parents of Canberra Montessori School to create and articulate this for the school over the next few years.

You are now reading a document which has been crafted over more than 6 months to ensure that it truly captures the needs and ambitions of this unique school in the Canberra Region. Whether you are a student, a parent, a staff member, one of our alumni or perhaps somebody considering Canberra Montessori School for their child’s education, we hope you will see in this Strategic Plan a focus for our future direction that is consistent with the values and strengths that have seen us achieve all that we have so far.

There were many issues, opportunities and challenges raised during the course of this strategic planning such as:
Our ability, via the nationally approved Australian Montessori Curriculum, to provide a holistic education that allows students to fully reach their potential academically, socially and individually. Parents of children attending CanberraMontessori can be confident that their children are receiving an education that will position them for success upon leaving the school.

Our determination to manage school fees, combined with our government funding, so that we enable the broadest possible number of students to benefit from a Montessori education in Canberra while still allowing for growth as a school.

The need to engage with our community to encourage the growth and understanding of Montessori in the broader community. The new Molonglo development, as well as other growing Canberra regions such as Gungahlin, presents us with various opportunities for expansion.
• The opportunity, now that we have solidified our primary school offering, to examine more broadly how we can provide a clear pathway for students and their families from birth through to 18 years of age and beyond.

Our thanks to everyone who has taken part in the creation of this document, and we look forward to supporting our Principal as he implements the vision presented here in the Canberra Montessori Society’s Strategic Plan, 2013 – 2015.

Vyt Vilkaitis
Board Chair
Creating our Strategic Plan, 2013 - 2015

The formulation of this Strategic Plan has seen input from a broad range of people. In early May 2012, the entire community, including staff, parents and friends of the school, were invited to a whole day workshop to define the core threads to be examined in the Strategic Plan. These key threads were then captured in an online forum. The community was invited to participate and expand on each, as well as pose additional questions or suggestions. The results were collated by the Board and fed into a Draft Strategic Plan, which was then put out to the community for review and comment.

Our 2013 – 2015 plan continues the model introduced by our 2010 – 2012 plan, which includes three interconnected pillars, each supporting the school’s overall Mission. These pillars continue to be fundamental to the success of our society and our school.

**Education**

Our school’s success relies on our ability to deliver the highest quality educational experience to our children. Fundamentally rooted in Montessori best practice, our approach continues to be open, innovative and progressive.
Community
The CMS community has always been one of shared experience. Support for families, outreach in the community and care for one another has always been, and will continue to be, an important component of our school’s ethos.

Business
Our third pillar ensures that our operations are strong, systems are evident and the school remains on a firm, sustainable and stable platform.
Summary of Outcomes

Community is Everything
Foster positive relationships and communication within our community and within the greater educational community at large

Pathways
18 to 18! Articulate a complete educational pathway for students from 18 months to 18 years of age.

Growth
Investigate and implement avenues of growth for our community, including growth in enrolment, society membership, programs and opportunities for children and families.
Outcome: Community is Everything

Foster positive relationships and communication within our community and within the greater educational community at large

By actively encouraging strong, productive and positive relationships between all members of our community, we model the social and personal behaviour we want our children to develop. By creating accessible resources and opportunities to discover what a Montessori education can mean for a child, we help the broader community to appreciate and understand the value we are providing.

Key Strategies

- Provide increased access to a Montessori education via our financial assistance program for enrolled students and a scholarship outreach program to underprivileged families.
- Increase availability of resources regarding CMS and Montessori education more broadly to the CMS community as well as the wider community in Canberra and beyond.
- Encourage positive, active relationships with students, staff and parents after they move on from CMS.
• Create opportunities to recognise the contribution of volunteers within our community.
• Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all new students, staff and parents.
• Recognise and actively support parental and family engagement in children’s learning.
Outcome: Pathways

18 to 18! Articulate a complete educational pathway for students from 18 months to 18 years of age.

Parents can have confidence that the time their child spends at CMS will provide a strong foundation for the remainder of their educational journey, and that they will continue to be supported by the school and the community for that entire journey.

Key Strategies

- Investigate the International Baccalaureate program and other internationally recognised curriculum frameworks which complement Montessori Education with an aim to articulate a clear educational pathway for children enrolling at CMS
- Define the outcomes and opportunities for a student progressing through each cycle at our school
- Develop partnerships and associations with high schools offering complementary programs for CMS graduates
- Investigate the option to grow CMS through to Year 10
• Develop partnerships with feeder programs in the community that match with our school’s ethos and focus
• Monitor the progress of CMS students and CMS graduates as they advance through our school and onto future experiences
Outcome: Growth

Investigate and implement avenues of growth for our community, including growth in enrolment, society membership, programs and opportunities for children and families.

We will ensure that, as we grow, we continue to maintain high standards for educational outcomes, student wellbeing and community engagement, as we have for the past 30 years. By increasing our diversity and cash flows and finding alternate incomes we will continue to build our resilience as a school.

Key Strategies

- Increase Parent Toddler Program and Cycle 1 enrolments via:
  - Introduction of additional Parent Toddler Programs to locations other than Holder
  - Establishment of suitable Cycle 1 sites that encourage community engagement with CMS

- Develop Long Day Care program to support increased participation in Montessori-based education

- Further the development of the Holder master plan to achieve two Cycle 3 classrooms

- Explore the possibility of acquiring additional land to enable further expansion
respect community spirit independence caring individuality
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