

**SHINING STARS**  
**MONTESSORI ACADEMY**  
— PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL —



SY2019 - 2020

# Annual Report

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## A Message from the Executive Director

The Montessori method requires that its educators and school leaders believe in the innate genius and unlimited potential of each individual child. It inspires the adults in the community to model the desired mindsets, habits and behaviors for the children who indeed have “absorbent minds.” A school community that is inclusive, equity-oriented, empathetic and peaceful is one that will naturally cultivate the genius within each child; the children will in turn offer the adults inspiration to reach for higher aspirations in their own performance.



I am extremely proud of the way our school community came together and performed during the 2019-2020 school year. We started off strong with a cohesive, authentic Montessori program, a close-knit school community and happy, intellectually curious children. When the pandemic disrupted our “normal” and the national, social justice movement demanded our consciousness, we took care of each other; we surrounded our children with love, a sense of community and relative stability; and we teamed up to offer new ways to master concepts, explore curiosities and creatively solve problems. In the Montessori tradition, we asked ourselves timely questions about the history of man, of science and discovery, and our relationships with each other and the natural world. We wondered aloud what we could teach, learn and do together in that moment in time.

The SSMA community held fast to its mission and core principles, and we demonstrated for our children the “practical life” applications of embracing and adapting to uncertainty and unexpected change. Our children remained happy, engaged and curious and that is our highest aspiration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Rodriguez-Garcia' with a long, sweeping underline.

R. Rodriguez-Garcia, Ph.D.  
Executive Director & Head of School

# School Description

## Our Mission

Shining Stars Montessori Academy’s (SSMA) mission is to offer a quality Montessori education, infused with culturally-inclusive principles to guide children to develop to their fullest potential.

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian scientist and physician was far ahead of her time in 1907 when she developed this method for teaching poor, disadvantaged children in Rome, Italy. Elite society believed these children could not learn. Her method was so successful that observers labeled her students “miracle children.” The Montessori Method was then rapidly adopted and duplicated, primarily for the world’s most privileged children. Until the last two decades, Montessori education has been offered almost exclusively in private school settings.

Dr. Montessori believed in the concept of a “Cosmic Education,” wherein children learn about the many interconnected parts that make a world, and then begin to consider the part they will play in that world. The parts are multi-disciplinary and interdependent; they advance from conceptual to concrete; each individual child develops social, emotional, intellectual and physical capabilities, at their own self-determined pace. They learn to care for themselves and the people and things in their environment. They are encouraged to ask “why?” as well as “why not?” The idea is that children who grow to confidently choose their own lifelong learning paths, will confidently and skillfully choose their ideal life paths. It is no surprise that the Montessori Method has cultivated some of the world’s most renowned innovators, problem-solvers and cultural icons.

The core of SSMA’s mission is to provide Washington, DC families with the authentic Montessori education within a school community that is culturally-inclusive and is peace, equity and empathy-centered. By supporting individual student engagement and diverse learning styles, and empowering our students to be collaborative, ethical citizens, we help shape the leaders of tomorrow.



# School Program – The Montessori Approach

## Curriculum Design

Dr. Montessori asserted that the goal of education is “to be able to find activities that are so intrinsically meaningful that we want to throw ourselves into them.” Shining Stars offers “the prepared environment” for children, in which the social-emotional development and academic needs of the whole child are met through six core areas of learning: practical life, language, sensorial, mathematics, cultural activities, and creative activities.

**Practical Life:** Through the use of uniquely designed materials, the children learn to complete tasks and projects that lead to functional independence and involve care of the self, care of the environment, grace and courtesy and movement of objects. The goal is for the child to develop concentration through repetition of these activities in addition to developing independence, coordinated movement, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and a sense of order. This area is the foundation for all the other areas.



**Language:** The materials and activities in this area are designed to give the child a working knowledge of syntax and grammar and enrich his/her vocabulary, as well as practice in public speaking. The idea is always to move from the concrete to the abstract, each activity building on the next until the child demonstrates, through speech and other activities, his or her mastery of the language.



**Sensorial:** The child’s use of the sensorial materials facilitate a refinement of the child’s five senses; assist the child in classification, gradually developing finer and finer distinctions; and leads to abstract thought. This area includes music and biology.



**Mathematics:** The materials in this area provide physical representations of mathematical concepts, allowing the child to access mathematical experiences through sensorial manipulation. Elements of the other core areas can be found in this approach, in which the guide first introduces the whole concept and then moves on to the details. Each of the six groups of mathematics instruction is presented in a three- step pattern: concrete experience of the concept, isolation of the concept, and combination of the concrete with the abstract.



**Cultural Activities:** This area encompasses history, geography, and social justice issues. The approach is to give the child a sense of the whole history of humanity and then encourage them to explore the finer details individually through storytelling, experiments, and field trips. In this process, the child takes on more of the burdens of the exploration as his or her abilities increase.



**Creative Activities:** Elements of art, music, drama, poetry, and writing are interwoven with the other core areas whenever possible and the child is encouraged to engage his or her imagination in problem solving in the classroom, at home, and in society. Their responsibility in relation to these issues increases along with their awareness.



SSMA's integrated curriculum is based on Montessori's Five Great Lessons:

- the story of the universe
- the timeline of life
- the story of language
- the story of numbers, and
- the timeline of civilization

### **The Montessori Instructional Approach**

At SSMA, students spend the majority of their time participating in blocks of uninterrupted activities that last approximately three hours. These projects consist of independent and group problem-solving tasks and other sensory activities related to math, science, language, history, geography, art, music, and nature.

## **Students with Exceptional Needs**

Dr. Montessori originally developed her educational method to support the learning of children with exceptional needs. Guides support children with deficiencies in motor or sensory skills, language acquisition, perceptual development and/or cooperative behavior are guided, using the principles of self-discovery, sensory learning, independent growth, and individual learning. Dr. Montessori's success with these populations inspired the application of the method with students of all abilities, making it a highly-inclusive approach.

The SSMA guide employs group lessons as well as individualized lessons, as the need is apparent. Morning lessons are determined based on each child's individual needs and interests. In this way, Montessori makes it easy to exercise differentiated instruction, recognizing the children's multiple intelligences and building from them. Small group lessons in the afternoon may be used to provide literacy support, address particular learning standards, or reflect with children on their learning process.

## **Instruction and Assessment**

Traditional school concepts such as textbooks, grades, exams, punishment, rewards, and homework are rarely embraced or applied in the Montessori Model. Our approach seeks to cultivate cooperation rather than competition, and personal growth rather than peer evaluation. The Montessori method places emphasis on the guides' accountability to the students in their class, and the students' accountability to themselves as independent learners.

*"The teacher's task is first to nourish and assist, to watch, encourage, guide, induce, rather than to interfere, prescribe or restrict"* – Dr. Maria Montessori

The primary role of the Montessori guide is to carefully observe, while creating a cooperative and supportive setting that is well-organized and aesthetically inviting to the students. The guide facilitates students' spontaneous actions by introducing materials with a brief lesson, offering a demonstration, and then passively guiding student-centered inquiry. On average, most teachers spend less than one hour of the daily class on group instruction. The methods that the guide employs when giving a presentation must adhere to the standards of careful movement, minimum speech, and simple concepts.

It is the responsibility of the guide to individually assess each student through critical observation so that individual plans can be devised to help students overcome specific areas of difficulty. Guides observe and record each student's daily interactions and progress on independent and collaborative tasks.

A child's individual and group creations are organized into a portfolio and progress reports for parents to review during three specific time periods of the year.

Additionally, SSMA maintains policies and practices that are aligned with those outlined in the American Montessori Society and the Association Montessori International teacher training programs. All classroom instruction and observations (i.e., assessments) in mathematics and language now align with the Montessori Learning Standards and the District of Columbia Common

Core State Standards. Following this model, all children received Common Core aligned individual presentations throughout the morning work cycle, and older students (kindergarten and above) receive additional small group lessons in the afternoon, while the younger children nap. The school administers Common Core aligned formal assessments throughout the year.

## Parent Involvement Efforts

Parent engagement at SSMA is a critical component of our school's success. Our parents have assumed numerous roles within our community. They have served as cheerleaders, thought partners, critical friends, event planners, mediators, problem-solvers, investors, real estate developers,



gardeners, promoters, fundraisers, home guides and board members, among other titles. The Shining Stars school community continues to stretch towards our highest aspirations because of our shared devotion to our children.

In 2019-20, SSMA parents actively participated in their child's education by attending parent-teacher conferences, three curriculum nights and assisting in the school or classroom.

In addition, parents enthusiastically participated in a variety of activities and events organized by the school or the parent-led SSMA Community Association. Some of those activities included:

- A family/student “meet and greet” at the start of the academic year
- Class observations (three times per year)
- SSMA’s peace assemblies (monthly)
- Monthly SSMA Parent Community Association meetings
- 100th Day Celebration
- “Chat and Chew” with the Executive Director (monthly; bi-weekly after March 3030))
- Workshops on the Montessori curriculum (three times per year/every trimester)
- Monthly parenting workshops on nutrition, positive discipline, bullying, communication, and other topics of interest
- Chaperoning on nature walks and field trips.
- Parent-Staff basketball game
- Socially-distanced, individual outdoor celebrations for our 2020 6th grade graduates
- Connecting with SSMA’s mental/behavioral expert during the post-school year summer months, regarding their children’s learning and behavior concerns
- Free parent yoga classes during the pandemic
- “Stewards of Children” training for parents to help protect children from sexual abuse





- Accessing additional resources for e-learning, as well as engaging, age-appropriate activities for families who want to reduce screen time.

Regular communication with parents has been instrumental in building and growing our close-knit and mutually-supportive school community. The weekly *News & Notes* e-newsletter keeps parents up-to-date on the Executive Director's insights, which help parents understand SSMA's Montessori principles, practices and values; classroom accomplishments and inspirations; operations news and important deadlines; and family supports and opportunities outside of school time. Parent open rates of the weekly newsletter far exceed industry standards – most often around 75%.

Students transport their “Blue Bag,” each day, which facilitates personal communications between the school office or the child's teacher and parents.

Whenever the school leadership team has important decisions to make about school operations, parent input is requested through surveys and/or in-person (or virtually) meetings with parents to discuss the variables, options, and parent concerns and preferences. A diversity of parent perspectives is always very informative when the school leadership team is faced with unexpected challenges or opportunities.

### **SSMA's Response to COVID-19**

When the world began to learn of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), our first thoughts were focused on the well-being of our interdependent and interconnected school community. With access to insights and discussions amongst DC school leaders about the possible impact on schools and families, the SSMA Executive Director and the leadership team focused on how to care for its families and staff and continue a robust and high fidelity student learning experience in the face of possible school building closures.

There were frequent communications with parents, staff and board members, sharing as much information as possible to prepare the community for possible health, economic and educational crises. We surveyed parents and hosted community conversations. Board members met frequently to consider new information, resources and considerations as they arose, and parents were regularly informed of new information that might be pertinent to their family decision-making. Teaching staff brainstormed, researched and planned the best possible ways to translate the authentic Montessori learning modules into a virtual setting, and how they could be sensitive and responsive to the mental and emotional impacts of the pandemic on students and families.



With input from parents, staff, city officials, the PCSB and other school leaders, the leadership team submitted a plan to PCSB and OSSE describing how SSMA would meet its mission, goals, and student academic achievement expectations in the face of school closures caused by the global pandemic.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yEL38hCvQzUbEGIsl08MeuLx5lPwNJR/s/view?usp=sharing>



Staff determined the food security of the families that relied on school meals and personally delivered or arranged for regular grocery deliveries, in addition to sharing information about city wide food distribution opportunities. The school tech team surveyed and assessed the technology needs and capabilities of every family. Chromebooks were distributed to every family (and staff members) that needed

them, ensured that families had internet access and provided parents with training in Google Meet/Hangouts and Google Classroom platforms, so that they could support their children as they adapted to learning online. After it became apparent that distance learning would continue through the end of the school year and possibly into the next school year, the leadership team invested in the procurement of authentic Montessori materials for each family to use at home and also began to arrange for extra-curricular programming that could be adapted to an online format.

Staff also received technology support and ongoing training to support their transition to teaching the Montessori model online.

As re-enrollment coincided with the shutdown and many parents were anxious and uncertain about the future, staff members reached out to individual families to encourage them to enroll for the next fall. This outreach continued into the early days of 2020-2021 school year, amid city wide concerns that many parents might opt out of enrolling their children in compulsory education, out of fear for their families' safety. SSMA's school counselor offered parents mental health counseling and/or referrals for themselves and their children.

The entire SSMA community came together to care for all of its members and to encircle our children with a sense of love, peace and continuity. We are extremely proud of our school community and are mindful of the demands that have been placed upon them during these uncertain times.

### **COVID-19 Response Plan Summary**

The key aspects of SSMA's COVID-19 Response Plan is 1) ensuring that students, families, and staff remain informed of the day-to-day student learning expectations; 2) maintaining awareness of individual family needs and student progress; 3) ensuring that all students have the resources and supports to access all learning opportunities; and 4) following and making adjustments according to the guidance of the Mayor's COVID-19 leadership team.

SSMA implemented 100% distance learning in response to the Mayor's city wide shut down in mid-March and remained in distance learning through the end of the 2019-2020 school year.



The COVID-19 plan included continuing in the fall 2020 with distance learning, with a plan to offer parents the option of hybrid attendance - alternating distance and in-school learning - after the first trimester (in December 2020), or the option of continuing 100% virtual. SSMA's implementation of these options would be influenced by information from City officials about the COVID-19 metrics and safety guidance.

### **Instructional Delivery Plan**

SSMA expanded our instructional program and moved from a distance learning plan to an e-learning format, which included the use of Google Classroom and Google HangOuts.



Our guides conducted weekly 'Google HangOuts' working sessions that allowed parents to raise any questions or concerns as well as provide support to individual students as needed. Daily tasks, assignments, and assessments through Google Classroom were completed by students and submitted electronically for review and progress monitoring.

The data collected from Google Classroom were used to develop new assignments as well as the instruction given during the daily virtual lessons. Attendance was taken daily via the virtual lessons and was put into an excel spreadsheet and monitored to ensure students were attending class sessions regularly and to detect chronic absenteeism.

The absences were verified by the school's attendance committee. If a student had three (3) consecutive absences during distance learning days, a member of the attendance committee contacted the parent/guardian of the student to determine the reason for the absence and to offer assistance if necessary. The goal was to get the student back in his or her academic routine to ensure the child successfully completed the school year.

### **Support for Students with Disabilities**

SSMA continued to offer services and support for students with IEPs and 504 plans. High priority goals were selected from the students' IEPs as areas of focus to prevent regression. Special education teachers and service providers collaborated with classroom teachers to create daily schedules for one-on-one instruction or therapy sessions. In addition to working on IEP goals, there was collaboration with guides to modify assignments when needed to support students with classroom work. For annual and triennial meetings and evaluations, IEP meetings were held either online or by phone. Clinicians provided assessment materials and conducted evaluations virtually when ethical.

## Support for Students and Families with Limited English Proficiency

SSMA's weekly News & Notes provided information and guidance regarding the school's e-learning program, which was translated into Spanish and Amharic. Native Spanish speakers on staff field Spanish-speaking parent inquiries and provided support on an as-needed basis. Staff ensured that all non-English speaking parents had access to what they needed to support their students' learning.

## Grading and Promotion Policies

During distance and e-learning, all SSMA students were expected to participate in live (synchronous) and recorded lessons (asynchronous), receive feedback from teachers, and complete new assignments. Decisions about student promotion and progress included, but were not limited to, completion of assignments, meeting individual student performance expectations, student attendance, teacher check-ins, and teacher professional judgment/observations. SSMA communicated its grading policies and promotion decisions to families before June 5th, the last day of school for students. Parents of sixth graders were asked to submit information on the graduating students' new school in order to forward student records to the appropriate schools.

## Governance

SSMA's Board of Trustees increased its meeting frequency during the pandemic to make decisions in a timely manner and to ensure that it was fully aware of school operations, challenges, and successes. The Board met virtually with the Executive Director every Friday in order to support, discuss and make policy decisions as they arose to ensure smooth school operations. We collected and analyzed data and utilized that data to inform our plan.



## School Performance

### Meeting the mission through performance and progress

Shining Stars continues to meet its charter goals and academic achievement expectations. Shining Stars' mission is centered on 1) offering an authentic Montessori education to each of its uniquely gifted students; 2) ensuring that the school community is culturally inclusive as it connects children to the interconnected world that they will help shape and lead; and 3) students are supported to develop their greatest potential.

SSMA's curriculum and instruction in 2019-2020 facilitated the Montessori Model's six core areas of learning: practical life, language, sensorial, mathematics, cultural activities, and creative activities.

*The Primary Program* offered instruction in all core areas with many interdisciplinary projects that combined the core areas. For example, in language, primary students completed pre-reading and pre-writing preparation projects within practical life applications; and worked on sensorial areas while refining auditory, oral, visual, and sensory/motor skills preparations. Two primary classes and one lower elementary class have participated in Shining Stars' pilot Spanish immersion classes, which integrated the Montessori environment and lessons for individualized and group activities in the Spanish language.

Using authentic Montessori materials, such as Number Rods & Cards, Set Baskets, Spindle Boxes, Sandpaper Numbers, Cards & Counters, Tray of Nine, Golden Bead Layout, Bead and Numeral Layout, Geometry solids and many other materials, students explored addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with the decimal system and prepared themselves for abstract study at the Lower Elementary level.

In science, students were encouraged to experiment and discover new concepts through studies of earth, astronomy, ecology, botany, physics, and chemistry. Scientific study was offered through observation of nature, and experiments. Science lessons included animal sorting and matching, identification of animal body parts, plants, and trees, and investigation of plants and animals. More advanced lessons included shell identification, animal classification, rock and mineral identification, and study of prehistoric animals and fossils.

Students explored culture and creativity using the Montessori maps, music, food, and artifacts, with a focus on the similarities of people throughout the world. The diversity of families and faculty, as represented in our in conjunction with the cultural social studies, and history, music and art helped our students develop a respect for all people and cultures.



annual international dress up day, materials to study geography,

Arts integration included drawing, painting, collage making, and printmaking. Objectives included recognition and understanding of line/shape/form, concepts of color, concepts of texture, basic

patterns of organization, whole-to-part relationships, and change processes. The program emphasizes the planning, preparation and process needed for the completion of artwork.

*Lower elementary* classes also advanced in the six core areas. This year SSMA's dual language program included lower elementary classroom. Lower elementary students also incorporated Dr. Montessori's concept of the importance of elementary students "Going Out" to explore nature, the environment and the wider world. The students took part in fieldwork focused on the restoration of the Anacostia River. During this fieldwork, the students learned about the important role mussels play as natural bio filters, cleaning pollution from the river. Students also took a boat ride while learning about the Anacostia's history and its natural/invasive inhabitants. They did a fabulous job of caring for the school's three aquariums of freshwater mussels, which they intended to reintroduce to the Anacostia after ensuring that they would survive and grow (this was not possible due to COVID-19). On average, the mussels increased in size by 2 centimeters. They also visited the Aquatic Resources Education Center to take a closer look at more than 40 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates found in the rivers, streams, and wetlands of the District and Chesapeake Bay.



The *Upper Elementary* curriculum featured more in-depth research, study and more advanced, abstract concepts in the six core areas. Montessori materials were used, in addition to advanced science, creative writing, economics, and literature materials. They wrote, directed and performed original plays, and participated in cultural celebrations by outside artists who visit the school.

Again this year, SSMA's upper elementary students assumed leadership opportunities where they learned to make decisions democratically, by consensus or through negotiations. They also represented the school in on- and off-campus events.

Following the school's closure due to COVID-19, SSMA began a virtual academic enrichment program for students in the areas of: math, language arts, reading, writing, notetaking and study skills. Student Academic Coordinator Delton Fontroy developed a program to help upper elementary students enhance and practice their math and language skills through hands-on instruction. The 3rd-6th graders had the opportunity to use computers to strengthen their core skills and content knowledge as well as increase test-taking preparedness. The program also included a coding component to help SSMA students develop computer science comfort and fluency. The concepts covered in the program are a continuation of the common core standards practiced in daily classroom activities and homework assignments.

SSMA also entered into a virtual partnership with Kids & Culture Camp, (KCC) which began in April 2020 as part of SSMA's after school MAP extended learning program. The KCC instructors provided live online cultural camps for all interested students. Students embarked on virtual cultural journeys as they studied various countries from around the globe. The countries featured in the 2019-20 school year were Senegal, Canada, and Ghana.

Montessori had a vision that world peace and the eradication of war should be the ultimate aim of human endeavors and she believed wholeheartedly that every child could be an agent of change for peace in the world. In honor of her vision, every month two classes lead a Peace Assembly that

focused on a particular theme (e.g. love, forgiveness, humility).

Classrooms used *Restorative Justice* as an approach to discipline that is committed to building a beloved community that is sustainable and growing, and shifts the focus of discipline from punishment to learning, and from the individual to the community.

## **Assessments**

### **Performance Management Framework**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy has adopted the Public Charter School Board's Performance Management Framework as the standard by which it measures the school's academic performance. Although there were metrics other than standardized test data, the state's PARCC assessment is a major component in determining a school's PMF score. Due to the COVID-19 school closure, PARCC was not administered, and schools did not receive a PMF score for the 2019-2020 school year. With that in mind, the PCSB has stated that it "will not collect goals and academic achievement expectation data for SY 2019-20 in accordance with the COVID-19 Impact Policy and will resume collection in SY 2020-21. Additionally, schools are not required to report on SY 2019-20 state assessment results."

Beyond state assessments, SSMA collected data from several other assessment resources. They are outlined below.

### **Spring Assessments**

Shining Stars students take four assessments to measure academic growth in reading and math during the school year. Our primary classes take the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)* for literacy and the *Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA)* for math. Our K-6 students are administered the *NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* for reading and math. All of these assessments measure student progress from Fall to Spring. School closure, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, prevented SSMA from administering the Spring assessments that would determine student progress.

### **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)**

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a research-based observation tool that measures classroom environments through teacher-student interactions. The CLASS measure identifies and assesses three domains, emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support that have an impact on children's learning. Each domain is broken down into several dimensions that are based on what is developmentally appropriate for pre-K classrooms.

Using national data of state-funded pre-K, research has shown that "threshold" scores of five or more in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and three or more in Instructional Support are associated with better social and academic gains for children. These threshold scores were the *minimum* scores that research has shown are associated with positive child outcomes for each CLASS domain. To further improve the quality of pre-K education, the District has adopted "targets" as well as thresholds for each CLASS domain and dimension. The District of Columbia's sets targets of 6 and thresholds of 5

for the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization Domains and Dimensions and a target of 4 for Instructional Support.

#### Class Observations Report

A summary of the results of the CLASS observation report is below:

*Domain Averages* - Shining Stars scored above the target of 6 for the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization Domains (6.16 and 6.08 respectively). SSMA met the threshold (3.0) for Instructional Support (3.64).

*Dimension Averages - Emotional Support*: Shining Stars scored above the target on the Negative Climate (reversed) and Teacher Sensitivity dimensions and met the threshold for Positive Climate and Regard for Student Perspectives.

*Classroom Organization*: SSMA exceeded the target for Behavior Management and Productivity and met the threshold for Instructional Learning Formats.

*Instructional Support*: SSMA met the thresholds for all three dimensions (Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling).

#### **American Montessori Standards**

The American Montessori Society, of which Shining Stars is an accredited member, has aligned Montessori standards with the Common Core Standards, particularly in support of Montessori Schools that are operating in the public domain.

In alignment with Montessori practices, SSMA guides used the Compass system to record lessons delivered and their observations of individual students. The School leadership team asserts that, based on teaching and learning inputs and observations of student outcomes, and notwithstanding disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, SSMA met or exceeded its Montessori method-based mission objectives during the 2019-2020 school year. We are in awe of the resilience and resourcefulness that our guides, students, parents, and staff demonstrated during this unprecedented moment in our school's and our city's history.

Although we were unable to complete assessments that would give us assessment data about our students' growth from Fall to Spring, our internal observations and ongoing engagement with individual students gives us confidence to say that SSMA students continued to embrace and enjoy learning in a Montessori context, within the distant learning format.

Taking together the school's success in delivering a multi-accredited, authentic Montessori model, and its progress on standardized assessments, Shining Stars Montessori Academy continues to offer education that is of great value to families.



## Unique Accomplishments



As a public charter school that offers a public Montessori model, Shining Stars can proudly share many unique accomplishments.

### *NCPSA Accreditation*

Through SSMA's continuing commitment to excellence, the school has been recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). The accreditation process consisted of a self-study report, a site visit conducted by independent professional educators to validate the information in the self-study report, creation of a site visit report by the independent educators, a hearing, and a vote by the membership committee. Membership in NCPSA is SSMA's third nationally recognized accreditation.

SSMA is the only DC charter Montessori school to be dually accredited by the American Montessori Society and the Middle States Association.

### *American Sign Language Program*

Understanding the benefits of being multilingual in the early stages of learning, SSMA added the American Sign Language Program, to offer our PreK-3 and PreK-4 students another avenue of enhancing their cognitive and memory skills.

### *Montessori After School Program (MAP)*

MAP is an after-school enrichment program that offers activities that include science, cooking, sports, dance, STEM, coding, chess and art. This program was offered until the shutdown in mid-March 2020.

### *Children's Community Garden*

The SSMA community built an organic vegetable garden that our students maintain. Students participate in the process of growing plant-life and food, from seeds to harvest. As in the Montessori philosophy, it is an additional way that children may see their connection to and collaboration with the natural world around them.



### *Community Service*

The school community established a fund to help less fortunate Shining Stars families during the pandemic. Shining Stars community members held food and clothing drives and continued our international relationships with sister schools overseas.

### *Chess Team*

SSMA instituted a chess team in the 2019-20 academic year (the Bravo Zulu Chess Academy) with the team participating in three tournaments with local chess teams. SSMA's team placed fourth, third, and first place, respectively.

### *Virtual Book Fair*

The school also held its first virtual book fair, with 15 percent of the proceeds going to SSMA's Dubois library.

### *Spirit Week*

SSMA students took part in the school's annual spirit week, with students dressing as their favorite book character or essential worker (police, fireman, grocery store workers, media reporters, truck drivers, etc.).

### *Bowen McCauley Dance Company*

The Bowen McCauley Dance Company performed at SSMA. The first performance, Lissajous, featured a STEAM collaboration with Drexel University (DU), inspired by the wonder of 'pi' and the never ending weaving and possible pathways through space and time. The Lissajous dance piece was choreographed by Lucy Bowen McCauley and re-imagines engineering with a deep manifestation of the intersection between engineering mechanics and dance movement. The purpose of the DU commission was to demonstrate the science behind the creative process and the interconnectedness of mathematics and engineering to the arts. The dancers also ignited the audience with a bopping, twirling ride through the past 50 years, beginning with the iconic 1950's Twist and continuing through the decades, finishing up with a tribute to the award-winning Broadway hit musical Hamilton.

### *SSMA International Day*

Every year, SSMA students and families celebrate the international, cultural diversity that our families contribute to the school community. Students wear the traditional clothing of their ancestry or cultural heritage and participate in a parade at the school and in the neighboring community. Students and families learn important lessons about inter-cultural for differences and appreciation ways all humans are similar.



### List of Donors\*

Name	Amount
DC Sustainable Energy Utility	\$20,000.00
The Greater Washington Community Foundation	\$1,562.00
The Alice Ferguson Foundation	\$750.00
School Tool Box LLC	\$603.41

**\*Contributions of \$500 or more**

## DATA REPORT

### Enrollment by grade level according to OSSE's Audited Enrollment Report

Grade	PK 3	PK 4	Kindergarten	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Count	63	57	41	42	33	34	13	3	6
Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12	Alternative	Adult	SPED*
Student Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### Student Data Points

School	<b>Total number of instructional days: 182</b>
PCSB	<b>Suspension Rate: 0.0%</b>
PCSB	<b>Expulsion Rate: 0.00%</b>
PCSB	<b>Instructional Time Lost to Discipline: 0.00%</b>
PCSB	<b>In-Seat Attendance: 93.7%*</b>
PCSB	<b>Average Daily Attendance: Not Applicable</b>
PCSB	<b>Midyear Withdrawals: 2.4% (7 students)</b>
PCSB	<b>Midyear Entries: 0.7% (2 students)</b>
PCSB	<b>Promotion Rate (LEA): 99.3%</b>
PCSB	<b>College Acceptance Rate: Not Applicable</b>
PCSB (SY18-19)	<b>College Admission Test Score: Not Applicable</b>
PCSB (SY18-19)	<b>Graduation Rate: Not Applicable</b>

### Faculty and Staff Data Points

School	<b>Teacher Attrition Rate: 5.3%</b>
School	<b>Number of Teachers: 19</b>
School	<b>Teacher Salary</b> <b>Average: \$54,400</b> <b>Range: Minimum: \$42,800 Maximum: \$65,000</b>
School	<b>Executive Compensation:</b> <b>Executive Director: \$144,200</b> <b>Principal: \$100,000</b>

## APPENDIX I: STAFF ROSTER 2019-20

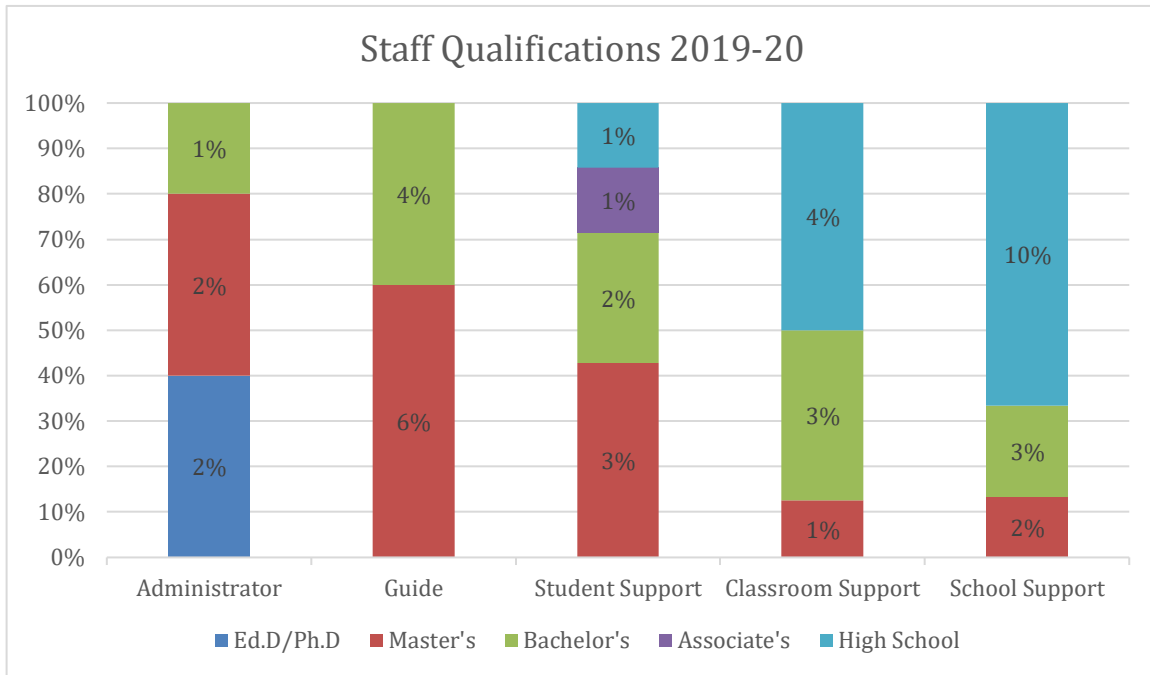
First Name	Last Name	Title
Delton	Fontroy	Lower Elementary Guide/ Elementary Program Coordinator
Jose	Guevara	Operations Associate
Nina	Ouzounova	Primary Guide
Gail	Jenkins	Principal
Kate	Lechner	Elementary Guide
Jose	Muniz	Classroom Assistant
Frances	Brooks	Director of ELL Services & Culture Coordinator
Jemia	Terry	ELL Specialist
Regina	Rodriguez	Executive Director
Ronelda	Brown	Upper Elementary Guide
Shaka	Green	Upper Elementary Guide
Tonya	Kornegay	Classroom Asst
Shaneka	Bush	Primary Program Assistant

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Willa	Jones	Director Student Support Services
Louise	Kelley	Reading Specialist
Aja	Campbell	Librarian
Erma	Molina	Primary Guide
Nicole	Austin	Montessori Resident Fellow-Primary
Susan	Shaw	Upper Elementary Guide
Kerry-Ann	Espinoza	Program Assistant
Aldith	Coleman	Food Services Manager
Aminat	Onafuwa	Lower Elementary Guide
Lauren	Karchefsky	Learning Specialist
Rachel	Clark	Program Assistant
Tais	Taylor	Title IX Coordinator Compliance Specialist
James	McGriff	Program Assistant
Tamela	Reynolds	Primary Guide

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Harry	Gary	Learning Specialist
Sandra	Larios	Classroom Assistant
Darryl	Buxton	Director of Special Education
Ansia	Dial	Classroom Assistant
Cherita	Moore-Gause	Operations Manager
Antonio	Hagans	Custodian
Zufan	Reddae	Primary Program Assistant
Maurice	Jackson	Montessori Resident Fellow
Elizabeth	Jean	Classroom Assistant
Bessie	Hubbard	Program Assistant
Allison	Petron	Classroom Assistant
Racquel	Clark	Program Assistant
Natasha	Johnson	Program Assistant
Julius	Brown	Dedicated Aide/Classroom Assistant
Bettina	Brown	Classroom Assistant
Rokiya	Cisse	Dedicated Aide
Marcus	Browning	Custodian (Afternoon)
Barbara	Giordano	Front Desk Receptionist

## Our Guides (Teachers)

Shining Stars prides itself on the quality and dedication of its teaching and support staff. All staff members are carefully selected teachers are American Montessori Society (AMS) and/or Association Montessori International (AMI) trained and certified or are in the final stage of certification. They continue their learning with ongoing professional development and study. We select our faculty for their love of learning, and their caring for and understanding of children.





## APPENDIX II: BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROSTER 2019-20

Name	Role
Anthony King, Esq.	Chair & Treasurer
Kamal Wright-Cunningham	Vice Chair
Aldel Brown, Esq	Member
Willa Golden*	Member
Shawn Samuels*	Member
Teicha Harris (parent)*	Member
Tatiana LaBorde*	Member
Regina Rodriguez*	Ex- Officio

\*D.C. resident

**APPENDIX III: UNAUDITED YEAR-END 2019-20  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

July 2019 - June 2020	
	<u>Total</u>
<b>Income</b>	
<b>04 State and Local Income</b>	
<b>400 Per-Pupil Operating Income</b>	
4000 Per-pupil alloc	3,769,434.30
4010 Per-pupil SpEd alloc	464,937.12
4011 Per-pupil SpEd ESY	96,861.00
4020 Per-pupil LEP/NEP alloc	457,317.00
4040 Per-pupil At Risk	165,523.54
4050 Per-pupil adjustment	<u>54,966.00</u>
<b>Total 400 Per-Pupil Operating Income</b>	<b>5,009,038.96</b> \$
<b>410 Per-Pupil Facility Income</b>	
4100 Per-pupil facility alloc	<u>973,820.04</u>
<b>Total 410 Per-Pupil Facility Income</b>	<b>973,820.04</b> \$
<b>420 Other Local Income</b>	
4210 Local programs	<u>8,505.98</u>
<b>Total 420 Other Local Income</b>	<b>8,505.98</b> \$
<b>Total 04 State and Local Income</b>	<b>5,991,364.98</b> \$
<b>05 Federal Income</b>	
<b>500 Federal Grants Income</b>	
5000 ESEA Title 1	43,608.18
5003 IDEA 611	31,725.93
5004 IDEA 619	210.34
5005 ESEA Title 4	10,000.00
5030 Competitive federal grants	<u>76,470.85</u>
<b>Total 500 Federal Grants Income</b>	<b>162,015.30</b> \$
<b>510 Federal Program Income</b>	
5100 National school lunch prog	<u>65,095.77</u>
<b>Total 510 Federal Program Income</b>	<b>65,095.77</b> \$
<b>Total 05 Federal Income</b>	<b>227,111.07</b> \$
<b>06 Private Income</b>	

600 Private Grants	
6020 Foundation grants	1,562.00
Total 600 Private Grants	\$ 1,562.00
620 Private Contributions	

6220 Foundation contributions	22,410.60
6230 Special event contributions	<u>1,000.00</u>
<b>Total 620 Private Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 23,410.60</b>
630 Activity Fees – NEW	
6300 Before care after care fees	<u>129,654.92</u>
<b>Total 630 Activity Fees - NEW</b>	<b>\$ 129,654.92</b>
640 School Sales	
6400 Paid meal sales	<u>21,566.18</u>
<b>Total 640 School Sales</b>	<b>\$ 21,566.18</b>
650 Additional Income	
6500 Short-term investments	46.38
6520 Rental revenue	<u>927.18</u>
<b>Total 650 Additional Income</b>	<b>\$ 973.56</b>
<b>Total 06 Private Income</b>	<b>\$ 177,167.26</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 6,395,643.31</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$ 6,395,643.31</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
07 Staff-Related Expense	
700 Curricular Salaries	
7000 Leadership salaries	503,225.32
7010 Teacher salaries	580,413.11
7011 SpEd teacher salaries	272,955.71
7020 Teacher aides salaries	<u>477,761.53</u>
<b>Total 700 Curricular Salaries</b>	<b>\$ 1,834,355.67</b>
710 Supplemental Service Salaries	
7100 Student support salaries	200,859.41
7110 Instr staff support salaries	146,166.72
7130 Business, operations salaries	<u>273,172.47</u>
<b>Total 710 Supplemental Service Salaries</b>	<b>\$ 620,198.60</b>
740 Employee Benefits	
7400 Retirement plan contrib	19,113.26
7410 Health insurance	155,376.55
7440 Travel stipends	0.00
7460 Workers' comp insurance	<u>8,029.00</u>
<b>Total 740 Employee Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 182,518.81</b>
750 Payroll Taxes	
7500 Social security & medicare	181,908.33
7510 State unemployment tax	26,713.23

7520 Universal paid leave tax	<u>15,217.28</u>
Total 750 Payroll Taxes	223,838.84 \$

760 Professional Development	
7600 Staff development (non-travel)	75,439.52
7610 Staff development travel	<u>1,858.23</u>
Total 760 Professional Development	\$ 77,297.75
780 Other Staff Expense	
7800 Staff recruiting	8,041.24
7820 Staff meals, events, & awards	<u>7,005.99</u>
Total 780 Other Staff Expense	\$ <u>15,047.23</u>
Total 07 Staff-Related Expense	\$ 2,953,256.90
08 Occupancy Expense	
800 Occupancy Rent Expense	
8000 Rent	<u>847,090.49</u>
Total 800 Occupancy Rent Expense	\$ 847,090.49
810 Occupancy Service Expense	
8100 Utilities & garbage removal	87,655.22
8110 Contracted building services	128,272.59
8120 Maintenance and repairs	27,871.93
8130 Janitorial supplies	<u>2,313.00</u>
Total 810 Occupancy Service Expense	\$ <u>246,112.74</u>
Total 08 Occupancy Expense	\$ 1,093,203.23
09 Additional Expense	
900 Direct Student Expense	
9000 Student supplies, snacks	66,263.78
9010 Student assessment materials	3,012.50
9020 Student textbooks	1,559.37
9050 Contracted instruction fees	70,985.63
9051 Contracted SpEd instruction	162,742.22
9060 Food service fees	184,514.21
9080 Student recruiting	19,950.10
9085 Student events	<u>17,561.02</u>
Total 900 Direct Student Expense	\$ 526,588.83
910 Office Expense	
9100 Office supplies	63,938.60
9110 Copier rental & services	49,460.09
9120 Telephone & telecommunications	14,399.36
9130 Postage, shipping, delivery	<u>568.48</u>
Total 910 Office Expense	\$ 128,366.53
920 Business Expense	

<b>9200 Business insurance</b>	44,159.56
<b>9210 Authorizer fees</b>	50,713.94
<b>9230 Accounting, auditing, payroll</b>	113,708.75

9240 Legal fees	46,937.96
9260 Computer support fees	100,073.20
9280 Other professional fees	<u>154,314.43</u>
<b>Total 920 Business Expense</b>	<b>509,907.84</b> \$
930 Dues, Fees & Losses	
9300 Dues, fees, and fines	<u>7,063.57</u>
<b>Total 930 Dues, Fees &amp; Losses</b>	<b>7,063.57</b> \$
<b>Total 09 Additional Expense</b>	<b>1,171,926.77</b> \$
11000 Operating asset depreciation	26,323.02
11010 Facility asset amortization & depreciation	<u>49,188.63</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>5,293,898.55</u></b> \$
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b><u>1,101,744.76</u></b> \$
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,101,744.76</b> \$



## APPENDIX IV: APPROVED 2020-21 BUDGET

<b>Shining Stars</b>	
FY21 Annual Budget	
	<b><u>Prior Year</u></b>
	<u>Projected</u>
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Per Pupil Charter Payments - General Education	3,878,432
Per Pupil Charter Payments - Categorical Enhancements	1,096,101
Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	973,820
Federal Funding	100,255
Other Government Funding/Grants	129,902
Private Grants and Donations	23,218
Activity Fees	141,059
In-kind revenue	-
<u>Other Income</u>	19,413
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>6,362,199</b>
<b>FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</b>	Total Employees
<i>Personnel Salaries and Benefits</i>	
Principal/Executive Salary	502,725
Teachers Salaries	1,073,176
Special Education Salaries	281,691
Other Education Professionals Salaries	356,995
Business/Operations Salaries	275,437
Administrative/Other Staff Salaries	-
<u>Employee Benefits and Payroll Taxes</u>	478,105
<b>Subtotal: Personnel Expense</b>	<b>2,968,129</b>
<i>Direct Student Expense</i>	
Educational Supplies and Textbooks	60,000
Student Assessment Materials/Program Evaluation	12,803

Contracted Student Services	245,000
Food Service	200,000
<u>Other Direct Student Expense</u>	42,434
<b>Subtotal: Direct Student Expense</b>	<b>560,237</b>
 <i>Occupancy Expenses</i>	
Rent	881,452
Depreciation (facilities only)	48,333
Interest (facilities only)	-
Building Maintenance and Repairs	70,000
Contracted Building Services	130,000
<u>Other Occupancy Expenses</u>	95,221
<b>Subtotal: Occupancy Expenses</b>	<b>1,225,006</b>
 <i>General and Administrative Expenses</i>	
Office Supplies and Materials	70,000
Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance	55,000
Telephone/Telecommunications	15,000
Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	135,000
Insurance	45,000
Transportation	-
Professional Development	77,298
PCSB Administrative Fee	49,000
Management Fee	-
Interest Expense (non-facility)	-
Depreciation and Amortization (non-facility)	28,000
<u>Other General Expense</u>	283,831
<b>Subtotal: General Expenses</b>	<b>758,128</b>
<hr/>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,511,500</b>
<b>Operating Revenue/Expense</b>	<b>850,698</b>
<hr/>	
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>850,698</b>