

1240 Randolph Street, NE Washington, DC



ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The 2021-2022 school year's return to in-person learning was a joyous celebration for many, and a source of great uncertainty and fear for many others. Our school community was hopeful for all of the benefits of coming back together, but also extremely cautious about letting our guard down to a possible resurgence of COVID-19. From the leadership team's point of view, it was a very tenuous and delicate balancing act; we surveyed parents and staff multiple times over the summer about their level of comfort returning to school fully in-person, and we never had an overwhelming majority on any side of the question. We closely followed guidance and data from local officials, and ultimately, we complied with our Mayor's mandate to fully open in-person at the beginning of the school year.

On many occasions we informed parents, often causing unintended inconvenience, that we would shift to virtual learning for whole classrooms, multiple classrooms, or the whole school, after cases of COVID-19 infection were reported within our community. With a large segment of our students unable to be vaccinated and a fair number of students whose parents chose not to vaccinate them, we frequently made decisions, "out of an abundance of caution" and "with the safety and health of our families at the forefront of our decision-making." Our teaching staff, having adapted to virtual learning the previous school year, was prepared to pivot as needed. Remarkably, our students adjusted to 100% mask wearing, social distancing and new configurations in classrooms, as only children can – with curiosity, creativity, and grace. We stayed in constant contact with parents about building safety protocols, school health data, and our communications with DC Government officials, as well as our efforts to maintain fidelity to the Montessori model and our standards for academic rigor. We challenged parents to more actively partner with our staff to support learning objectives at home. For the most part, our entire school community was admirably resilient.

Notwithstanding the challenges, our students learned, bonded with each other and staff and their positive experiences offered reassurance to their sometimes-anxious parents.

We celebrated many accomplishments and milestones throughout the year, including (full details in the School Performance section):

- Our students showed growth on standardized assessments:
 - o 6th graders met math and ELA goals and showed tremendous growth
 - o 3rd graders exceeded expectations for growth in both math and ELA
 - Our students who are enrolled in the Spanish dual immersion program showed gains in mathematics
- We launched the Upper Elementary weekly STEAM Challenge, which aligned with 4-6th grade Montessori and Common Core mathematics and science learning standards.
- SSMA Shining Lights Children's Choir students learned songs, voice control, music, and performance skills after school.
- Project Give Back
 Staff and families collected, packaged, and delivered food to families in need, within and outside of the school community.

• Student Support Services

The SSMA Parent Education Program (PEP) provided eight skill-building workshops during the 2021-2022 school year.

• Young Ladies with Purpose

The Young Ladies of Purpose, a new extracurricular, rights-of-passage program that supports the social-emotional and leadership development of our upper elementary girls, held meetings throughout the school year.

• Science Fair and Space Parade

Fourth through Sixth grade students held their first Science Fair and Space Parade, a curriculum culminating event designed and put on by them with the support of the upper elementary teachers.

• Children's Community Garden

Our students continued to maintain and improve the organic vegetable garden that they built in previous years. Students participated in the process of growing plant-life and food, from seeds to harvest.

Spirit Week

SSMA students and staff 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.). Spirit Week builds a sense of community, encourages imagination and creativity, and supports fun ways for children to express themselves with and among their peers.

Day of Service

Montessori Stars served the community by helping to clean up the campus and surrounding neighborhood.

• Day of Peace

Students enjoyed many activities demonstrating what Peace means in the Montessori Children's House. The children demonstrated their knowledge through role play, discussions, and working together as a team making tie-dye masks.

• School FAR Report

In FY 2021, the SSMA continued its robust financial performance.

Much of what we teach in the Montessori Model prepared our community to learn, adapt and get creative in unique ways. Modules such as Practical Life, Going Out, Grace and Courtesy, Peace, and Creativity, which are often considered less important in traditional pedagogy, proved their value for teaching students (and their parents) how to embrace change and uncertainty as growth opportunities.

This is why Montessorians will continue in the future to lead change and innovation in the fields that will move human development forward.





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

Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach

The theory behind Montessori education is impactful: Children yearn for learning. From the time of birth through maturity, the child lives in what appears to be a chaotic world. The child is then able to gradually establish order by learning how to distinguish the senses and develop their inner resources resulting in a secure, self-confident learner.

The purpose of Montessori schools is to offer a cautiously planned, thought-provoking environment, which will help the child develop a foundation for innovative learning. Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to investigate their natural drive to work and learn. Montessori teachers embrace the whole-child approach to teaching. This means that we do not just focus on academics. Skills in grace and courtesy and everyday living are also of extreme importance.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed the methods to enhance opportunities for the child to explore concrete examples of abstract ideas. The learning is a self-correcting one, allowing the child to move through the senses and discern concepts under the direction of a skilled Montessori-trained guide. Each piece of material teaches a single skill and is introduced to the child when he is ready to receive instruction based upon interests and ability levels.

The Montessori approach believes that children are more receptive to learning experiences at specific times or during the "sensitive periods." Montessori guides are trained to recognize these sensitive periods when the child exhibits a need for a new learning experience. It is then that the guide directs the child toward materials that will compliment his developmental needs. During these critical years, the child moves at his or her own pace, creating an environment for discovery learning.

Today, there are schools throughout the world offering Montessori programs for children beginning at birth and going to three years (Infant/Toddler), 3-6 years of age (The Children's House), 6-9 years of age (Lower Elementary), 9-12 years of age (Upper Elementary) and 12-18 years of age (Adolescent). According to research, there are almost 5,000 Montessori schools/programs in the U.S. and more than 20,000 in over 100 countries worldwide. (AMI/USA Bulletin 2012).



Developmental Focus

Children's House (Primary)

Ages 3-6, Age of Discovery

At age 3, children begin developing important skills that are fundamental to all learning: order, concentration, coordination, and independence. Children's House students want to be free to work independently within a structured environment, doing real activities with an intelligent purpose. Focus is on hands-on exploration, children plan out their day to begin learning time management, and we have small groups and one-on-one lessons in core subjects. To develop the critical skill of reading, students read one-on-one with a teacher each day for a minimum of 15 minutes.

Lower Elementary

Grades 1-3, Age of Interests

The elementary child has reached a new level of development. Before, they were interested in things – like working with their hands and learning their names. Now they are interested mainly in what and why – the problem of cause and effect. The Great Lessons provide the unifying theme for the origins of the world around us and spark their imagination. Our program continues to feature small group and one-on-one lessons, and children plan schedules that include multiple days at a time.

Upper Elementary

Grades 4-6, Age of Industry

The child has moved beyond what and why to how. They move from concrete thinking to abstraction to make sense of the disconnected facts and ideas they are encountering in the world. Social interactions are very important, and we honor this by offering more collaborative group projects. Students are expected to plan their daily schedule in one-week increments.



The Children's House - Serving Children Ages 3 Through 6



Children in the first plane of development, ages 3 through 6, have an amazing ability to absorb all the world around them has to offer through their senses. The rich environment of the Children's House is carefully prepared to expose these absorbent minds to inviting and culturally diverse materials that are sure to captivate the interest of the young explorer. Many of the Montessori materials are designed to promote functional independence as the child gains mastery of self-care and care of their environment. The environment also enables children to develop personal dignity and an awareness of their responsibilities as human beings. Like the home environment, the Children's House provides children with a comfortable and safe space to begin their

journey toward maturity. As they choose the materials that appeal to them and are guided in their proper use, children begin to develop the inner discipline and lifetime love of learning that is crucial to their success as human beings.

Practical Life

Through the use of uniquely designed materials, the child learns to perform the basic actions that lead to functional independence through activities that involve care of the self, care of the environment and health and nutrition. 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 or her vocabulary, as well as practice in public speaking. The idea is always to move from the concrete to the abstract, each activity building upon the next until the child demonstrates through speech and other activities, his or her mastery of the language. Moreover, it helps the child develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are woven throughout the day. To develop speaking and listening skills, teachers take time to converse with students one on one, and in small and large group settings. Students also learn the proper formation of letters by using a variety of writing equipment and the Montessori metal insets. Once children learn to form a few letters, their passion for writing is stirred. They learn to write before they learn to read. Reading is taught using both a strong phonics program and whole language activities. Students are introduced to the sounds that letters make as early as age 3 and often by the end of Kindergarten they are typically reading simple books.

Sensorial

The child's use of the sensorial materials will facilitate a refinement of the child's senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste); assist the child in classification, gradually developing finer and finer distinctions; and lead to abstract thought, always moving from the tangible and concrete to the abstract as the child learns to record sensory impressions accurately.

Mathematics

The materials in this area are physical representations of mathematical concepts—this includes geometry. It is important for the child to have access to mathematical experiences through sensorial manipulation. Qualities of the other five core areas can be found in the approach to mathematics and the idea is to give the whole concept first and then move on to the details. There are six basic groups of mathematics instruction and each one is presented in a three-step pattern: a concrete experience of the concept, followed by isolation of the concept and finally, a combination of the concrete with the abstract. The Montessori math materials are beautiful, inviting, and functional. These hands-on materials give children concrete experiences with numbers. Students makes the learning last and concepts easier to grasp. Montessori children explore these concepts with very concrete, hands-on materials. This helps them internalize the correlation between number symbols and their value. Once the concept of place value is solidified, students are shown how to add, subtract, multiply begin by rote counting or reciting the numbers, then move on to associating the number symbol to a quantity. They do this for numbers from zero to ten first. This leads to the introduction of the place value system. Research has shown that working with hands-on materials and divide these quantities and they love doing it! As they become comfortable with the operations, they are then introduced to simple math facts

Cultural Activities

This area encompasses geography, exploration of our natural world, social justice issues, and corresponding cultures. Children learn about other countries, their flags, customs, clothing, music, art and of course the food. The cultural area provides a platform of interest for all of the other four areas of the Montessori classroom. In science the natural world is presented to the child as they learn the parts of various plants, animals, and minerals. We explore nature firsthand as we plant gardens, take care of classroom pets, and collect rocks. Children at this age are curious about the natural world around them and enjoy naming and classifying the elements. Again, the approach is to give the child a sense of the whole of his or her humanity; then move into the finer details, utilizing storytelling, experiments, and limited field trips, with the child taking on more and more the burden of exploration as her abilities increase. The world is presented as a whole and then the child is encouraged to explore the details individually. This area provides the perfect entrée for the cultural empowerment curriculum. The learning materials used, and subject areas covered with the cultural activities will be inclusive of a wide range of cultures around the world, and will reflect the cultures of the children in the classroom.

Creative Activities

This includes art, music, drama, and poetry, in addition to writing. Elements of each of these are interwoven with the other core areas whenever possible and the child is encouraged to engage the imagination in trying to figure out solutions to classroom problems as well as societal problems. As their awareness of these issues increases, the burden of responsibility gradually increases as well



Lower Elementary Program - Serving Children Ages 6 Through 9

Inspired Learners

Our students examine ideas and deepen their understanding by using multiple lenses—writing, experimenting, performing, carving, presenting, painting. They become scientists by doing science, artists by creating art, and lifelong learners by finding joy in challenge and discovery.

At Shining Stars Montessori Academy, Elementary education is student-tailored for each child. It also covers more than just the traditional academic curricula area; it is an education of the whole child: cognitively, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. The curriculum follows the child, instead of forcing the child to follow the curriculum along with every other child at the same time. Only by following and studying the child can teachers match their efforts and provide appropriate jobs and environment tailored to the child's developmental needs.



at the same time creating a sense of achievement and fun.

At Shining Stars, we seek to nurture each child's natural desire to learn so they will develop to their fullest potential. Each day, children in the Elementary classrooms follow a routine that allows them to have confidence in the rhythm of the day and a sense of control in their environment. After arrival, children have time, called "Morning Meetings", where the students discuss their community time for the week and set out the routine of that particular day. Children then move into the uninterrupted work time, when they are allowed to choose from work on which they have had lessons. Each child has a learning plan to complete during the week, and they are responsible, with gentle encouragement and guidance, to make sure they complete the work for which they are responsible. Rather than being in an environment that makes work sound mundane and boring to children, they learn to associate work with things they can accomplish,

The Montessori philosophy considers "holistic development of the child to be essential." Work focuses on multiple forms of learning, stressing not only cognitive exercises but also tactile and auditory development. This is a time of high growth for the child, where she or he still rapidly absorbs the sights, sounds, and experiences in the world around her. Outside time in nature is a critical element of the Shining Stars Montessori philosophy as well, and Elementary students will have the benefit of an outdoor classroom and nature to explore. Elementary serves in many ways as a continuation of the foundation built in the Primary classrooms. Some of the same activities remain from the Primary classroom, ones that are "developmentally appropriate and help foster confidence and personal growth across a range of developmental schema. At the same time, new work is added to help the student continue to progress, ensuring growth across the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual realms." Montessori materials are laid out in an organized fashion throughout the classroom, at levels that are appropriate for children in this age range. The entire classroom is designed with the children's needs in mind.

A key concept in Montessori education is "freedom with responsibility." Each child has a work plan tailored just for him or her. At the beginning of the year and for younger students, the work is mostly teacher-chosen. As the students gain more skills, they can plan more of their own work. The students will meet with the teachers each Friday to discuss the current work plan and to plan for the week ahead. The children spend most of the mornings with work plans. A teacher checks all work each day. When the work plan is complete for the day, the child may choose any work in the classroom he or she has seen presented as a lesson. The work plan allows children the freedom to make choices. They move freely about the classroom during work time. They may choose to work at a table or on a rug on the carpet. They may choose to work alone or with a friend. They also choose the order in which to complete their tasks. Older children choose which days to complete which tasks. When the work plan is complete, children choose work from the shelves.

Mathematics

Math concepts at Shining Stars are aligned with the Common Core and presented in a logical sequence, beginning with the concrete, and leading to the abstract. Understanding takes precedence over memorization, which develops through repeated work with the operations. Through student work with the Montessori and other supporting materials, Elementary students are introduced to advanced mathematical concepts. Operations are presented in the following order: addition, multiplication, division, and subtraction. Geometrical concepts that are introduced at the sensorial level in the Primary Program, are explored further through the use of Montessori materials in Elementary. The study of geometric solids, lines, angles, basic shapes, plane figures, polygons, and quadrilaterals form an important foundation for further exploration of geometrical concepts.

Language

Language studies include multiple forms of learning in the Montessori Elementary classroom. Reading and writing are widely used forms of language development both through formal activities and daily interactions in all forms of communication. Students also focus on vocabulary development and word study. Through introduction to research, students also learn about paraphrasing, applying appropriate grammar and conceptual analysis, as well as developing oral presentations and performances to share their learning. All language curriculum is an alignment of Montessori standards and specialized materials, with the Common Core standards.

Reading

Shining Stars Montessori Academy utilizes the American Reading Company (ARC) Core for reading instruction. ARC Core provides a customized scope and sequence in a flexible framework that complements the Montessori method. Organized into thematic units, ARC Core is a structured project-based learning process that ensures that students are ready to meet the demands of college or career through extensive reading (both as a class and independently), multiple extended writing projects, and daily practice discussing ideas and texts with peers.





Science & Cultural Studies including the "Great Lessons"

In the Elementary classrooms, science and cultural studies are a central part of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy students' learning. Lessons are planned in both history and geography. Science lessons span the areas of geology, botany, zoology, physical science, and the scientific method. The Elementary classroom also includes the "Great Lessons": the Coming of the Universe, the Coming of Life, the Coming of Humans, the Coming of Language, and the Coming of Numbers.

Peace Education

The Peace Curriculum is a central part of Shining Stars Montessori Academy education. The focus of the lessons includes problem-solving among peers (e.g., use of the peace tables), the cause of conflicts and why some conflicts lead to violence, as well as considering alternative solutions and problem-solving techniques.





Upper Elementary Program – Serving Children Ages 9 Through 12

The Upper Elementary Classroom is an extension of the students' world. As such, the emotional aspects of the elementary students play an important role in their development. We help the students understand how to work, fit in and be a part of a community in a positive and productive way. At this level, we do not shy away from difficulties or issues; instead, we work through them in a healthy manner. The classroom is very calm and productive, but at times also lively and exciting, as collaborative activities take place. Character lessons and team building create an ever-changing and engaging environment. Each year, we create a Group Mission Statement, and discuss and make the rules of the classroom. Emphasis is placed on this classroom as the students' community—therefore, they must play an integral role in how it should be experienced.

The Upper Elementary Classroom

The look and feel of an Upper Elementary Montessori classroom are designed to encourage a positive learning environment and to foster independence. Our classroom environment includes:

- Plants, animals, natural light, beautiful materials, and a home-like feel that the students are responsible for taking care of
- Outside and corridor workspace
- "Works" that are arranged to create independence
- Self-paced learning and organization skills-building, using planners and binders



Students create ownership and shared responsibilities of their environment. They also understand how to complete work and have the confidence to ask for help from a peer or a teacher if needed. Within this environment, our job as teachers is to foster a love of learning. We also provide the space and materials that enable students to explore topics and concepts at a deeper level.

Upper Elementary Curriculum Overview

As educators, our goal is for the students to reach their fullest potential in all areas, so they can move forward with confidence in who they are and in their individual abilities—especially as they advance into their next level of academia successfully. In Montessori, we explore the academic areas a little differently—and at times, go more in-depth—compared to a more traditional scholastic environment. For example, Montessori places more emphasis on Science and Math during the elementary years. It would not be unusual to have our Upper Elementary students extract DNA from liver or a piece of fruit, learning about the Pythagorean Theorem or the Advanced Decanomial Sequence (based on the European math model), in addition to their regular standards of Science and Math.

A Typical Upper Elementary Day

The social and community building takes place daily in morning meeting. After meeting, students review expectations for the day with their daily planners. The students then start their work time where individualized and small group lessons take place.

Field Trips or "Going Out"

Maria Montessori called for "going out" to be an integral part of the elementary child's education. Trips to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Smithsonian museums, Frederick Douglass House, and the National Colonial Farm in Accokeek are just some of the places we plan to visit over the three-year cycle of the Elementary Program.

Community Service

Students are encouraged to bring forth areas of need in the community they are interested in making better. This helps to develop an awareness of the needs of others in their community. We began our community service outreach by coordinating a food drive for Martha's Table and S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat).

Music (Instrumental & Voice)

Music is an integral part of the Montessori philosophy. Consistent exposure to musical instruments, musical note work, and rhythm and melody work are a core part of the Shining Stars Academy philosophy of holistic development of the child.

Art

Regular art lessons are included in the Elementary classrooms. Lessons span the scope of visual arts, including drawing, painting, and sculpting.

Physical Education/Health and Wellness

In addition to extracurricular physical education options, regular physical education will be included in the Elementary classroom.

World Language Exploration at SSMA

Spanish continues to be offered as part of the regular day with children in Primary through Upper Elementary.

Common Core and Montessori Standards Curriculum Alignment

Shining Stars has aligned the Montessori Curriculum with the Common Core Standards to ensure students are meeting state learning standards. To assess academic progress throughout the year, every student will be evaluated using the NWEA MAP, based on Common Core Standards. Based on classroom work and observations as well as individualized standardized assessment data, students' instruction will be tailored accordingly.



The six-hour school day began with breakfast for all students and included uninterrupted work cycles in both the morning and afternoon master schedule.

See the daily schedule below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast 8:15-8:45	Breakfast 8:15-8:45	Breakfast 8:15-8:45	Breakfast 8:15-8:45	Breakfast 8:15-8:45
E 8:50-9:35		Morning Work Cycle 8:45-9:35		
	Morning Work Cycle 8:45 - 11	LIB 9:40 - 10:25	Morning Work Cycle 8:45 - 11	Morning Work Cycle 8:45 - 11
Morning Work Cycle 9:40 - 11		Morning Work Cycle 10:30 - 11:00		
LUNCH 11-11:30	LUNCH 11-11:30	LUNCH 11-11:30	LUNCH 11-11:30	LUNCH 11-11:30
RECESS 11:30 -12	RECESS 11:30 -12	RECESS 11:30 -12	RECESS 11:30 -12	RECESS 11:30 -12
Afternoon Work Cycle 12 - 3:00 Academic Support Intensives (Accelerated Learning Program)	Afternoon Work Cycle 12 - 3:00 Academic Support Intensives (Accelerated Learning)	Afternoon Work Cycle 12 - 3:00 Academic Support Intensives (Accelerated Learning)	Afternoon Work Cycle 12 - 3:00 Academic Support Intensives (Accelerated Learning)	Afternoon Work Cycle 12 - 3:00 Academic Support Intensives (Accelerated Learning)

The majority of students attended school in-person. Remote instruction was available full time for a small number of medically fragile students. As an early childhood/elementary school, the majority of SSMA students were unvaccinated and may have been at higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 outside of school, than students 12-years and older. If exposed, parents/guardians followed the school's reporting protocol, to notify the school of the child's exposure, so the school could take the necessary steps to ensure the child's learning is not interrupted. If a student had to be out of school because of COVID-19, the student utilized the equipment SSMA provided at the start of the school year for remote learning.

When safety protocols dictated it, SSMA moved classrooms to remote learning for quarantining purposes. In anticipation of unexpected or partial closures, SSMA provided each student with the technology, and materials they might need for remote learning.

SSMA staff leaned heavily into communicating with families, using the PowerSchool Communication Tools, phone, email, One Call Emergency Message Alert System, SSMA's website and via social media.

Students were able to immediately access our curriculum while remote via multiple platforms, including, but not limited to, Google Classroom and SSMA's parent portal. SSMA provided each student with the necessary equipment, to include, but not limited to, Chromebook and/or iPad [depending on the child's age, knowledge and/or experience with a tablet hotspot and web camera, to be used to access online resources and meetings.

Shining Stars nurtured a sense of community, using the digital resources (webcams, cameras, OWLs) that, in real time, connected the classroom to home; teachers/staff to students and parents; and students to students. To maintain continuity, teachers and staff also occasionally accessed professional development training remotely.





Partnership with parents is a critical component for the academic success and social-emotional development of the children. SSMA implemented a comprehensive approach to communicating and engaging with parents for collaboration and mutual support, which included a diversity of methods and activities.

Parent Orientation

At the beginning of every school year, the SSMA leadership team hosts an orientation meeting for new parents, to meet each other and SSMA staff, their childrens' guides, to learn about Montessori teaching methods and school protocols.

Student and Family Handbook

Within the Student and Family Handbook parents are able to find all of the school's policies and procedures, school enrollment and registration details, distance learning and social services resources [see II. Family Engagement In Continuous Learning section below] and additional information to help students and families succeed in the SSMA community.

Weekly News & Notes

Parents received a weekly newsletter, News & Notes, which is a communication from the Executive Director that shares timely information from each of the school departments, such as Teaching and Learning, School Counselor, Dual Language Immersion, School Librarian, School Operations, Tech Support, and COVID-19 policy and procedure updates. The News & Notes conveyed messages from DC agencies such as the DC Department of Health, OSSE, and Office of the Mayor. In addition, parents were informed of other resources for family support, academic and cultural enrichment. Data analysis of the Mailchimp software indicates very high open rates of the News & Notes.

One-Call, Text and Swift K12

Parents received calls and texts to their phones for any time-sensitive matters, such as unexpected school closures, COVID-19 notifications, and important reminders, high priorities, sensitive student-related information, and to schedule ways to connect in-person or via phone/video. Families received direct communication from the school at least twice weekly and more frequently with students with higher needs.

Website

SSMA's website, shiningstarspcs.org, was the location for general information about the school as well as specific details on typical school operations details (menus, activities calendars, Free Reduced Price Meal applications). This information was available to families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A parent portal was established to provide information to parents about school activities that, for safety and security reasons, was not available to the general public. The school's operating status (open, closed, weather delay, et. al.) was communicated on the main page of the website. When the school needed to close due to COVID-19 or for any other health or safety related reason, families were advised on the homepage.

Social Media Channels

SSMA staff consistently used Facebook and Instagram to communicate the school's values, Montessori method, student, staff, parent and whole school achievements and activities within the school; suggestions for home book libraries, outdoor and other enrichment activities; as well as school-wide announcements such as closures and open houses. Parents were encouraged to engage with posts, including commenting, answering questions, and sharing family experiences and photos. Staff post on Facebook and Instagram accounts five days per week.

Classroom guides also sent classroom-specific newsletters which included family encouragement, learning goals, lessons, and classroom progress, among other news.

Parent Surveys

SSMA staff surveyed parents to get their insights on ways to effectively serve the SSMA community, including, two surveys at different times about mandating masks indoors and outdoors.

Chat and Chew with the Executive Director

Dr. Rodriguez hosted five Chat and Chew meetings with parents, mostly during the early part of the school year, to address parent concerns about returning to in-person learning, COVID safety protocols, vaccines and other topics.

SSMACA Parent Meetings

The parent-led SSMA Community Association hosted four parent meetings at SSMA. The meetings are supported by SSMA leadership and staff, but the topics and activities are driven and led by parents.

Fall Festival

SSMA guides and parents organized the Fall Festival, which included fun fall activities, food, and a favorite book character costume parade. At least 12 parents volunteered to organize and staff the activity and it was well-attended by SSMA families.

Parent Engagement Workshops

SSMA's Counseling staff hosted numerous parent engagement workshops to help parents support their children's social, physical, emotional, and academic development. Workshop topics included:

- Transitioning from Distance to In-person Learning: How Hard Has it Been?
- How to Encourage Positive Behavior in Children
- 13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do
- How Can We Help Kids with Self-Regulation
- 6 Proven Ways to Encourage Kids
- How Trauma Impacts Brain Development
- Healthy Eating for Your Family

Dual Learning Immersion Activities

The DLI team hosted several activities for families whose children are enrolled in SSMA DLI program

- Family Meet and Greet at the National Arboretum
- Pulsera Project
- Strutting Our Stuff Showcase for Parents

Children's Garden

Parents, children and staff came together numerous times during the school year and summer to clean up, plant, maintain and harvest vegetables in the SSMA Children's Garden.





Monthly Board of Director's Meeting

Each month from September to June, parents are invited to attend and participate in SSMA Board of Director meetings.

Parent-Guide Conferences

SSMA held two parent-guide conferences for parents to speak one-on-one with guides about their children's development.

Giving at SSMA

SSMA families participated in three giving activities, particularly to benefit SSMA families in need.

- Project Give Back is led by SSMA parents who collect and distribute food to families in need.
- Gratitude Baskets the DLI classrooms collected and packaged food, household items and other gifts for SSMA families in need around the Thanksgiving break
- Capital Area Food Bank- SSMA partners with CAFB as a host site for SSMA families and other community members experiencing food instability to receive food items.

Festival of Lights Celebration

The SSMA community came together before the winter break to celebrate the end of the calendar year, share family traditions, food and fun activities.

Stepping Up Ceremony and Graduation

In the SSMA tradition, we resumed our Stepping Up and Graduation ceremonies, to celebration student milestones aligned with Montessori academic levels. Primary students (PreK3/4-K) were promoted or "stepped up" to Montessori Lower Elementary; Lower Elementary students (1st-3rd) stepped up to

Montessori Upper Elementary Level (4th-6th); and 6th graders "graduated" and were given celebratory send off to their respective middle schools. The celebration of these achievements are intended to instill pride in accomplishment, and a recognition of the responsibilities of maturing, leading younger students and being responsible role models and helpers to those who will follow behind them. SSMA parents take almost as much pride and joy in the experience.

In SY2021-2022, the Stepping Up ceremonies were streamed live on SSMA's YouTube channel, to reduce the risk of possible COVID-19 infections. Only students and limited school staff were present in-person, while an unlimited number of families and friends were able to watch online. After the ceremonies, parents were allowed to assemble with their children and take photos with their students in caps and gowns, in front of celebratory signage on the school lawn.



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

Meeting Our Mission

Creating a "culturally-inclusive and equity "centered" school means that Shining Stars staff will be intentional about our environmental design, educational practices, and behavior modeling to ensure a true cultural competency and equity-driven focus within the community. Materials will be familiar to students, while also expanding their exposure to cultures around the world. Books on the shelves of the in-class libraries reflect the ethnicities and cultures of our families, while also presenting children from a variety of backgrounds as heroes and heroines of their own stories.

A culturally-inclusive Montessori school across all classrooms is one where Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS students, staff and the parent community recognize, appreciate, and capitalize on diversity so as to enrich the overall learning experience. Fostering a culturally-inclusive learning environment encourages all individuals - regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or political beliefs - to develop personal contacts and effective intercultural skills. Cognitive development, perspective-taking, critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and problem-solving skills are among the outcomes that researchers have consistently noted in studies about the effects of inclusive pedagogy and curricula. Accordingly, engaging in meaningful discussions about racial/ethnic, gender, religious, and socioeconomic differences, as well as privilege in all its forms, affords students opportunities to think critically about topics to which they previously had not been exposed. When faculty interweave multicultural perspectives into classroom discourse, students can challenge preconceived notions and learn about the unique knowledge that their peers of diverse backgrounds hold and bring to the classroom. These principles are further supported through our peace curriculum and grace and courtesy lessons. Shining Stars Montessori School includes 'peace' as a major part of how we live our everyday lives. Creating a culture that promotes respecting yourself and the others around you further strengthens the peaceful classroom. When children are responsible for caring for their environment, themselves, and each other, they take more pride and ownership in creating and maintaining peace in the classroom. Many of these foci can be introduced as small and large group Grace and Courtesy Lessons and are practiced throughout the child's daily classroom experiences.

Aligned with other aspects of the curriculum, each month has been assigned a 'peace focus' or virtue to be highlighted and discussed in more detail throughout that month. For example, a 'friendship focus' in September helps children gain the skills needed to 'get to know others' and establish friendships as the year progresses. December is 'generosity' where children experience the 'joy of giving' at a personal level as most families participate in celebrations that include the act of giving. The other months also have similar areas of focus which are meaningful and relate to the child's everyday life.

The Grace and Courtesy lessons are the glue that holds the Montessori Primary (3-6) environment together and lays the foundation for success in the Montessori Elementary (6-12) environment. The lessons are formal and designed to preserve the harmony in the environment. In this context, "grace" can be defined as "harmony between the mind and the body"; and "courtesy" can be defined as "harmony between the self and other people." In both instances, we are talking about our social interactions with each other and how we move about in the prepared environment. It is extremely important that we are careful with our movements, adults as well as children, because of the direct social interactions in which we are all involved.

Grace deals primarily with efficiency and control of movement. The focus in a Montessori environment is on control of movement, so becoming a graceful person should be a natural outcome of all movement

experiences in a Montessori prepared environment. We are also taking advantage of the 3 to 4 1/2 year old child's sensitive period for movement and the fact that they are especially enthralled and interested in refining their movements.

Courtesy is what we use to help establish and maintain our social relationships in the environment. This does not necessarily mean that you have to make friends with everyone, but more so it pertains to the development of the ability to communicate what you need to do so that you could live in harmony with those around you. We also need to remember that the primary child is in a sensitive period for social relations and grace and courtesy are very important issues to them.

Ideally, through Grace and Courtesy, the Guide/adult may be able to prevent some things from happening. Children can be spared feelings of awkwardness, confusion, embarrassment, and total dependence on adults in the environment with regard to what to say or do in a given situation. The lessons can go a long way towards avoiding those feelings and also serve to counteract the negative impacts of adults who are not fully aware of how children learn.

Grace and Courtesy lessons allow the avoidance of commanding and directing and explaining to children what they need to do or correcting them when they do something. The idea is to demonstrate what needs to be done before the child is faced with a situation so that the child has all the information needed to function when actually faced with the situation. This allows the child to feel oriented and comfortable and able to function within the environment. We are not expecting that the child to behave in exactly the way that we demonstrate. We give the lessons knowing that the children will find their own ways. Some suggested lessons that can be taught at home include:

- How to sit in a chair
- How to close/open and door
- How to carry a book; how to read a book
- How to greet someone
- How to say goodbye
- How to interrupt someone
- How to offer/refuse help
- How to know when the bathroom is occupied
- How to talk softly
- How to honor and negotiate your and/or classmate's 'personal space'

Additional Conflict Resolution Strategies Children need to be taught how to handle conflicts. They also need to be given the opportunity to practice how to handle conflict situations. The adults in the environment need to be aware of this and always be ready to demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution strategies when the situation warrants it. A good rule of thumb to follow when helping children resolve conflicts is to first observe the situation before you step in. The only exception to this would be in the event that someone may be hurt if you do not intervene.

As much as possible, we want to encourage the children to solve their conflicts on their own with as much support from us as they need, in order to do so safely. At neutral times, we give grace and courtesy lessons on what to say and do in certain situations so that children are able to handle conflicts independently. At other times, we may need to be more involved in the resolution process, offering comfort and/or re-direction as children attempt to resolve issues and come to some resolution. Use of the 'peace table' (located in every room) will be among those behavioral strategies used to calm difficult situations.

MEETING OUR GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Shining Stars Montessori Academy (SSMA) PCS provided in-person learning for all students for 180 days at 6 hours per day, or 1,080 hours, and professional development for staff to ensure a healthy and safe learning environment.

After nearly two years of remote learning, in which students across the city and the nation experienced significant learning loss, we urgently focused in on recovering academic progress after returning to in-person learning.

Shining Stars has selected as its measure of academic achievement expectations for its prekindergarten through sixth grade programming the indicators identified in the Performance Management Framework (PMF) as outlined in the school's amended charter agreement. DCPCSB did not produce PMF scores for SY2021-2022.

PERFORMANCE ON STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

2022 PARCC and NWEA Assessment Summaries

NWEA Map Spring 2022

- Fall to Spring Math performance increased in 5 out of 7 grades and 3 out of 7 in ELA performance.
- 2nd grade showed the largest increase in performance on the Spring 2022 Math MAP assessment (10.6%).
- 6th grade showed the largest increase in performance on the Spring 2022 ELA MAP assessment (14%).
- Schoolwide, the percentage of students meeting their math growth goal significantly increased from Fall-to-Spring by 30 percentile points.

Strong Performances

- 79% of English Learners students met their Math growth goal.
- 86% of 6th graders met their growth goal in ELA.

Concerns

- Kindergarten ELA and Math performance decreased by 14.2% and 11.7%, respectively.
- 100% of students in 6th grade performed under the 50th percentile in ELA despite a majority meeting their growth goal.
- Special Education students and EL students scored lower than their non-subgroup counterparts also true in Winter, but a reversal from Fall. The At-Risk and McKinney Vento subgroups also scored lower than their non-subgroup peers this trend continues from Fall where these subgroups also performed lower than non-subgroup peers.
- Gender, Race/Ethnicity SpEd, Status, and At-Risk designation all indicate significant differences between student groups, where MKV and EL designations were inconclusive given the low n-size.



Math Growth by Subgroup

- The highest Math subgroup performance (in a student group with 5 or more students) was in the "Not-At-Risk" student subgroup (MGP=57). In Fall and Winter, the highest performance was in the English Language student group.
- The lowest Math subgroup performance (of a group with n-size 5 or more) was the "Female" subgroup (MGP=14). In Fall and Winter, the lowest performance was in the SpEd student group.
- English Language students scored higher than their non-subgroup counterparts, while the SpEd and At-Risk subgroup did not. This trend has held true since Fall.
- In Spring, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, EL status, and At-Risk designations all indicate large differences, where MKV designations continue to be inconclusive due to low n-size. SpEd status, while still a gap of 4 percentile points, has closed from a 17-point gap in Winter.

ELA Achievement by Subgroup

Most subgroup N-sizes for grades 3-6 are too small (n<5) to make comparisons against the non-subgroup.

- Male and Female achievement has evened out to be within 1% of each other at Level 4+, but Level 3+ has widened since Winter.
- The At-Risk subgroup also shows a wide variability between those designated "At-Risk" and those who are not, with the latter group meeting growth goals at a higher rate.
- All other comparisons have n-sizes under 5.
- Most subgroup N-sizes for grades 3-6 are too small (n<5) to make comparisons against the non-subgroup.

PARCC

Summary (Link to the Full Report)

Strong Performance:

- 52% of students in Grade 3 earned a Level 3+ in ELA. This is an increase of 16 percentage points from 2018-19. Very generally Grade 3 ELA and ELL students were real bright spots in our data.
- The proportion of students earning a Level 4+ in Math has increased to 21%. This is an 11-percentage point increase from 2018-2019.
- English Learner students performed 12 percentage points higher at Level 3+and 4+ compared to the general population in ELA and were on par at Level 3+ and 4+ in Math.

Concerns:

- 44% of students earned a Level 3+ in ELA. This is a decrease of 31 percentage points from 2017-18. We need to see 18-19 and 19-20.
- Not only has Level 3+ ELA gone down, the percentage of students in Levels 1 and 2 has gone up by 40 percentage points since 2017-18.
- The proportion of students earning a Level 4 in ELA <u>has droppe</u>d by 17 percentage points from 2017-2018.
- The proportion of students earning a Level 1 and 2 in Math has increased by 24 percentage points.
- We are seeing a downward historical trend in ELA.
- In Math, performance has increased from 18-19, but is still below 17-18 levels.

Sector Analysis:

- In ELA and Math 3rd grade students are performing better than students across the Charter District.
- Grade 6 SSMA students are significantly below the Charter Sector average.
- ELA performance at SSMA is much higher than Math in all but Grade 3.

Distribution across all levels

- No students achieved a Level 5 in ELA, only 4% of Grade 3 scholars did so in Math. Grade 3 generally performed better on PARCC than other grades.
- Close to half of students across all grades earned a Level 1 in Math.

Earning Level 4+ by Grade, Year over Year

- The overall ELA performance for students meeting or exceeding expectations of college and career readiness has decreased since 2017-2018. The overall performance in Math has increased since the 2017-2018.
- The overall performance in Math significantly decreased from SY2017-2018 to 2018-2019 and;
- slightly increased from SY2018-2019 to SY2021-2022. Grade 3 is driving any performance increases in both subjects.

By Race and/or Ethnicity

- The percent of students meeting, or exceeding expectations of college and career readiness is highest in the White/Caucasian race group and lowest in the Black/African American race group for both ELA and Math (Level 4).
- The percent of students approaching college and career readiness is highest in the White/Caucasian race group for both ELA and Math also true for Level 4+. The Hispanic/Latino student group has the lowest percentage for ELA and the Black/African American student group has the lowest percentages for math.
- English Language Learners outperformed the "All" student groups in both ELA and Math at the 4+ Levels, while students identified as Students with Disabilities or At-Risk performed significantly lower.
- English Language Learners outperformed the "All" student groups in ELA and were on par in Math at the 4+ Levels, while students identified as Students with Disabilities or At-Risk performed significantly lower in 2021-22. We cannot say if this trend has held true from previous years, as OSSE suppresses data for student groups under 10.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with Disabilities

As the school community transitioned back to in-person learning during the SY2021-2022, so did the inperson support for students with disabilities. Students were supported according to their services stipulated in their IEPs. Students received one-on-one and small group support within and outside the classroom.

Students were also provided with accommodations and modifications to ensure they had access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), through access to the general education curriculum.

Students received support from related service providers such as speech, occupational therapy and behavior supports, as well as in-person specialized instruction. Recovery goals focused on reading, writing and math, which were prioritized and delivered in conjunction with service session support, as well as supplemental activities, using platforms such as Reading A-Z, IXL and other learning software.

Service providers, teachers and parents consistently collaborated throughout the school year. On a weekly basis, team members utilized planning time to review student progress and discuss challenges. Some of the major challenges included student attendance and participation. Team members devised plans to help support students with modified workloads, establishing accountability partners and working with parents to find the solutions to barriers preventing students from accessing instruction. Team members also adjusted their approach to instruction when necessary. Annual and triennial meetings continued to be held virtually and consisted of all team members when possible. Clinicians continued to provide evaluations virtually, using Zoom, Google Meets and Doxy.

Once evaluations were finished, reports were provided to all team members electronically for review and discussion. For families who required translation, an interpreter accompanied meetings and documents were translated as needed.

Support for Students and Families with Limited English Proficiency

Similarly, when the school community resumed in-person learning, support services for English language learners resumed in-person. English Learner- certified specialists ensured that all students identified as English Language Learners had access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), with access to the general school curriculum. Specialists followed WIDA standards and assessment data as a guide to establish English Learner plans for each ELL student. SSMA contracted with professional translation vendors for verbal translation and document translation, as needed by parents. SSMA also has staff members who are native speakers of the Spanish and Amharic, the two home languages most frequently spoken by ELL families needing translation.

Students with Medical Certifications

When the school community returned to in-person learning in the fall of 2021, SSMA leadership proactively created the category of medically fragile students that were identified as special needs, without IEPs, because they were unable to return to in-person learning, due to their increased risk associated with COVID-19 infection. SSMA did not have any students who were determined to need Distance Learning for Students with Medical Certifications. Had there been any cases, SSMA was prepared to fulfill those students' rights to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

In the case of the student with a medical certification participating in virtual learning, SSMA

- (a) may provide headphones and a privacy panel so that when students are on-line, their focus is on the screen and ambient noise is lessened;
- (b) teacher may provide an outline of lessons prior to the start of class; and
- (c) teacher allows unrestricted bathroom breaks. The teacher would let the student know, in private, that it is okay to turn off his/her camera and go to the bathroom whenever necessary.

While all students who have medical certifications may not be special education students, the responsibility for ensuring that services are delivered, and students have the necessary 504 Plan lies with the 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator is responsible for implementing/providing oversight to SSMA's distance learning services to students with medical certifications in accordance with each student's 504 Plan.



DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Four years ago, SSMA began piloting a dual language immersion program (Spanish/English) with Primary students (PK3, PK4, K). The dual language program guides students who are English-dominant and non-English dominant toward acquiring two languages by learning a variety of skills in two languages in a Montessori environment. For all students in the immersion program, the goals are:

- To become bicultural, bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish; that is, to develop proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in two languages as well as cross-cultural communication
- To meet or exceed grade-level academic content standards and benchmarks in all subject areas, as defined by the Montessori Learning and Common Core State Standards



The dual language immersion (DLI) program at SSMA is expanding to accommodate students as they grow from primary to lower and upper elementary. There is a Spanish language dominant Guide and an English language dominant Guide for each cohort of students. As part of accelerated learning and remediation regarding students in the dual language immersion program, there is intentional instruction on literacy which offers students metacognitive flexibility and closes the achievement gap that research has proven many times over. Emergent bilingual learners and dual language immersion students

learn how to read differently than monolingual, English-speaking students. Research has shown that bilingual/biliterate students are able to use the same orthographic mapping process but with their full linguistic resources and codes within and across languages (Van Hell and Dijkstra, 2002; Dijksra et al., 1998).

We continued a robust Dual Language Immersion program in SY2021-2022, with the 3rd grade classes added as part of the progression. DLI staff fleshed out the curriculum for 3rd grade and 4th grade.

The DLI Coordinator provided extracurricular cultural activities and field trips that explored the Spanish language, history and culture of the Spanish-language diaspora. The activities aligned well with SSMA's Montessori and DLI curricula.

Key DLI accomplishments include:

- Expanding the bilingual library;
- Expanding the number of American Reading Company learning labs modules that are available to K-4th grade levels, in English and Spanish; and
- The Menchu Stars classroom published a second book, Poemas de estrellas Menchu, in Spanish and English. It was distributed to all students in the lower elementary class and was made available via Amazon to the rest of the school community.

Spanish language continues to be offered as part of the regular day with children in Primary through Upper Elementary. Based on federal law, English Language programs must be: (1) based on a sound educational theory; (2) adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and (3) periodically evaluated and revised, if necessary. Shining Stars implements two English Language Models: Dual Language Immersion and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).



Governance

SSMA's Board of Directors is very active and supportive of the school's fidelity to its mission, vision, and values. Board members meet monthly to stay abreast of the school's academic progress, culture, and climate, legal compliance, and fiscal management. They bring their unique and valuable insights as parents, educators, lawyers, and business professionals, as they review and approve school policies, plans, protocols, performance data, and supports for students, parents, and staff. Board members were especially attentive to the school leadership's needs for consultation and support as school community carefully transitioned back to in-person learning in SY2021-2022.



UNIQUE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We celebrated many accomplishments and milestones throughout the year, including:

- Our students showed growth on standardized assessments:
 - o 6th graders met math and ELA goals and showed tremendous growth
 - o 3rd graders exceeded expectations for growth in both math and ELA
 - Our students who are enrolled in the Spanish dual immersion program showed gains in mathematics
- We launched the **Upper Elementary weekly STEAM Challenge**, which aligned with 4-6th grade Montessori and Common Core mathematics and science learning standards.
- **SSMA Shining Lights Children's Choir** students learned songs, voice control, music, and performance skills after school.

Project Give Back

Staff and families collected, packaged, and delivered food to families in need, within and outside of the school community. SSMA also continued to partner with Capital Food Bank to serve as a host site for families facing food insecurity. SSMA families and community members were invited monthly to come to the building to receive groceries and prepared meals.

Children's Community Garden

Our students continued to maintain and improve the organic vegetable garden that they built in previous years. 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.





Young Ladies with Purpose

The Young Ladies of Purpose, a new extracurricular, rights-of-passage program that supports the social-emotional and leadership development of our upper elementary girls, held meetings throughout the school year. In addition to participating in academic related activities, students took part in community service activities. Students created cards and prepared small gifts for seniors in local assisted living and nursing homes. With the help of our parents ang guardians who donated, students were able to make holiday ornaments for 120 seniors. Thank you to staff and parents who donated to support this service project. At the end of the school year, to celebrate their accomplishments and commitment to academia and community service, the young ladies held a white linen etiquette and dress up cotillion. This was a wonderful and fun event that gave students a chance to dress up and for parents/guardians to meet and get to know one another.



Parent Engagement Program Trainings

The SSMA Parent Education Program (PEP) was conducted virtually during the 2021-2022 school year by Dr. Willa Jones, the Director of Student Support Services. The Parent Education Program is a series of eight skill-building workshops which began in October and ended in May. During these informative and supportive sessions, information is shared, and parents are encouraged to explore their thoughts and feelings about the various topics.

The 2021-2022 schedule is presented below:

- o 10.28.21: Transition from Distance to In-School Learning: How Has it Been?
- o 11.18.21: How to Avoid Power Struggles
- o 12.16.21: 13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do
- o 2.17.22: How to Help Children with Self-Regulation
- o 3.17.22: Six Proven Ways to Encourage Kids Effectively
- o 4.21.22: How Trauma Impacts Children's Brain Development
- o 5.19.22: Healthy Eating for Your Family

• Science Fair and Space Parade

Fourth through Sixth grade students held their first Science Fair and Space Parade, a curriculum culminating event designed and put on by them with the support of the upper elementary teachers. This new tradition made several onlookers teary-eyed. The care students shared for one another showed in their remarks and partner routines. The trust was there. Students presented and displayed their projects in front of one another, some for the first time ever. It was beautiful to see, particularly in the vulnerable years of adolescence and approaching tweendom. The event involved all the upper elementary scholars presenting their space projects that they worked on for two and half weeks as a culmination to the science curriculum. A great deal of thought, research, and planning went into this science fair and peace parade. Students read the American Reading Company (ARC) book called "Space", they chose a study group, decided on a group name, researched planet, and other planetary objects within the solar system, worked in groups, and decided on a topic of study. Then, students prepared a well-research paper, a PowerPoint presentation, and sculpted a model of the solar system under study. What made this fair even more memorable was the involvement of our parents/guardians who purchased white jackets and materials for their models (students) to wear as they presented their hard work. The students included the fair by having a parade where they were able to showcase their models with the primary and lower elementary students.





• Spirit Week

SSMA students and staff 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.) Spirit Week builds a sense of community, encourages imagination and creativity, and supports fun ways for children to express themselves with and among their peers. Students showed up in their creative outfits and shared photos for SSMA's social media channels.

Day of Service

Montessori Stars serving the community by helping to clean up the campus and surround neighborhood.



• Day of Peace

Students enjoyed many activities demonstrating what Peace means in the Montessori Children's House. The children demonstrated their knowledge through role play, discussions, and working together as a team making tie-dye masks. Later the class ate refreshing Italian ice in the atrium donated by the class parents.





• School FAR Report

In FY 2021, the LEA continued its robust financial performance. The change in net assets margin nearly doubled from 17% in FY 2020 to 32% in FY 2021 due mainly to the \$0.6M PPP loan forgiveness and a \$0.6M rent abatement, combined with effective cost management. As shown in the following chart, the cash flow from operations margin declined slightly from 17% in FY 2020 to 15% in FY 2021, still above the 12% sector median, as the noncash PPP loan forgiveness and rent abatement did not contribute to cash flows in FY 2021. Effective March 2021, the LEA acquired from Howard University the leasehold interest of the facility at 1240 Randolph Street, NE. The LEA expects this acquisition will provide an increased level of long-term financial stability. The FYE 2021 debt ratio increased above the 0.5 target to 0.7 as the LEA funded its capitalized \$11.0M ground lease right of use through two loans, for a total of \$7.5M, and a \$3.5M lease liability. This is not a cause for concern since the LEA demonstrates above target liquidity indicators.

OUR DONORS*

Name	Amount
Rokhaya Cisse	\$1,000.00
Regina Rodriguez	\$2,500.00

^{*}Contributions of \$500 or more

SCHOOL 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	44	36	31	28	25	32	12	28	10
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	Total number of instructional days: 180
PCSB	Suspension Rate: 4.50%
PCSB	Expulsion Rate: 0.00%
PCSB	Instructional Time Lost to Discipline: 0.10%
PCSB	In-Seat Attendance: 91.70%*
PCSB	Average Daily Attendance: Not Applicable
PCSB	Midyear Withdrawals: 6.90% (17 students)*
PCSB	Midyear Entries: 1.60% (4 students)*
PCSB	Promotion Rate (LEA): 100%
PCSB (SY20-21)	College Acceptance Rate: Not Applicable
PCSB (SY20-21)	College Admission Test Score: Not Applicable
PCSB (SY20-21)	Graduation Rate: Not Applicable

Faculty and Staff Data Points

School	Teacher Attrition Rate: 14.7%
School	Number of Teachers: 34
School	Teacher Salary:
	Average: \$56,763
	Range: Minimum: \$35,000 Maximum: \$85,000
School	The following represents Shining Stars employees earning more than \$100,000 in School Year 2021-2022. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia, Executive Director Cherita Moore-Gause, Director of Operations Gail Jenkins, Principal Willa Jones, Director of Student Support

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: STAFF ROSTER 2021-22

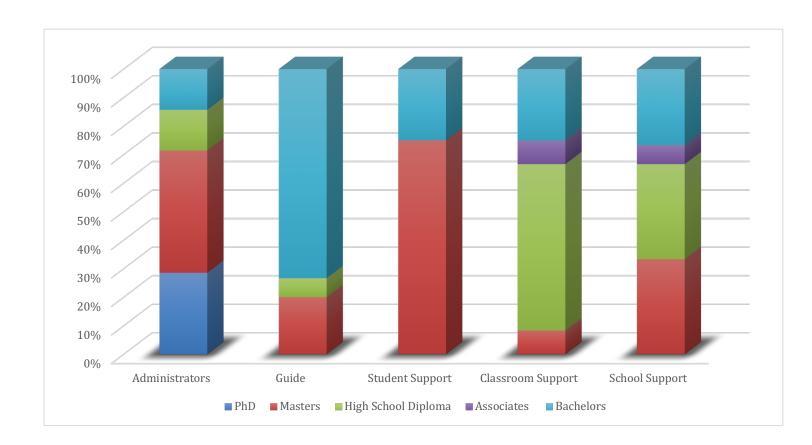
First Name	Last Name	Title	
Matilde	Alcala	Bilingual Lead Montessori Guide	
Cynthia	Allen	Upper Elementary Classroom Assistant	
Nieva	Armstrong	Lower Elementary Classroom Assistant	
Nicole	Austin	SSMA Montessori Teaching Fellow and Primary Lead Guide	
Melissa	Ayala	English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator	
Marelli's	Barrios-Florez	SSMA Teaching Fellow and Dual Language Primary Spanish Teacher	
Rachel	Briggs	Director of Curriculum and Administration	
Bettina	Brown	Primary Guide	
Julius	Brown	Dedicated Aide and Behavioral Assistant	
Ronelda	Brown	Upper Elementary Guide and Next Steps Program Coordinator	
Milton	Brumfield	Custodian	
Nzinga	Burrell	Upper Elementary Math and Science Teacher	
Shaneka	Bush	Primary Classroom Assistant	
Darryl	Buxton	Director Of Special Education and English Language Services	
Aaliyah	Carter	Operations COVID-19 Response Associate	
Rachele	Celeste	Kitchen Manager	
Raquel	Clark	Program Assistant	
Aldith	Coleman	Food Service Manager	
Jewel	Collins	Special Education Teacher	
Sherry	Feliz	Classroom Assistant	
Delton	Fontroy	Program Coordinator and Montessori	

		Afterschool Program (MAP) Coordinator
Barbara	Giordano	Part-Time Receptionist
Harry	Gray	Special Education Teacher
Vanessa	Guardado	SSMA Teaching Fellow and Dual Language Primary Spanish Teacher
Bessie	Hubbard	Primary Classroom Assistant
Maurice	Jackson Jr.	Primary Guide
Elizabeth	Jean	Lower Elementary Classroom Assistant
Gail	Jenkins	Principal
Natasha	Johnson	Operations Associate
Willa	Jones	Director Of Student Support
Vyju	Kadambi	Assistant Principal
Louise	Kelley	Senior Reading and Writing Specialist
Топуа	Kornegay	Classroom Assistant
Sandra	Larios	Primary Classroom Assistant
Lauren	Lynn	Lead Elementary Humanities Teacher
James	McGriff	Senior Operations Associate
Steven	Miller	Custodian
Kerry-Ann	Mohammed-Espinoza	Lower Elementary Classroom Assistant
Erma	Molina	Lead Primary Guide
Cherita	Moore-Gause	Director Of Operations and Business Manager
Iisha	Nelson	Special Education Teacher
Aminat	Onafuna	Lead Elementary Guide
Nina	Ouzounova	Lead Primary Guide
Gisselle	Ozuna	Classroom Assistant
Sonija	Parson	SSMA Montessori Administrative Fellow and Dual Language Immersion Program Coordinator
Kathryn	Price	Librarian
Zufan	Reddae	Primary Classroom Assistant
Regina	Rodriguez	Executive Director and Head of School
Susan	Shaw	Lower Elementary Guide
Sandra	Simpson	Bilingual Primary Classroom Assistant
Tais	Taylor	Operations School Performance

		Manager
Jemia	Terry	English Language Learner Teacher
Sharese		Front Office Manager and Receptionist

Staff Qualifications for 2021-2022

Shining Stars prides itself on the quality and dedication of its teaching and support staff. All staff members are carefully selected. Our teachers are American Montessori Society (AMS) and/or Association Montessori International (AMI) trained and certified or are in the final stage of certification. SSMA teachers and student support staff 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 2021-22

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 2021-22 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

		Year-To-Date
Income Statement		Actual
Revenue		
	State and Local Revenue	5,019,856
	Federal Revenue	345,119
	Private Grants and Donations	8,549
	Earned Fees	140,565
	Total Revenue	5,514,088
Expenses		
•	Salaries	2,983,948
	Benefits and Taxes	534,242
	Contracted Staff	0
	Staff-Related Costs	47,773
	Rent	0
	Occupancy Service	168,835
	Direct Student Expense	452,990
	Office & Business Expense	686,428
	Total Expenses	4,874,217
Operating Income		639,871
Extraordinary Expenses		
	Interest	589,233
	Depreciation and Amortization	403,704
	Total Extraordinary Expenses	992,938
Net Income		(353,067)

Assets		Year End
Current Assets		
	Cash	2,639,466
	Accounts Receivable	18,542
	Other Current Assets	210,927
	Intercompany Transfers	0
	Total Current Assets	2,868,936
Noncurrent Assets		
	Facilities, Net	11,045,508
	Operating Fixed Assets, Net	237,640
	Total Noncurrent Assets	11,283,147
Total Assets		14,152,083

Liabilities and Equity	Year End
Current Liabilities	

	Accounts Payable	42,094
	Other Current Liabilities	5,752
	Accrued Salaries and Benefits	148,869
	Total Current Liabilities	196,715
Equity		
	Unrestricted Net Assets	3,927,217
	Net Income	(353,067)
	Total Equity	3,574,150
Long-Term Liabilities		
	Senior Debt	7,348,447
	Other Long-Term Liabilities	3,032,770
	Total Long-Term Liabilities	10,381,218
Total Liabilities and Equity		14,152,083

APPENDIX IV: APPROVED 2022-23 BUDGET

Income Statement		<u>SY22-23</u>
Event		-
Students		271
Students		2/1
Employees		
	Teachers	27
	Other Curricular	17
	General and Admin	13
Total Employees		57
Revenue		
	State and Local Revenue	5,728,209
	Federal Revenue	727,938
	Private Grants and Donations	-
	Earned Fees	125,862
	Donated Revenue	-
Total Revenue		6,582,009
Operating Expense		
	Salaries	3,471,818
	Benefits and Taxes	669,365
	Contracted Staff	-
	Staff-Related Costs	40,427
	Rent	-
	Occupancy Service	195,944
	Direct Student Expense	651,031

	Office & Business Expense	760,420
	Donated Expense	_
	Contingency	65,820
Total Operating		
Expense		5,854,826
Net Operating		
Income		727,183
Interest,		
Depreciation		
	Depreciation and Amortization	101,956
	Interest	401,436
Total Expenses		6,358,217
Net Income		223,792