

WAUSAU AREA  
**MONTESSORI**  
CHARTER SCHOOL

FAMILY HANDBOOK  
2011 - 2012



*Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!*

*- Anne Frank  
(Montessori Student)*

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# CONTACTING WAMCS

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Main Phone: **261-0795** Fax: 261-2035 Health Office: 261- 0749

[www.wausau.k12.wi.us/montessori](http://www.wausau.k12.wi.us/montessori)

## School Hours

School Day	8:15 am - 3:15 pm	Arrival	7:50 - 8:15 am
Office Hours	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Dismissal	3:15 - 3:30 pm

## Administrative Staff

WAMCS Principal

**Thom Hahn**

Director of Education

[thahn@ausau.k12.wi.us](mailto:thahn@ausau.k12.wi.us)

## Classroom Staff

<b>Robin Scherr</b>	Teacher - Grades K-1	<a href="mailto:rscherr@ausau.k12.wi.us">rscherr@ausau.k12.wi.us</a>
<b>Charles Patten</b>	Teacher - Grades 2-3	<a href="mailto:cpatten@ausau.k12.wi.us">cpatten@ausau.k12.wi.us</a>
<b>Sarah Yoho</b>	Teacher - Grades 4-6	<a href="mailto:syoho@ausau.k12.wi.us">syoho@ausau.k12.wi.us</a>

Classroom Assistants

## How to Reach School Staff

**Notes:** Place notes for teachers in your child's Communication Folder.

**Email:** Notes to teachers via Email can be an efficient means of communication. Please understand that teachers have limited time during the school day to check email. It could be the end of the school day or even a day or two before time allows an appropriate response. For a more immediate response, please call the number above.

**Telephone:** The main WAMCS phone line is answered by the Montessori secretary who will take attendance information, answer questions, or take messages for teachers. She can also connect you to a teacher's voicemail when appropriate. In your message please include the best way to reach you. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

## School Websites

**[www.wausau.k12.wi.us/montessori](http://www.wausau.k12.wi.us/montessori)** In addition to information about the Montessori method and other important school information, our website also includes a monthly calendar, access to the hot lunch menu and information about volunteer opportunities. Updated monthly during the school year.

**[www.PayPAMS.com](http://www.PayPAMS.com)** Pay for meals, view balances and cafeteria purchases, and view menus online using the Parent Account Management System (student ID# is required).

**[www.wausau.k12.wi.us](http://www.wausau.k12.wi.us)** The Wausau School District Website

**WAMCS Parent Connect** is on Facebook: search for "WAMCS Parent Connect" or contact Anna Schreiber: [schreiberfamilyfour@gmail.com](mailto:schreiberfamilyfour@gmail.com) 715-581-0200



**The WAMCS Governance Council** sets WAMCS policy and guides operations. The Council typically meets on the third Monday of each month at 4:30, in the upper library. Meetings are open to all in accordance with Wisconsin open meeting laws. Agendas are posted on the WAMCS bulletin board at school, as are meeting minutes. Both are available from the Council Secretary. *Members as of August 2011:*

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Email</u>
Ingrid Clark Zavadoski, President	Jan. 2011-2013	iclarkz@gmail.com
Joe Reissmann, Vice President	Jan. 2011-2012	jreissmann@yahoo.com
Dan Weith, Secretary	Jan. 2011-2013	djweith@msn.com
Anna Schreiber	Jan. 2011-2012	schreiberfamilyfour@gmail.com
Kristine Zarins	Jan. 2011-2012	Kristine.Zarins@cssw.org
Patti Filak	Jan. 2010-2011	pfilak@yahoo.com
WAMCS Teacher	2011-2012	
WAMCS Principal	ex-officio	
Thom Hahn, Director of Charter Programs	ex-officio	thahn@ausau.k12.wi.us

*Members are appointed by the Wausau School Board with recommendations by the sitting WAMCS Council. Terms begin in January, and members serve for staggered 2-year terms.*

WAUSAU AREA  
**MONTESSORI**  
CHARTER SCHOOL

***MISSION:***

*Our mission is to use the principles of Dr. Maria Montessori to create educational success with individualized instruction and hands-on learning, to foster awareness of self, and to instill acceptance of the unique responsibility each of us has to our world.*

***VISION:***

We are dedicated to providing an environment where we will:

- Attract, develop, and retain certified, Montessori-trained teaching staff.
- Meet each student's developmental needs.
- Connect each student to his/her learning environment by providing concrete educational experiences.
- Communicate with each child to encourage mutual-respect and intrinsic motivation.
- Reinforce learning by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate and share their knowledge with other students.
- Create community by overseeing constructive problem solving, and by building healthy, long-term interpersonal relationships.
- Encourage students to make good choices with work time.
- Invite families to participate in the educational process.

*Adopted by the Wausau Area  
Montessori Charter School  
Governance Board*

*June 24, 2006*

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# MONTESSORI EDUCATION

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Early in the twentieth century Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy's first woman physician, developed educational materials and methods based on her observations that children learn best by doing, not passively accepting other people's ideas and pre-existing knowledge. This idea of learning promotes the active personal pursuit of many different experiences: physical, social, emotional, cognitive. The materials Montessori devised foster an environment in which such learning takes place.



Dr. Montessori believed learning should occur in multi-age classrooms where children at various stages of development learn from and with each other. Her developmentally appropriate approach was designed to fit each child instead of making each child fit the program.

Montessori teachers, often called guides or directresses, know that children learn more by participating and experiencing than by simply listening and reading about information and events. Montessori training programs prepare guides to create dynamic, interactive learning environments that encourage each child to reason, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand. Their goal is the development of an autonomous individual, competent in all areas of life, not merely someone with the "right" answers.

## Montessori Key Concepts

A Montessori education fosters competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are lifelong learners and problem solvers.

Learning occurs in an inquiring, cooperative, nurturing atmosphere. Students increase their knowledge through both self- and teacher-initiated experiences.

Learning takes place through the senses. Students learn by manipulating materials and interacting with others. These meaningful experiences are precursors to the abstract understanding of ideas.

The individual is considered as a whole. Physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cognitive needs and interests are inseparable and equally important.

Each student is treated with respect, and individual skills and interests are acknowledged.

Respect for self, others, the environment and life is necessary to develop a caring attitude toward people and the planet.

## Basic Characteristics of the Montessori Classroom

- Guides (teachers) are trained in the Montessori philosophy and methodology appropriate to the age level they are teaching.
- The learning community includes students, school staff and families. The family is considered an integral part of the students' total development.
- Classes include a multi-aged, multi-grade, heterogeneous group of students.
- A diverse set of Montessori materials, activities and experiences which are designed to foster physical, intellectual, creative and social independence are used to educate all students.
- The daily schedule provides students with large blocks of uninterrupted time to solve problems, to see the interdisciplinary connections of knowledge and to create new ideas.
- The classroom atmosphere encourages social interaction for cooperative learning, peer teaching and emotional development.

## The Montessori Guide (teacher)

**A Resource and Consultant** for the students -- he or she will guide them to find the resources they need for their many questions.

**An Observer** -- the Guide observes both what and how a student is working and acting to ascertain what support materials or lessons are needed for that child.

**A Model** -- the Guide embodies the behaviors, dispositions, aspirations, and possibilities that she wishes to see in the students. The Guide is "firm at the edges and empathetic at the center", and will respond supportively to a student's feelings, while firmly establishing limits for the group.

*An understanding heart is everything in a teacher, and cannot be esteemed highly enough. One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.*

*- Carl Jung*

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# THE WAUSAU AREA MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

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The Wausau Area Montessori Charter School was established in the fall of 2005 to offer area families an alternative to traditional classroom learning. WAMCS was created when parents at Montessori Children's Village, then a private elementary program, worked with the Wausau School District to create a new charter school within the district.

Since we are a public charter school, there is no tuition. Like other public schools, funding comes from the Wausau School District, with additional state funding. A startup grant awarded by the US Department of Education and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction was used to purchase classroom materials and initiate teacher training. A "school within a school", we are currently housed in a sixth grade wing at Horace Mann Middle School.

We are an authentic Montessori school. We use real Montessori materials as well as teacher-made materials. Guides are Montessori trained and classes are multiage.

Because we are housed within a middle school, we have access to the middle school gymnasium, the swimming pool, the hot lunch program and the library. Students interact with the middle school students only when an activity has been arranged with the middle school teachers. A playground is located outside our school entrance, and Montessori students have their own recess time.



## A Day at WAMCS...

Our school day starts at 8:15 am, well after the middle schools students have begun. Our students arrive between 7:50 and 8:10, put their lunches, coats and backpacks in their lockers and enter the classrooms where the guides are ready to greet them.

Lessons begin promptly at 8:15 am. Lessons are typically presented to small groups of students but are sometimes presented individually or to the whole class. The morning work time runs from 8:15 until around 11:00, when students clean up and lunch begins.

After lunch, afternoons include gym and music which are taught by specialists, as well as recess and additional classroom work and lesson time. Around 3:00, the students clean up and prepare to head home. Dismissal is at 3:15. Students who have not been picked up by 3:30, will be asked to wait in the office.

## A Year at WAMCS...

Our school year begins in late August with a Family Orientation. This is a great time for families to see each other again, for students to bring in their materials and for both students and parents to familiarize themselves with the classrooms and the school. Important information is distributed, and classroom guides will answer questions that families may have.

***A New Beginning*** The first week focuses on students and guides getting to know each other. A fall picnic is also planned as a social event. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to meet each other or get reacquainted in a social setting.

***Teaching the Whole Child*** Learning occurs in the classrooms, on the playground, throughout the school, and on field trips. We teach the whole child, meaning that academics, social skills, courtesy and physical skills are equally important. Within the classroom, students are free to move around, working alone or with others as they choose. Students are encouraged to help each other learn. Students may even be found helping in other Montessori classrooms. Parent volunteers are a common sight in our classes, and we appreciate all that they do.



***Lunch and Learn*** Lunchtime is also seen as a learning opportunity. Parents are always welcome to join us for lunch. Periodically, a committee of students in each class prepares a healthy snack or meal for the entire class.

On Valentine's Day, we have a special tradition. The children each draw another child's name. It is then their job to make a nutritious lunch for that student. They also decorate the bag or the box that contains the lunch to make it beautiful.

***“Going Outs”*** Learning at WAMCS also means leaving the classroom at times. What Maria Montessori called “going outs” are important for elementary students who are ready to learn from interactions within their communities. Small groups of children are encouraged to plan field trips when completing self-chosen research projects.

**Exploring** Class field trips are also common at WAMCS. Every year, all of our students visit the Wausau School Forest for a day trip to learn about the natural environment. The 4th, 5th & 6th Grade class visits the School

Forest again for either a day or an overnight trip. Check the school calendar and updates on the school website or in your child's communication folder for other field trip opportunities.

**Look deep into nature and...  
understand everything better.**

- Albert Einstein

**Celebration** The end of the school year is a time for celebration. A spring program includes a graduation ceremony for students "moving up" and a hearty congratulation to all the students for their work for the year. On the last day of school, the students spend a relaxing and fun day enjoying each other's company, signing yearbooks and celebrating the year.



## WAMCS Traditions

Family Orientation & Open House, *late August*

Family Game & Activity Nights, *Fall, Winter and Spring*

Maria's Kitchen (Student Prepared Snacks or Lunches), *monthly*

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum Visits

Grand Theater Field Trips

Wausau School Forest Day Visit for all students, *January*

Valentine's Day Lunch, *February*

Wausau School Forest Overnight for Grade 4 - 6 students, *December*

Colonial Manor Nursing Home Visits, *monthly*

End of Year Picnic With New Incoming Families, *mid-May*

Moving Up Ceremony & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation, *June*

*The hands are the instruments of man's intelligence.*

*-Maria Montessori*



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# WAMCS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## GETTING STARTED...

### Arrival at school 7:50 to 8:15 am

It is important that students arrive on time. It's hard for a child to enter class after everyone else has settled into their work. Class begins at 8:15 am. Children may be dropped off after 7:50. Please provide enough time for your child to put his or her belongings away, greet friends and get settled in the classroom.

Any student who arrives tardy (after 8:15) must report to the main office to check in. They should then quietly enter the classroom in order to minimize disruption in the flow of classroom activity.

### Parking: Student Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Drop-off and pick-up occur on the east (playground) side of Horace Mann. You may stop the vehicle and wait, but please remain in the car. If leaving your vehicle, please park in a designated parking stall.



Middle school bus traffic on the east-side drive is very busy from 7:15 to 7:45 and from 2:40 to 3:05. When arriving prior to 7:50 or earlier than 3:15, you must park your car in a lot, regardless of whether you remain in your car. **Buses must not be blocked**, so please do not stop curbside at these times. Your cooperation will enhance student safety and allow bus traffic to flow without delays.

**West Lot.** Consider the west-side parking lot as an alternative.

Typically few cars are parked there, buses don't use that side of the building, and during busy times it is much less hectic. From the west entrance, the classrooms are just across the school lobby. Enter the west lot at 13<sup>th</sup> and Spring Streets.

### Transportation

Because our school is small and students travel from many parts of the area it is impractical to provide bus service. Transportation of students to and from WAMCS is a family responsibility. Car pooling is encouraged.

# DAILY ROUTINES...

## Communication Folders

Effective communication between home and school is essential to the success of your child here at school. Each student has a Daily Communication folder. Important information such as permission forms, classroom newsletters, homework, etc. is sent home in the children's communication folders. Please send this folder with your child every morning.

Notes to teachers can go back to school in this folder. The folders are checked every day and sent home every afternoon. Your interest lets the children know that you place a high value on their education.

## Student Belongings at School

Please leave play items such as handheld video games, card collections, sports equipment, toys etc. at home. They are distractions at school and can end up broken or lost. Skateboards, roller blades/skates and scooters are not to be used at school. Cellular phones brought to school must remain in student's locker during the school day.



Occasionally children may bring something that is important to them to share with their class. This may include shells, rocks, something they have made, books or some other item of interest. Please discourage your child from bringing toys such as dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, etc. If a child brings non-educational playthings into the classroom, these items will be stored by the teacher and returned to the family at dismissal.



## Lunch

Students may bring a sack lunch (warm-ups are fine) or may take hot lunch from the Horace Mann cafeteria. We encourage students to eat a well balanced diet so please limit the amount of “snack” foods like potato chips, cookies, etc. Candy and soda are not allowed in school. A microwave is available, and cold packs should be included with lunches that need to be kept cool. Lunches are stored in student lockers.

**Hot Lunch:** Students who wish to take hot lunch can pick up a payment envelope from outside of the cafeteria. Parents deposit money into the student’s account using these envelopes (checks payable to **“WSD-Food Service”**). A new envelope will be sent home when the account needs replenishment, which can be sent back in the student’s communication folder or placed in the metal container marked “for payments” outside the lunch line area. .

**Online Payments:** Parents can pay for meals, view balances and cafeteria purchases, and view menus online using the Parent Account Management System at **www.PayPAMS.com** (student ID number is required).

Free and Reduced Lunches are available to qualifying students. Contact the main office for more information.

**“Maria’s Kitchen”** One of our traditions is for the students to plan and prepare a snack or meal for the students in their class. Each family will be asked for an ingredient to contribute and will be notified by a slip sent home with their child. This is a tradition that the students look forward to and take pride in. Parents are welcome to join us when possible. It is helpful to have a couple of parent volunteers to coordinate on the day of “Maria’s Kitchen.”

## Milk

Milk cards are available for \$7.00 for 20 cartons. Parents pre-pay for milk cards which are punched as they are used. You will be notified when you need to buy another card and should be paid from separately from hot lunch. Checks should be made payable to: **“WSD-Food Service.”**

Students are asked each morning if they want milk and what kind (white, chocolate, strawberry). Milk is provided with hot lunch. Students may choose two milks to have during snack. Please discuss these choices with your child.

## Snack

Snack routines are determined within each classroom.

# 2011-2012

## Yearly Planner

August 11						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### August

- 29** Teacher Inservice
- 30** 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Welcome to WAMCSI (for all new families to our school)
- 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Open House
- Teacher Inservice

September 11						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### September

- 1** First Day of School
- 5** Labor Day - No Classes
- 14** Picture Day

October 11						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### October

- 3** District Wide Professional Development - No Classes
- 19** Picture Retake
- 27** Fall Break

February 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

### December

- 29** Winter Break
- 30** Winter Break

### January

- 2** Classes Resume

- 19** Elementary Recordkeeping - No Classes - PM

- 20** District Wide Professional Development - No Classes

### February

- 20** District Wide Professional Development - No Classes

March 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

### March

- 16** Elementary Recordkeeping - No Classes - PM

- 22** 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Spring Conferences

- 23** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Spring Conferences

No Classes

April 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**28** Fall Break

**November**

**4** Elementary Recordkeeping -  
No Classes - PM

**17** 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Fall  
Conferences

**18** 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM Fall  
Conferences

Early Dismissal 11:30

**23** District Wide Professional  
Development - No Classes

**24** Thanksgiving Recess

**25** Thanksgiving Recess

**December**

**26** Winter Break

**27** Winter Break

**28** Winter Break

November 11						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December 11						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**26** Spring Break

**27** Spring Break

**28** Spring Break

**29** Spring Break

**30** Spring Break

**April**

**6** No Classes

**20** District Wide Professional  
Development - No Classes

**May**

**25** Elementary Recordkeeping -  
No Classes - PM

**28** Memorial Day - No Classes

**June**

**1** Students' Last Day

May 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July 12						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# Health Services (261-0749)

The Wausau School District's registered nurses function as health service administrators and provide direct and on-call nursing services to all schools. A health aide/health room is available at Horace Mann for students who become ill, injured, require medication, or have any health concerns. Health services shall be provided according to the Wausau School District Health Care Policy and Procedure Manual and per the Emergency Nursing Plan.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Confidential student health and immunization records are maintained in Health Services.

## EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD

All students are required to have a signed form on file for information and permission to act in case of an emergency.

Please list emergency contacts who can pick up your child from school in case you cannot be reached and your child becomes ill or injured.

Please inform the school of any changes that may occur during the school year, so this card can be updated.

## PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Prior to administration, students must have written instructions, along with practitioner and parent/guardian signatures on the WSD Medication Consent Form. All medications are kept locked in Health Services, except students

may carry and self-administer inhalers, EpiPens, or insulin when practitioner and parent or guardian give consent on the medication form.

## NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Prior to administration, students must have written instructions and a parent or guardian signature on the WSD Medication Consent Form. All medications are kept locked in Health Services, except students may carry and self-administer cough drops or throat lozenges, lip balms or sunscreens. Medication Consent Forms are available in the Health Services Office at school.

## ALL MEDICATIONS

All medications must be brought to school by a parent or guardian. Medications may not be sent to school with a student. Medications must be in the original container.

All medications must also be picked up from school by a parent or guardian. Medications will not be sent home with students. Any medications left in the Health Office at the end of the school year will be disposed of by school personnel.

## ACCIDENTS

Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, or at any school sponsored activity must be reported to the person in charge and to the school Health Services.

# DAILY ROUTINES CONTINUED...

## Appropriate Dress

Students should wear clothing that is conducive to classroom learning and will withstand the wear of daily classroom activity. Other than for special events, “flip-flop” sandals and pajamas are not appropriate for everyday dress.

## Medicines and the Health Office

For all medications sent with students or to be taken at school, even those available “over the counter”, a parental consent form must be on file with the health office. Without it students will not be permitted to take the medication. For more information see the Health Services insert in this booklet. The Horace Mann Health Office is located near the west entrance just off the main lobby, and can be reached at 261-0749.

## School Closings

Should weather or another emergency close Horace Mann Middle School, the Montessori school will also close. Area media outlets will be notified. **Dismissal times for Montessori students is 15 minutes later than the rest of the District to minimize congestion with the middle school.** The Wausau School



District handbook has more information on Emergency School Closings.

## Attendance and Absences

Each student is an important part of our community. Frequent absences are a loss for the individual and also for the class as a whole. Of course, there are times when it is appropriate for a child to be absent, such as religious holidays, family emergencies or funerals, medical appointments, or educationally beneficial activities (please discuss with teacher). It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to notify the school of a child's absence. Please call school before 8:30 am.

**Illness** - your child should be kept home from school if experiencing:

- fever, vomiting or diarrhea – until 24 hours after last symptom
- weeping or draining rash – until a doctor determines it safe to go to school
- untreated, communicable disease – until a doctor determines it safe to go to school

Schools are required by State Statute (S.118.15) to observe the compulsory education law which requires students under age 18 to attend school regularly. Regular attendance is an important element of success and is the responsibility of parents or guardians and the students. For more details see the Wausau School District handbook under “School Attendance.”

# LEARNING TO LOVE LEARNING...

## Homework

From the Montessori perspective “homework” is all of the work that a child does at home. This means that we put value on everything a child does to contribute to the wellness of his/her community (home and otherwise). Activities such as daily chores, volunteering, helping with the grocery shopping or reading to a sibling are important aspects of a child’s education. These types of activities further a child’s more formal classroom education by developing language, math and communication skills, and cultural awareness. By having these experiences and responsibilities your child develops a sense of being an integral part of the community. We encourage parents to involve their children in these types of activities. We have provided a list of suggestions of real life activities that can be “homework” for the child and parent:

Letter writing (thank you notes, invitations, etc.)

Story writing

Journaling

Trip to the library

Reading aloud to your child

Having your child read to you, a sibling, grandparent, etc.

Scanning the newspaper and discussing news topics together

Counting money

Involving your child in meal planning and preparation

Having your child write the grocery list

Have child compare prices, figure cost per ounce or serving, etc.

Taking hikes and bike rides

Having your child plan trips using maps etc.

Visit a grandparent – interview them for their life story

Periodically, students may bring work home from school to practice skills, to finish assignments from class, or to work on projects started in school.

## Library

The Horace Mann library maintains a collection of books for younger students, and Montessori students are encouraged to check out books. A wide selection is available, including grade appropriate research books and picture books.



## Going Outs

Attending a Montessori school provides students with a unique opportunity to broaden their areas of interest. If a student or group of students want to explore a topic in more depth they may design and plan a “going out”. The students take responsibility for setting up chaperones, transportation and appointments with people relevant to their current studies. A teacher will attend all “going outs” that take place during the school day. Parents are encouraged to participate as well. If you are interested in being a chaperone, please ask your child’s teacher to send home a background check form.

*When the child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them in cupboards.”*

*-Maria Montessori*

## Field Trips

Throughout the school year field trips will be organized by the teachers. These trips will be related to learning activities. We will also take advantage of the area’s exceptional performing arts offerings and museums.

Transportation will be via school bus or city bus. Occasionally there may be costs for admission, meals, or other items. Notification of planned trips and associated costs will be sent home in students’ communication folders. Parents are asked at the beginning of the year to sign a consent form for field trips throughout the year. (For more information see Wausau School District Handbook – Field Trip Policy)

For field trip costs, please make checks payable to **“Horace Mann”**.



# MEASURES OF PROGRESS...

## Progress Reports

While parent / guide communication is ongoing regarding student progress, we do send home formal progress reports twice per year. We do not use traditional grades. Our reports are very thorough. Shortly after, conferences will be held to discuss your child's progress.

## Observations

Parents and community members are encouraged to take part in classroom observation, an important part of the Montessori experience. Observation will provide you with a better understanding of the Montessori classroom and how the children and adults work within it. Your presence and the simple act of observing can affect the work students are doing, so we ask that you follow some guidelines:

Please schedule observations between October 1 and May 15 only, in order to give the children time to adjust at the beginning of the year and less distraction at the busy year-end.

Call the School Secretary to schedule your visit.

Prior to your visit, please inform your child that you will be observing and not coming to help with classroom work.



On the day of your visit, stop by the office first to sign in and pick up a visitor's badge.

Engage in minimal conversation with the children. If children are clinging to you, politely explain that you are here to observe and that they should show you how well they can work. You may also ask them to show you what they are working on.

Make notes of questions and discuss them with the teacher at another time. You can call or email teachers with questions, or make a separate appointment to discuss your observation and questions.

Remember to return visitor's badge and sign out in the main office before you leave.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Dates for the 2011/2012 year are:

**Thursday, November 17** – 4:00 to 7:00 PM

**Friday, November 18** – 12:30 to 3:30 PM (11:30 dismissal)

**Thursday, March 22** – 4:00 to 7:00 PM

**Friday, March 23** – 9:00 to noon (no classes)

Should students attend? Often, teachers will encourage students in the third grade and above to attend the conference. This offers the child accountability. Discuss with teacher what is appropriate for your child.

## Standardized Testing

Part of the No Child Left Behind legislation that authorizes funding for charter schools like ours also requires that the charter schools report their academic progress, so that the federal government knows that its grants have been used appropriately. Similarly, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction must make sure that the public schools are, in fact, teaching the children of this state.

Therefore, despite the fact that Maria Montessori hoped for a day when there would be no formal testing in any schools, WAMCS students will participate in the mandated standardized testing of academic achievement. **3rd through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students** will take the *Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations – Criterion Referenced Tests* (WKCE-CRT) during October and November. In addition, we utilize the following assessment tools:

- **English Language Learners** - Access for ESL (December & January)
- **MAP** (Measures of Academic Progress), (Sept & May)
- **InView** (2nd grade)



# PARENTS CAN HELP...

## Volunteer Opportunities

We have found that most children love it when a parent volunteers at school. If you are interested in volunteering, you are welcome in any of our classrooms. A background check is required by the Wausau School District for all volunteers. Contact the school to request a form.

Here are just a few ideas of how you can volunteer your time:

- Attend Parent Connect Meetings
- Assist with Parent Connect events
- Listen to children read
- Help with follow-up work
- Prepare class materials
- Chaperone on Going Outs or Field Trips
- Serve on Governance Council Committees
- Assist Student Chefs with "Maria's Kitchen" meals or snacks
- Talk to the students about your career, a hobby or travel experience

Please complete the volunteer form that you receive at the beginning of the school year so that the guides can match your skills with classroom needs. If you hear about an upcoming field trip you'd like to attend, inform the teachers. Calling ahead or speaking with the classroom guide beforehand will make it easier to plan for your visit, but if you'd like to drop in at a moment's notice to read with children, help with lessons or simply have lunch with your child, you are always welcome.

Volunteers must check in at the Horace Mann office when arriving for activities. When signing in, you will receive a visitor badge to be worn during your stay. Please be sure to return the badge when you sign out.

## Parent Connect

The WAMCS Parent Connect group is an organization dedicated to enhancing the Montessori school experience for all students and their families by:

- organizing and sponsoring family events
- planning special classroom activities
- providing teacher support and parent education
- helping with fundraisers for extra scholastic needs
- so much more!

### **Parent Connect: How can I get involved?**

contact: Anna Schreiber  
715-581-0200

[schreiberfamilyfour@gmail.com](mailto:schreiberfamilyfour@gmail.com)

Or search Facebook for  
"WAMCS Parent Connect"

It doesn't take a huge commitment to be active with Parent Connect. You can attend one monthly meeting, or all of them; volunteer to help with one event, or commit to a leadership role; whatever level you would like to be involved at is welcomed! The best ways to get started are to either sign up for email updates at the Fall Open House or fill out the volunteer form that is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

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# BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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The goal of WAMCS is to provide a safe, orderly and enjoyable environment for all individuals. Students, staff and parents share the responsibility of maintaining a school climate that encourages learning, fosters respect for one another, and promotes positive self-esteem. Cooperation between home and school is vital to the success of this goal.

We believe...

All students are responsible for their own actions

All students can choose peaceful means of resolving conflict

All students deserve respect and are to be treated equally regardless of race, color, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry and gender



All students have the right to learn without being distracted by others

All students have the right to be an individual without experiencing ridicule from others

All students have the right to attend school without the fear of intimidation or bullying

Parents or Guardians are a great influence on children in how they view and act at school

## The Montessori Approach to Discipline

Maria Montessori believed that moral development is of utmost importance during the elementary years. It is during this time that the concept of justice is born; children begin to see the world in shades of gray. Montessori believed that the moral teachings of life come from social experiences.

Discipline is **student-centered** at WAMCS as students are actively taught conflict-resolution skills. Children in Montessori preschool programs are

taught to “use your words” when upset with someone else. We build upon this concept at WAMCS.

If a conflict can be successfully resolved between two students at school, the matter is closed and everyone moves on. Parents might not be notified. Successful student conflict resolution builds confidence and leads students towards greater independence. If students are unable or unwilling to resolve a conflict or if a negative behavior is repeated or is severe, an adult will step in to help guide the children toward more positive behaviors.

Adult help may come from the guides, the parents, the principal, the school counselor or any combination. We recognize that each child is an individual and that different consequences may be needed depending on the severity of an offense, the number of times a specific problem has occurred and the students’ personalities.

## PBIS - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

Schools across Wisconsin have begun creating a more positive environment for students and staff by establishing clear expectations for their students and taking active steps in teaching, modeling and reinforcing appropriate behaviors school wide.



You can learn more by visiting the PBIS website at: [www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org](http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org)

Or read more about how the Wausau School District is implementing this program:

[www.wausau.k12.wi.us/departments/communityrelations/Dialogues/DialogueSpring10.pdf](http://www.wausau.k12.wi.us/departments/communityrelations/Dialogues/DialogueSpring10.pdf)

## Classroom Expectations

Students should demonstrate respect and responsibility toward:

Themselves

Others

The environment



**Consequences:** When behavior concerns arise, classroom staff will discuss choices with the student and consider where the behavior falls on the Above the Line / Below the Line spectrum. Students will have an opportunity to follow through with behavior changes. If behavior continues, these steps will be followed:

1. Student will be given a verbal warning and redirection.

2. A conference will be arranged with the student to create a “fix-it” plan and to arrange any lessons or practice that may be necessary.
3. A conference will be arranged with the student and a parent or guardian (including a counselor if appropriate), to discuss possible solutions to behavior issues.
4. A student who has not successfully corrected the behavior with the prior three steps will be referred to the office and the appropriate administrator.

In the case of a major discipline incident the staff is directed to involve the office immediately.

### Playground Expectations

- Students must stay in designated areas of the playground.
- Good sportsmanship is expected.
- Respect playground supervisors and follow their directions.
- Equipment used outside must be returned to equipment bin after recess. Proper use of equipment is expected.
- Any equipment that goes out of the playground area must be reported to the playground supervisor. Only adults may enter the street to retrieve playground equipment.
- No throwing of snowballs, woodchips, gravel, or any other objects not intended to be thrown.
- Students are not allowed on the snow hills on school grounds.



## Restroom Use

- Restrooms are to be used for their intended purpose and not as a play area.
- Use quiet indoor voices.
- Flush the toilet after use.
- Wash hands after use.
- Paper should be placed in the wastebaskets.
- Throwing of objects, intentional splashing of water or writing on the restroom walls are not allowed.

## Guest Speakers and Presentations

Students should be attentive, quiet, respectful, and courteous.

## Field Trip Expectations

- Students will respect bus drivers, chaperones and adults in charge at their destination.
- Seat belts will be worn if available.
- Students in vehicles must remain seated, facing forward at all times.
- Students will be courteous to other passengers and will not kick the seat in front of them.
- Students will only eat or drink in field trip vehicles when special permission is given.

***Consequences:*** A student unable or unwilling to abide by these rules may be asked to sit out from an activity, or to miss the next field trip. On an overnight trip, a student unwilling or unable to behave may be sent home early.



## OTHER POLICIES...

### Issues of Concern or Conflict

WAMCS recognizes that conflicts can arise. It is our desire to work towards conflict prevention as much as possible and to encourage open and direct communication between individuals.

Parents and guardians are reminded that our classroom guides are professional educators, carrying out the mission of the Wausau Area Montessori Charter School. If an issue arises that is not routine or cannot be handled in a brief conversation with a teacher, parents are asked not to discuss the matter during school hours or in front of students. Please set an appointment to discuss the matter in person, in a phone call, or by email. Upon request the school Principal will be invited to participate.

As a reminder, please keep email correspondence directed to the audience for which it is intended. Do not broadcast messages that are intended for specific individuals or that reference specific students or situations.

The next page contains a form adopted by the WAMCS Governance Council as a guide for introducing an issue for discussion by the Council and school administration. It can be submitted to Council members (listed on page 3), to the WAMCS principal, or to the Wausau School District Director of Education overseeing charter school programs (listed on page 2).

*As one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it is attached to the rest of the world.*

*- John Muir*

# WAMCS Strategic Issue Briefing Paper

## Critical Issue Statement:

✚ **Background:** *(Why and how this is a critical strategic issue for the charter school?)*

✚ **Opportunities for the charter school:** *(Opportunities for growth, improvement, and/or increased program impact for WAMCS)*

✚ **Threats for the charter school:** *(Threats to the charter school and/or constituents served — consequences for the charter school if nothing is done in response to this issue.)*

✚ **How Charter Schools and Other Organizations Facing Similar Issues, Opportunities and Threats Are Responding:** *(What changes, strategies, shifts in direction are charter schools and other organizations attempting? NOTE: Don't limit yourselves to what other charter schools are doing. Consider other kinds of organizations as well.)*

✚ **What major choices, decisions and/or shifts in direction does this issue challenge us to consider?**

✚ **What other information do we still need in order to develop effective responses to this issue?**

## WSD NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The Wausau School District does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability. Federal law prohibits discrimination in education and employment on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability.

Anyone who believes that the Wausau School District has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act, may file a complaint with the WSD Equity Director at the Longfellow Administration Center, 415 Seymour Street, Wausau, Wisconsin 54402-0359, or by telephone at 715-261-0500.

Lub Wausau School District txwv tsis pub leejtwg ua saib tsis taus ib tus neeg twg txawm yog hais tias nej yog pojniam los yog txivneej, yog haiv neeg dabtsi, ntseeg dabtsi, poj koob yawm txiv yog leejtwg, nyiam pojniam los yog txivneej li cas, muaj mob nkees li cas los yog xiam oob qhab li cas. Kevcai nyob rau tebchaws no txwv tsis pub leejtwg yuav ua saib tsis taus nej yog nej tuaj nrhiav haujlwm ntawm pib txawm yog nej yog haiv neeg twg, muaj noob nyooq li cas, cev nqaij daim ntawv yog xim dabtsi, nyiam pojniam txivneej, ntseeg dabtsi, los yog muaj kev xiam oob qhab li cas.

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*El Distrito Escolar de Wausau no discrimina contra las personas por motivos de sexo, raza, religión, nacionalidad, ancestro, credo, embarazo, estado civil, orientación sexual, o discapacidad física, emocional, mental o de aprendizaje. La Ley Federal prohíbe cualquier tipo de discriminación en la educación y empleo por motivos de edad, raza, color, nacionalidad, sexo, religión o discapacidad.*

*Cualquier persona que crea que el Distrito Escolar de Wausau ha aplicado inadecuadamente los principios y/o reglas del Título VI, Título VII, Título IX, Sección 504 o del Acta para Americanos con Discapacidades, podrá presentar una denuncia ante el Director de Igualdad del Distrito Escolar de Wausau al Centro de Administración Longfellow, 415 Seymour Street, Wausau, Wisconsin 54402-0359, o por teléfono al 715-261-0596.*

***We can never forget*** that the Montessori materials are materials of development, not teaching aids; that is, the materials are not designed to help the teacher make a particular point but rather are designed so that students can develop themselves through their own work.

*We must always remember that learning is the students' work, not ours. We must remember that we cannot really teach students by rote even with the help of teaching aids. All we can do is put students in positions to understand something they were not able to before -- that is, by giving them the opportunity to work through for themselves the materials of development at their own pace.*

*We must allow students to follow their natural tendencies, remembering that each student is an individual.*

- John McNamara

