

January 31, 2010
Proposal for Change to Classroom Structure

Summary: A proposal for a change to the following classroom configuration: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8 for the first and subsequent years. Included are projections of how enrollment, staffing, and budgets will change.

Introduction

The current model for enrollment was developed with the knowledge that there might be an adjustment once the Board of Directors had a better understanding of the community desire for a public Montessori school. After the initial enrollment on January 4th, it was clear that there was a much greater interest in Montessori education than modeled in the original petition. The Admissions Committee set out to investigate alternate models for the classroom to allow for additional students without sacrificing the educational goals of the school.

Several models were proposed. First, Sherwood could continue the classroom configuration as written in the petition, but add more students. Second, the initial enrollment could follow the second projected year by going immediately to a 2-yr classroom model. Third, it was suggested that we consider a K-1 classroom and adjust upward accordingly. Each configuration was modeled for a three-year growth to test fiscal solvency. Finally, the successful models were then discussed with the Curriculum Committee and area teachers to see if the educational goals would be compromised or realized. The result was the decision that Sherwood Montessori should move to a K-1 model.

The K-1 Model

In this configuration, Sherwood Montessori would comprise four classrooms: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8. The K-1 room would have a morning Kindergarten and an afternoon Kindergarten (the 1st graders would be all-day students). This model is more in-line with Montessori pedagogy than a separate Kindergarten classroom, particularly as it relates to mentorship. It is also believed that this classroom would be more beneficial to 1st graders as they transition into a Montessori teaching style.

GROWTH PLAN-K1							
First Year					Students	Teachers FTE	S:T Ratio
K-1a	K-1b	2-3	4-5	6-8	89	4.5	19.8:1
20	19	24	20	18			
Second Year					102	4.5	22.7:1
K-1a	K-1b	2-3	4-5	6-8			
20	19	26	24	25			
Third Year					102	4.5	22.7:1
K-1a	K-1b	2-3	4-5	6-8			
20	19	26	24	25			

The chart above assumes 8 morning and 7 afternoon Kindergarten students would join 12 first grade students. While these numbers are slightly higher than the original classroom configuration, it is believe that the overall mission would not be compromised.

A comparison of funding between this model and the original petition shows some interesting trends. By changing the number of students, classrooms, and teaching staff, the following results:

Comparison of Models			
	Old	New	Difference
Students	79	89	10
Classrooms	4	4	0.0
Teaching Staff	4.0	4.5	0.5
Aides	3.5	4.0	0.5
Revenue	651,225	698,373	47,148
Expend (w+b)	356,703	397,971	41,268
Expend (other)	173,425	197,186	23,761
Grant Expenses	72,914	72,914	
Balance	48,183	30,302	-17,881

Though this is a very generic summary, we see that in year one, the school would have more revenue but also more expenditures than the original model. However, the difference can be covered by the Federal start-up grant. More important, Years 2 and 3 show an increase in net, thus the model is financially stable. The chart below shows a simplified summary based on the K-1 model:

Summary of K-1 Model over Three Years			
	Y1	Y2	Y3
Students	89	102	102
Classrooms	4	4	4
Teaching Staff	4.5	4.5	4.5
Aides	4.0	4.0	4.0
Revenue	698,373	683,628	605,253
Expend (w+b)	397,971	397,971	397,971
Expend (other)	197,186	212,283	212,283
Grant	72,914	57,320	0
Balance	30,302	46,356	41,355

Recommendation

The Admissions Committee, in consultation with area educators and the Budget Committee, recommends converting to the K-1 model for the first year. While it has been modeled to show that this model could be sustained, the Board of Directors should review prior to continuing in Year 2.