



Dear CMEC Community,

As a Board of Trustees, one of the most important efforts we undertake with the administration is the development of our strategic plan.

Work on the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan began in the fall of 2014, and the Board and administration are now pleased to present the culmination of this yearlong effort to you. During this process, we benefitted greatly from the perspectives provided by several members of the community that participated with the Board and administration in our kickoff brainstorming session. Ideas, input, and goals advanced in that session drove the framework for the strategic plan, and a significant amount of that content carried forward to its final version.

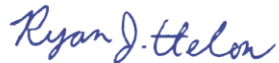
Columbus Montessori Education Center is approaching the midpoint of our third consecutive fiscal year of sustainable operations, with revenue exceeding expenses and resulting growth in our net assets. Significant effort by our administration and teaching staff has made this possible. In addition, we have been successful capitalizing on the opportunity to become an Ed Choice school which has contributed to strengthening enrollment in our Children's House and Elementary programs. We also benefit tremendously from the generosity of our community, with consistently strong philanthropic support for our Annual Fund and Gala fundraisers. Our recent operating success and the positive outlook have created new possibilities for further growth, investment in our programs and facilities, and building financial reserves to ensure our long-term sustainability.

Our strategic plan includes three core goals: **Educational Excellence**, **Engaged Stakeholders**, and **Operational Effectiveness**.

- **Educational Excellence** is the core reason for CMEC's existence. Ensuring CMEC's consistent delivery of a cutting edge Montessori education is the administration's primary focus, and the Board's most critical objective. We desire nothing less than the best-prepared, most confident, and most thoughtful graduates, ready for success in their next school, no matter when they graduate from CMEC or where they continue their education.
- **Engaged Stakeholders** highlights the importance of leveraging and building on our strong CMEC community of teachers, parents, alumni, volunteers, and community partners — in achieving our goals of Educational Excellence and Operational Effectiveness. Our goals are interrelated and interdependent, for example, our parents and community volunteers in our classrooms directly and positively contribute to our academic programs. Engaging our community also is critical to achieving our fundraising goals, which enable us to serve a socioeconomically diverse community, which is core to the CMEC mission.
- **Operational Effectiveness** enables the long-term sustainability of our organization. While CMEC is organized as a non-profit institution, it must operate in a financially sustainable manner if it is to survive and thrive. Our administration and Board are highly focused on this goal, as CMEC weathered significant losses during the recent recession which negatively impacted enrollment and fundraising. Our recent success in achieving sustainable operations is a direct result of our operational effectiveness. By operating CMEC in an effective manner, we are able to provide for current needs, including staffing, educational materials, student financial aid, and facilities maintenance, while planning and preparing for the future.

For the Board, the strategic plan will become the framework for our goal setting, budget process, and performance measurement.

These are exciting times at CMEC, as we continue into our fourth decade of operations, reflecting on the great potential of our next generation of graduates, who will go on to further academic success, growth, and development. The strategic plan serves as CMEC's North Star, and it will drive CMEC to greater success in delivering education to our students, and in providing a warm and engaging community for our families, faculty and staff, and stakeholders. Onward!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan J. Helon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ryan Helon

Board President, Columbus Montessori Education Center



COLUMBUS MONTESSORI

2015-2018 Strategic Plan

Columbus Montessori Education Center's Mission:

Our mission is to **nurture** and develop the **whole** child through **magnified** learning and **quality** care in a **diverse** community.

Columbus Montessori Education Center History:

Columbus Montessori Education Center ("CMEC", "the school", or "the center") was founded in 1984 by three women who saw a need for a high-quality early childhood center on the east side of Columbus. Their dream was to build a nurturing environment that was developmental in its approach so that each child would be taught and cared for at his or her individual level and ability. The school began as a comprehensive child care and early education program for 3 to 6 year olds, based on the principles and methodologies developed by Maria Montessori. From the start, CMEC implemented the key components necessary to be considered an authentic Montessori program:

- Montessori-credentialed teachers in every classroom
- A three-year cycle with multi-age groupings that foster peer-learning
- A minimum of one uninterrupted work cycle per day
- A well-prepared environment with ample Montessori materials
- Guided choice of work activity, supported by in-depth observation and a personalized approach

More about the Montessori Method can be found at the American Montessori Society (AMS) website: <http://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/Introduction-to-Montessori/>.

Serving a diverse population was at the heart of the school's mission then, just as it is today. An aggressive annual fundraising campaign allows the school to stay true to that mission.

Growth:

In its first year, the school enrolled 51 children, in two classrooms in the basement of a church. As the reputation of the school spread, enrollment grew very quickly and in 1992, Columbus Montessori purchased a permanent facility just a mile north of the church. This facility allowed CMEC to greatly expand and improve services for its 3 to 6 year olds, and allowed an expansion into the city's first comprehensive Montessori infant/toddler program, as well as an Elementary program.

Today, the school enrolls approximately 250 students each year, in one of 5 programs:

- Comprehensive Infant Toddler program – a full day, 12 month program for children aged 6 weeks to 3 years
- Toddler Preschool – a half day academic year program for children 18 months to 3 years
- Children's House – a half, extended, or full day academic-year program for children 3 to 6 years, including kindergarten
- Lower Elementary – a full day academic year program for children in 1st-3rd grade
- Upper Elementary – a full day academic year program for children in 4th-6th grade

The center also offers a comprehensive summer program for Children’s House and Elementary students.

A recognized leader in high-quality education:

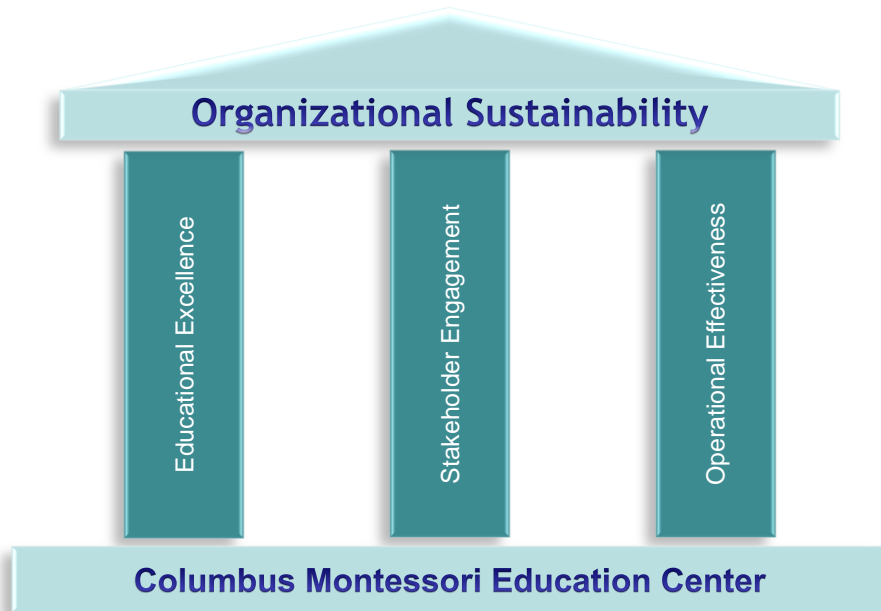
CMEC has consistently been recognized as a leader in high-quality education in the greater Columbus area. Our achievements include:

- An American Montessori Society (AMS) and Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited teacher education program
- Affiliate member of AMS
- Recognized as a non-public school system by the Ohio Department of Education
- Accredited by the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Star-rated by Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- Founding partner in Early Care and Learning, Inc.’s Caring Communities: Birth to Three (CC:B-3) initiative

Strategic Plan Framework Overview

“All our handling of the child will bear fruit, not only at the moment, but in the adult they are destined to become.” – Maria Montessori.

The 2015-2018 strategic plan was developed by a committee of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director, and was then presented to and approved by the entire Board of Trustees. The overarching goal of the strategic plan is to ensure that CMEC is sustainable as an organization that can fulfill its mission far into the future. The following graphic represents CMEC as a building with three pillars – Educational Excellence, Engaged Stakeholders, and Operational Effectiveness. Each pillar is essential to achieving the goal of Organizational Sustainability. The strategic plan is organized according to this picture of a strong organization that is built to last. More detail for each goal can be found on the following pages.



CMEC Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: Educational Excellence

Children are successful as learners and prepared for school and life, as a result of a cutting-edge¹ Montessori experience implemented by a highly-qualified workforce with Montessori credentialed teachers in every classroom. Move from: saying we are good to demonstrating we are better.

Goal 2: Engaged Stakeholders

We are family-centered, which inspires diverse stakeholders to become engaged and committed to our mission, connecting with our alumni families and following their progress far into the future. CMEC is a pillar in the neighboring community, and an advocate for early childhood education in greater Columbus. Move from: this is how it's always been to let's imagine how it can be.

Goal 3: Operational Effectiveness

Strengthen our organizational capacity by maximizing our resource utilization and human capital. Create a culture of continuous improvement. Financial decisions are aligned to mission and data driven. Move from: a culture of surviving to a culture of thriving.

¹ This term was chosen as it denotes being on the forefront of the field, an elite organization that bases decisions on the most advanced education research, data, and best practices.

2015-2018 CMEC Strategic Plan Initiatives




Goal 1: Educational Excellence

- Ensure a cutting-edge Montessori Method (AMS) is implemented across all program options so children are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for 21st century leaders
- Ensure positive child outcomes are achieved across all developmental domains so children can reach their fullest potential
- Ensure students have successful transitions, so they are well prepared for their next academic environment.
- Ensure a 21st century workforce that is highly qualified and utilizes research and best practices to meet the demands of 21st century learners



Goal 2: Engaged Stakeholders

- Foster stewardship of current and alumni families so that families feel connected to the school and can strengthen the community
- Promote the advancement of CMEC goals to a broader community to secure financial and political support
- Develop a consistent marketing message and strategy to demonstrate the value of a CMEC education
- Explore the adoption of a formal family engagement model so we have a systematic way to engage and support our community



Goal 3: Operational Effectiveness

- Practice sound financial management so that we have the resources required to sustain the organization
- Optimize time allocation by streamlining processes and eliminating redundancies so that faculty and administration can be more strategic in decision making
- Facilities are conducive to learning, today and tomorrow in order to meet the needs of our diverse student community, and future growth
- Ensure full enrollment so we can retain a high-quality workforce and deliver high-quality programming

Goal 1: Educational Excellence

#	Initiative	Est Start Year	Est End Year
1.1	Ensure a cutting-edge Montessori Method (AMS) is implemented across all program options		
	Maintain AMS affiliation, NAEYC accreditation, and SUTQ star rating	All	All
	Evaluate program enhancements. Evaluation of enhancements follow a predictable timeline, and plans can be communicated to families at contract issuance/prior to enrollment	All	All
	Utilize external Montessori evaluators to assess teachers in each program	All	All
	Ensure curriculum alignment to state and national academic standards	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Allocate professional development budget dollars thoughtfully, based on program and teacher evaluations	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Create a teacher evaluation system that defines components of a cutting-edge Montessori program	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Develop individual and collective professional development plans based on teacher assessment data	2016/2017	2016/2017
1.2	Evaluate the merits and cost/benefit of pursuing full AMS accreditation (alignment with SUTQ and NAEYC requirements) and ISACS accreditation for the elementary program	2017/2018	2017/2018
	Ensure a 21 st century workforce that is highly qualified and utilizes research and best practices		
	Ensure every classroom has a Montessori credentialed teacher	All	All
	Maintain TEP accreditation with AMS and MACTE	All	All
	Establish relationships with Montessori college/Teacher Education Programs (like Xavier University)	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Ensure teaching staff meet all program professional development requirements	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Allow teachers formalized opportunities to problem-solve and collaborate in decision making	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Develop a comprehensive compensation strategy, including benchmarking studies to remain competitive, as well as alignment with SUTQ guidelines	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Provide growth opportunities for staff to contribute in meaningful ways, such as intervention specialist, reading endorsements, and other certifications	2016/2017	2016/2016
	Gain approval for TEP classes to count toward SUTQ approved training, where applicable	2016/2017	2016/2017
1.3	Inspire teaching staff to be thought-leaders in the educational community	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Evaluate addition of Elementary TEP accredited by AMS and MACTE	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Ensure positive child outcomes are achieved across all developmental domains so children can reach their fullest potential		
	Develop program-specific handbooks that define clear expectations and the “lay of the land” for families	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Ensure seamless transitions between programs and to other schools	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Develop a tool that documents children’s progress toward achieving state/national standards	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Use child assessment data to strengthen student learning and inform program improvement	2016/2017	2016/2017

Goal 2: Engaged Stakeholders

Initiative		Est Start Year	Est End Year
2.1	Foster stewardship of current and alumni families		
	Improve communication between school, parents, and teachers	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Develop and implement a Montessori Parent Academy	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Create a formalized mechanism for parents to share feedback on an ongoing basis	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Evaluate purchase of development software	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Improve tracking of and engagement with alumni families	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Evaluate staffing the development function	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Look for “funding allies” and apply for grant funding	2016/2017	2017/2018
2.2	Promote advancement of CMEC goals to a broad community		
	Advocate for the wider acceptance and understanding of the Montessori Method through relationships with local Schools of Education and state/national Montessori organizations	2015/2016	2017/2018
	Ensure the CMEC Board of Trustees represents our broad and diverse stakeholder base	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Reinsert CMEC into policy decisions and early-childhood advocacy at local, state, and national level	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Strengthen neighborhood ties	2016/2017	2017/2018
2.3	Develop a consistent marketing message and strategy		
	Develop a CMEC Montessori Philosophy Policy Statement	2015/2016	2015/2016
2.4	Explore the adoption of a formal program of family support, such as the Strengthening Families Program (Center for the Study of Social Policy) or Head Start’s Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework		
	Create partnership agreements with individuals and organizations that can provide support to our students and families	2015/2016	2016/2017

Goal 3: Operational Effectiveness

#	Initiative	Est Start Year	Est End Year
3.1	Practice sound financial management		
	Comply with revenue bond covenants	All	All
	Improve profitability and expense management	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Develop process for NPSS, Title XX, and EdChoice funding	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Enhance internal accounting and financial analysis processes and reporting capabilities	2015/2016	2017/2018
	Manage and plan for program growth	2015/2016	2017/2018
	Diversify funding sources and make contingency plans	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Assessment of revenue bond and relationship with Huntington	2016/2017	2017/2018
3.2	Optimize time allocation by streamlining processes and eliminating redundancies		
	Implement time and attendance system and HR self-service technology	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Streamline purchasing and reduce costs through bulk orders	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Develop and implement a tracking system for professional development	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Evaluate student/family software systems	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Identify bottlenecks in processes, staff appropriately, and look at process improvements	2016/2017	2017/2018
	Develop process calendars for major annual initiatives like Gala, Annual Fund, contract issuance, accreditations, TEP, back-to-school, etc.	2016/2017	2017/2018
3.3	Ensure continuity and minimize key-person risk		
	Develop succession plans for administrative team and staff positions	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Communicate succession plans to staff during development conversations	2016/2017	2016/2017
3.4	Facilities are conducive to learning today and tomorrow		
	Ensure facilities are safe and well maintained	All	All
	Develop a prioritized list of capital improvement projects, with cost estimates, and present to Board a timeline of completion	2015/2016	2016/2017
	Maximize current floorplans to encourage multi-use options	2016/2017	2016/2017
	Evaluate building plan to optimize/allow for future growth	2016/2017	2016/2017
3.5	Ensure full enrollment		
	Retain 70% of students eligible	2015/2016	2015/2016
	Increase retention rate of kindergarten students	2015/2016	2015/2016



2015-2018 Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Jill Aubert, Chair

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Vondolee Delgado-Nixon

Nancy DeRoberts-Moore

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For questions or comments:

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