

Laramie Montessori School Implementation

Abstract

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Goals

The mission of Laramie Montessori School (LMS) is to support the development of the whole child through an authentic Montessori environment that honors the child's intrinsic motivation to learn and supports each individual's unique intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. LMS will be located in Laramie, Wyoming (in Albany County). It will provide an authentic Montessori education as developed by Maria Montessori.

Expected outcomes

Project objectives are to: (1) Prepare, open and expand Laramie Montessori School; (2) Ensure an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse student body; (3) Develop a trained, educated, cohesive and diverse LMS faculty and staff capable of implementing and supporting an authentic Montessori curriculum; and (4) Cultivate student academic learning and personal development. Key academic outcome measures for the four project objectives include student progress in Montessori Performance Goals and student attainment of “proficiency or advanced” status as measured with the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS). Other measures include evidence for an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and growing student enrollment, professional and staff development completion and application to build a strong and qualified community of teachers and staff, and parents’ beliefs about the quality of the environment and learning community LMS provides.

Contributions for research, policy, practice

The Montessori curriculum is an established and tested educational program that has been adopted all over the world, on six continents. Even so, achieving key outcomes at LMS will provide local evidence and support for its curricular success, and will provide a model for other rural-frontier communities in Wyoming and elsewhere.

How the application meets the purpose of CSP as stated in the Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards

The LMS implementation grant application meets the purpose of the Charter School Program by providing an alternative, public charter school in Albany County, WY (including the city of Laramie) a community characterized as having higher than state average numbers of impoverished families. Applying the Montessori curriculum, LMS will integrate subjects to maximize intrinsic motivation and to contextualize learning of all subjects, including mathematics and language arts. LMS will use multi-age classrooms that allow for students to learn at their own pace, peer-tutoring which builds self esteem and collaboration, and teacher continuity that builds strong teacher-student relationships. The LMS curriculum will appeal to all learning styles as it involves all four functions of the brain to fully engage each and every student. In conclusion, LMS will provide a high quality charter school to all students in Albany County with an alternative curriculum capable of meeting or exceeding WY State standards.