

Our Vision, Mission, & Core Values

Vision: Educating the Whole Child

Mission: The mission of Murray-LaSaine is to provide a Montessori education that guides students to their fullest potential by instilling independence, social responsibility, and a lifelong love of learning.

Core Values: Community, Independence, Curiosity, Integrity, Perseverance, Growth, Peace, Inclusiveness



Adolescent students ran a food drive, collecting over 1,500lbs of food.

SIC Annual Goals

- ❖ Improve science instruction and opportunities for science experiences.
- ❖ Improve math skills for students.
- ❖ Improve home-school communication.



Reading together, COVID-style: Plexi & Masks



Working, creating, concentrating, learning, growing, collaborating, & thriving

SIC Members 2020-21

Chair: Jamie Meissner, Parent

Secretary: Kate Riddile, Parent

Laura Getsinger, Teacher

Brian Chadwell, Teacher

Elizabeth Ryan, Teacher

Allison Soler, Parent

Gerald Perron, Parent

Robin Fay, Community Member

Lauren Dasher, Community Member

Shanna Thomson, PTO

Kisha Harvey, Guidance Counselor

Joey Ballenger, Ex-Officio

Meredith Wallace, Principal



Staying connected to our remote learners with special sessions

Purpose of the Report

This Report is issued by the MLMS School Improvement Council in accordance with South Carolina law to share information on the school's progress in meeting various goals and objectives, the work of the SIC, and other accomplishments during the school year.



Murray-LaSaine Montessori

“Educating the Whole Child”
Primary-Adolescent Programs

School Improvement Council Annual Report to Parents 2020-21



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Our staff makes the difference and inspires change.

Murray-LaSaine is a partial-magnet public Montessori school serving over 380 students ages 3 through grade 8 in Charleston, South Carolina. We are proud of our collective efforts to have an amazing year despite the challenges of COVID-19. Leading up to the start of the 2020-21 school year, virtual parent coffees were held to ensure parents and staff were involved and aware of all CCSD Safe Restart plans. MLMS prides itself on dynamic home-school communication and partnerships.

This year's theme was "Inspire Change." We certainly had a lot of changes! From adjustments to remote and in-person learning schedules, wearing masks, adding plexiglass to classrooms, social distancing, contact tracing, and quarantining to having 95% of our students back for in-person learning and the majority of our staff vaccinated, it's been quite a year. In the area of academics, teachers focused on math fact fluency and algebraic thinking and all students showed gains. With FOSS kits and the Montessori science curriculum, students have experienced biology, physical, and earth science.

Our Primary students (ages 3-6) focused on providing a safe, loving, and consistent learning environment for our youngest students who thrive when there is consistency and routine. While it is a challenge to teach young students with masked faces and plexiglass throughout the classroom, our staff did an outstanding job tackling the challenges and ensuring high-quality Montessori instruction happened every day.

Lower Elementary (LE) students learned how to use work plans and about responsibility, time management, and independence. To build community, students created personal timelines. Adaptive digital content was incorporated to allow students to practice important key skills. During the holidays, classes studied traditions from around the world. We completed biography projects on black heroes and Engaging Creative Minds helped us make quilt squares representing those heroes. Other highlights from the year include Read Across America week, gardening, spirit days, outdoor picnic lunches, and building new friendships. In a year of unknowns, our students have shown resilience, compassion, and a love of learning.

Our Upper Elementary (UE) team highlights their Engaging Creative Minds experience. They welcomed Dave Smith via zoom to our classrooms to teach us about creating products, science, and entrepreneurship. UE students worked on projects about the thirteen original colonies, Industrial Revolution, WWI, and Ancient Civilization. Gardening was a component of the work students completed this year. Several flower gardens are in the works. UE students learned about animal life cycles, hatched 4H chicks, practiced mindfulness through breathing techniques and yoga.

Our adolescent students organized a student election and coordinated a fall festival complete with a pumpkin patch for the primary students. The adolescent group ran a food drive and hosted several virtual guest speakers ranging from a shark expert in Australia to parents of a student with Down Syndrome for. In art class, students are working with muralist Quintin Chapin to create a mural on our building.

Our music department secured a large donation to purchase Orff instruments and a grant to purchase keyboards for each student. Our PE teacher taught health and wellness everyday and our art teacher allowed children to express their emotions through art. Our librarian inspires children to love reading with new books, book fairs and Read Around The Bases. Our technology teacher inspires a love for technology. Our strings teacher adapted to moving locations to our entry foyer, which, while not an ideal location, is acoustically perfect.

Our PTO decided to minimize fundraising this year and instead ask for item-specific donations. PTO was able to purchase picnic tables for outdoor eating and instruction, outdoor chairs for adolescent students, meals and snacks for teachers, host a Virtual Sweetheart Ball with Kyle K'Otic, host spirit nights at area restaurants, purchase several teacher wish-list items, stock the coffee/tea bar for staff, and add to the primary playground with new trikes.

A special acknowledgement to our nurse, Julie McElroy, for her unflagging efforts to keep our staff and students safe and healthy this year. We have proven "we can do hard things."

Meredith Wallace, Principal

Jamie Meissner, SIC Chairperson