



Bluffview Montessori

Charter School Annual Report 4001-07 & World's Best Workforce Report



Submitted to:

**Volunteers of America MN
Charter School Authorizing Program
924 19th Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55404**

**Publicly Available on the Bluffview website
www.bluffviewmontessori.org**

November 2021

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Introduction

Bluffview Montessori School was created on September 29, 1989 by the merger of two separate schools: Bluffview School, a Montessori Learning Center and Montessori of Winona. The school converted to a public school following the Omnibus Education Act of 1991, which allowed for the conversion of private schools to public institutions. Under its Articles of Incorporation, the school was organized exclusively for nonprofit purposes and to “create a quality Montessori school for children.” The school pursues this through a distinctive Montessori approach that embodies individualized instruction, mixed age groupings, an international curriculum, a prepared environment, and Montessori teaching materials. The goals of the school are to improve pupil learning, increase learning opportunities for pupils, encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

This report is prepared annually by BMS and is approved by its Board of Directors.

Vision

Empowered learners unfolding their full potential as whole and unique persons in a global community.

Mission

Bluffview Montessori School empowers self-directed learning through a materials-based Montessori curriculum that encourages independence and natural curiosity. Bluffview cultivates learners’ deep respect for self, community, and a peaceful environment, while nourishing the intrinsic desire for academic, civic, and personal fulfillment.

This Montessori Method of education is based on the principle that education is to be an aide to life, and that it should go far beyond the simple acquisition of factual knowledge in various areas. Montessori schools help children develop a positive attitude and a curiosity toward learning.

The following are the basic tenets of the Bluffview Montessori School curriculum:

- Individualized instruction and a respect for each child’s interests and style of learning
- Extensive use of Montessori materials designed to help develop concentration, coordination, and independence, as well as to give concrete experiences of academic concepts
- A classroom community founded on respect for self, others, and the environment allowing for the development of social senses and awareness of others in a natural and unhurried way
- Opportunities to ask questions, to seek many answers, and to work on projects of special interest
- Class groupings where children of different ages work together. Older children inspire younger children, and by helping them, gain confidence and a sense of responsibility
- An orderly and peaceful educational environment in which the child develops enthusiasm, self-motivation, concentration and the joy of learning

Statutory Compliance Verification Table

| Statutory or Contract Required Annual Report Element | Page(s) |
|---|---------------------------|
| School Statutory Purposes and Outcomes | <u>1</u> |
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School Governance

Members of the Board of Directors

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the School and Minnesota Statutes, Section 124E.07, the Board of Directors consists of a majority of full or part-time certified teachers employed by the school and at least one Winona community member. The remaining two positions are filled by guardians of enrolled Bluffview students.

The Bluffview Montessori School Board of Directors is a seven-member board. All 2020-2021 Board members completed School Board Training in Governance, Financial Management and Employment Matters. All board members had satisfactory attendance at board meetings.

The 2020-2021 members of the Board of Directors included:

| Name | Board Position | Group Affiliation | Date Elected | Email Address | Ongoing Training |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Meghan Booth | Member | Teacher 486642 | Elected 7/1/20 | mbooth@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, Employment and Finance- MACS • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law |
| Ann-Marie Dunbar | Chair | Parent | Elected 7/1/17 7/1/20 | adunbar@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law • Employment in Charter Schools, Governance and Finance- MACS |
| Erich Lippman | Secretary | Parent | Elected 7/1/18 | elippman@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, Employment and Finance- MACS • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law |
| Shelly Merchlewitz | Member | Teacher 333395 | Elected 7/1/20 | smerchlewitz@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter School Board Training • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law • Employment in Charter Schools- MACS |
| Katie Kinneberg | Treasurer | Teacher 423840 | Elected 7/1/16 7/1/19 | kkinneberg@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law • Employment in Charter Schools- MACS |
| Molly Leifeld | Vice Chair | Teacher 462786 | Elected 7/1/15 7/1/18 | mleifeld@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, Employment and Finance-MACS • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law |
| Daniel Kirk | Member | Community Member | Elected 7/1/20 | dkirk@bluffviewmontessori.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financials and Budgeting- BergenKDV • Open Meeting Law • Non-profit Law • MN Employment Law • Employment in Charter Schools- MACS |

School Management & Administration

Head of School

Henry Schantzen

Head of School

July 2017-present

The following disclosure is provided as required by MN Statute 124 E.12 subdivision 2.

The board of directors and an individual who does not hold a valid administrative license and who serves in an administrative, supervisory, or instructional leadership position shall develop a professional development plan. Documentation of the implementation of the professional development plan of these persons shall be included in the school's annual report.

Professional Development Plan for Henry Schantzen, Head of School

The Bluffview Montessori School Board has approved a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for the Head of School. The Professional Development Plan (PDP) covers such areas as:

- Instruction and assessment
- Human Resources and personnel management
- Legal and compliance management
- Effective communication
- Board, authorizer, and community relationships
- Financial management

Some of the activities approved for the Head of School for the 2021-2022 school year included:

- Continued involvement in community organizations and building external relationships including Engage Winona, Chamber of Commerce, Winona State University, St. Mary's University, Winona Nonprofit Alliance, and the Winona Community Foundation
- Develop plans for fundraising, attend professional development in fundraising, create, lead, and participate in a capital campaign committee to build our endowment fund
- Update the BMS Strategic Plan
- Establish and train Finance Committee in alignment with new Authorizer contract
- Work with VOA so that BMS is compliant with all areas of the new Authorizer contract
- Continue to develop the new HR Coordinator Position
- Analyzing assessment data to evaluate curriculum scope and sequence and align Montessori curriculum to updated Minnesota state standards-plan to align Science standards this year and next, the ELA after that
- Analyze data to find areas negatively impacted by Covid, draft and implement solutions
- Build/generate more staff accountability measures for all staff
 - Use new job descriptions to create self-evaluations for all staff
- Rebuild parent engagement with the school, revisit a PTA model
- Full Policy review with MSBA: ensure all policies are accurate and up to date

Faculty Information SY 2020-2021

Administration and Support Staff

This table contains information for all members of the school management/administrative team and also includes faculty employed by the school that did not serve as classroom teachers.

All of our Kindergarten and Elementary classrooms have a lead teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. Our special education program also employs paraprofessionals that assist students in the classroom.

| Name | File Folder Number | Assignment |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| Bacon, Greta | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Beckmann, Elana | | Personal Care Assistant |
| Bronk, Amy | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Foley, Stirling | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Hill, Esther | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Johnson, Carly | | Food Service Assistant |
| Johnson, Mindy | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Kaul, Angela | | Classroom Assistant-E2 |
| Kerr, Carol | 504193 | Classroom Assistant-CH |
| Kimber, Evangeline | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Knutson, Renee | | Office Assistant |
| Lenihan, Melanie | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Lohmeyer, Sherry | 514712 | Assistant Head of School |
| McCullough, Jena | | Classroom Assistant-CH |
| Metz, Lorrie | | Classroom Assistant-E1 |
| Meyer, Joyce | | Classroom Assistant-E1 |
| Pasche, Amber | | Librarian |
| Petersen, Ashley | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Polachek, Criss | | Classroom Assistant-CH |
| Price, Diana | 430989 | Classroom Assistant-E2 |
| Richardson, Andrew | | Maintenance |
| Rourke, Ruth | | Administrative Assistant |
| Schantzen, Henry | 385789 | Head of School |
| Simmons, Stephanie | | Transition Assistant |
| Smith, Cynthia | | Food Service Lead |
| Smith, Tina | | Classroom Assistant-E2 |
| Soulier, Sherry | | Food Service Assistant |
| Vandenberge, Olivia | 517113 | Classroom Assistant-E2 |
| Wilkens, Amber | | Classroom Assistant-E1 |
| Windmiller, Laura | | Program Paraprofessional |
| Young, Maddie | | Transition Assistant, Pre-K after school care |

Teachers

This table contains information for ALL teachers employed by the school.

In addition to being licensed by the State of Minnesota in their respective areas, Montessori elementary classroom educators prepare for their teaching assignments by either completing the requirements for a Montessori teaching certificate or enrolling in an approved Montessori training program. The Montessori certification process is extremely rigorous and involves 1-3 years of graduate level coursework, a practicum in the developmental area of assignment, and final written and oral examinations.

Our total faculty turnover from 2020-21 to 2021-2022 was 12%, teaching staff was 15%. Primary reason for departures is monetary/lack of competitive compensation.

| Name | File Folder Number | Assignment |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|
| Aarre Anna | 421025 | Kindergarten Teacher/Pre-K |
| Bell, Kim | 382280 | Special Education Teacher |
| Berg, Scotti | 517376 | Math: Grades 7&8 |
| Booth, Meghan | 486642 | Science: Grades 7 & 8 |
| Borkowski, Sandra | 347177 | Art |
| Carlson, Josh | 510709 | Kindergarten/Pre-K |
| Dubis, Chris | 478314 | Music, Instrumental Music |
| Fischer, Michaela | 485123 | Special Education Teacher |
| Hohensee, Pat | 161429 | Title I – Math |
| Kinneberg, Katie | 423840 | Kindergarten Teacher/Pre-K |
| Leifeld, Molly | 462786 | Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3 |
| McClatchey, Eldridge | 510858 | Physical Education |
| Merchlewitz, Shelly | 333395 | ADSI Math Intervention Teacher |
| Musehl, Sydney | 1005362 | Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6 |
| O'Connell, Amy | 494596 | Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6 |
| Patton, Kitt | 405969 | ADSI Behavior Interventionist |
| Porter, Kiersten | 1008233 | Floating Substitute Teacher |
| Salzmann, Linda | 504716 | ADSI Reading Intervention Teacher |
| Schillerstrom, Amy | 1004683 | Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3 |
| Skillicorn, Kelly | 304706 | School Counselor |
| Speltz, Anne | 1005284 | Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6 |
| Swogger, Kristine | 462637 | Title I, EL |
| Wagner, Shelby | 480351 | Social Studies/History: Grades 7 & 8 |
| Weaver, Brooke | 482591 | Special Education Teacher |
| Webber, Susan | 512149 | Communication Arts/Literature: Grades 7 & 8 |
| White, Mariah | 478840 | Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3 |

School Admissions and Enrollment

As a charter school, Bluffview Montessori School has a limited capacity to enroll students. We have identified the capacity for each grade level from Kindergarten through sixth grade as 25 students. Total capacity for our Erdkinder program (7th – 8th grade) is 40 students. Most of our students enter the charter school program their Kindergarten year. Each year 25 Kindergarten positions are available. Preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students and staff children. All remaining positions are filled via a public lottery.



Openings in the elementary and junior high grades occur only when a class is at less than capacity. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available spots, then available positions in those are filled by means of the public lottery. Preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students and staff children. The procedures for the lottery and application form can be found on the following pages.

Policy 501

BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICY 501

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for enrollment of students to BMS.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Bluffview Board of Directors believes that parents have the responsibility to select the most appropriate educational programs for their children and that parental commitment to the educational program is a significant and positive choice. The Board also recognizes that choice in the selection of a public school provides parents and learners an opportunity to seek a school that best fits their needs and interests. This policy addresses the terms and conditions of student applications and enrollment into Bluffview Montessori School.

III. OPEN ENROLLMENT

A. General Application

1. Applications for all levels will be available on the school website or by request via phone or email.
2. Student applications for a school year that is in progress are accepted during the year. Students may be admitted if space is available throughout the year.
3. Applications will be made available for an upcoming school year on the first working day in January. Any applicants to be considered for the lottery process must have an application submitted to administration by the end of business on the last calendar day of that January.
4. Applications received beginning February 1st will be accepted and processed in the order they are received.
5. A new application must be submitted each year for any student that is not currently enrolled-they do not carry over from year to year.
 - a) Families of enrolled students will be sent an "Intent to Return" form each January to formally identify students that will not be returning the following year (for the purpose of potential recruitment).
 - b) Students that do not submit an Intent to Return Form will remain enrolled.

B. Eligibility

1. Tuition-based Pre-K
 - a) Children must be 33 months of age by their first date of attendance.

- b) Enrollment in each classroom environment shall not exceed 20 children, with a ratio of one adult per every ten children enrolled.
 - (1) There are 35 full time spots in total.
 - c) No preference for K enrollment may be given to BMS Pre-K students based on their attendance or enrollment in the Pre-K program.
- 2. BMS Public Charter School (K-8)
 - a) To attend Kindergarten, a student must be “at least 5 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences.” MN 124E.11
 - b) To attend first grade, a student must be “at least 6 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed Kindergarten.” MN 124E.11
 - c) Bluffview has philosophically chosen not to offer early Kindergarten (September 2 or later) or early first grade enrollment:
 - (1) “A charter school may establish and publish on its website a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in [MN Statute 124E.11] paragraphs (b) and (c).
 - d) Student must be a Minnesota resident
 - (1) At least one of the student’s parents/legal guardians must be a MN resident.

C. Enrollment

- 1. All eligible students who submit a timely application shall be enrolled, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a class, grade level, program, or building.
 - a) If the number of applications exceeds the given capacity, students will be accepted by lottery.
 - (1) Levels
 - (a) CH: 60 students
 - (b) Elementary I & II: 75 students each
 - (c) Erdkinder: 40 students
 - (2) Grades
 - (a) Kindergarten: 25 students
 - (b) Elementary grades 1-6: 25 students each
 - (c) Middle school grades 7 & 8: 20 students each,
 - (3) Entire K-8 Public Charter school program: 215 students
 - (4) Entire Tuition based pre-k: 35 full time spots
 - b) The classroom or program level may only be overenrolled under special circumstances and at the discretion of the teaching level team.

2. Enrollment Preference will be given to
 - a) current staff children
 - b) siblings of currently enrolled children
 - c) Foster children of enrolled students parents
 - d) **due to the fact that the BMS pre-k program is tuition-based, no preference may be given for enrollment into kindergarten based on pre-k enrollment. Refer to the previous two options.*
3. Once a student is enrolled in Kindergarten or higher, that student is considered enrolled until the student is formally withdrawn or is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.
4. Once a Pre-K student is enrolled, that student is considered enrolled in the Pre-K program until the student is formally withdrawn, is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, or until they apply for admission to and are enrolled in Kindergarten.

D. Lottery Process

1. Applicants are populated onto a spreadsheet by grade
2. All returning K-7 students are enrolled in the next grade
3. All enrollment preferences are filled
4. Any grade that has more applications than spots (end of January) will have all of the applications entered into a lottery and drawn at random.
 - a) Students are admitted to the program in the order they are drawn, as capacity allows.
 - b) Once individual grades/levels have been filled, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn.
 - c) If a student is admitted through the general lottery and that student has one or more siblings/foster siblings in other grades also subject to a lottery, those students will be given preference.
 - d) If there are more siblings/foster siblings and/or staff children than available spots, separate lotteries will be held for those categories before the general lottery is held.
 - e) Regarding multiple birth/foster siblings are entered into a lottery (each by their own name), then if one of the siblings is drawn, the other siblings shall be admitted to the program.
 - (1) In the event that admission of multiple siblings fills the enrollment to capacity without each of them being enrolled, they will be placed as next on the waiting list.

E. Waiting Lists

1. Waiting lists are constructed in the order drawn in the lottery. After conclusion of the drawings, Bluffview shall add to the waiting lists on a first come first serve basis. This waiting list is used to fill

subsequent openings for the following academic year in the order populated onto the list.

- a) If the applicant being placed on the waiting list has sibling/staff preference they will move to the top of the waiting list but below any other sibling/staff preference students already on the waiting list.

IV. REQUIRED FORMS

A. Application process

1. Appropriate application form

B. Enrollment process

1. Enrollment form for new students
2. Student Information form
3. Health form including immunization records
4. Emergency information
5. Contract form and deposit for Children's House students
6. Early Childhood Screening records (Kindergarten only)
7. Previous school records including any Individual Education Plan (IEP) information.

Legal References:

MN Statute 124E.11: Admission Requirements and Enrollment

MN Statute 124E.06

Application

Bluffview Montessori School

1321 Gilmore Avenue

Winona, MN 55987

507-452-2807

2021-2022

SCHOOL APPLICATION FORM

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| F OR OFFICE USE ONLY | |
| DATE RECEIVED _____ | ENROLL _____ |
| DATE _____ | ROOM/GRADE _____ BIRTH _____ CERT. _____ |
| ATTCH. Y or N | |
| MARSS # _____ | |

NOTICE TO PARENT/GUARDIAN: Tennessee Warning-MN Stat. 13.04.subd. 2: As a part of the permanent record for all students registered in the Bluffview Montessori Charter School/ISD 4001, information deemed private or confidential is collected. This data will be available only to district employees on a need-to-know basis. Failure to provide complete and accurate information may result in inaccurate records and incomplete services.

STUDENT INFORMATION

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Last Name (Legal Name) | First | Middle |
| | | |
| _____ | _____ | |
| Parent's Last Name | Parent's First Name | |
| | | |
| _____ | | |
| Address | | |
| | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| City | State | Zip |
| | | |
| _____ | _____ | |
| Home Phone # | Cell Phone # | |
| | | |
| _____ | | |
| Email | | |

Please indicate grade

Charter School (circle one) KG 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Extended Day Programs

The YMCA runs the after school care program. Information can be disseminated in the Bluffview Office, or by contacting the YMCA directly.

Student Background and Demographics

Student Enrollment and Attrition

This table identifies the number of students enrolled at Bluffview from the 2017-2018 to the 2021-2022 school years. Data is based on October 1 Average Daily Membership.

| GRADE | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Kindergarten | 22 | 23 | 26 | 24 | 25 |
| One | 25 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 25 |
| Two | 23 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 25 |
| Three | 24 | 25 | 25 | 23 | 25 |
| Four | 22 | 25 | 25 | 23 | 24 |
| Five | 29 | 22 | 26 | 24 | 24 |
| Six | 23 | 29 | 25 | 25 | 24 |
| Seven | 22 | 19 | 23 | 20 | 22 |
| Eight | 17 | 21 | 14 | 21 | 18 |
| Total | 207 | 215 | 214 | 212 | 212 |

Other Student Demographics

2020-21

| Race/Ethnicity | Percentage of Entire Student Body |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Native American | - |
| Asian & Pacific Islander | 1.4 |
| Hispanic | 3.3 |
| Black, not Hispanic | .5 |
| White, not Hispanic | 85.8 |
| Two or more races | 9.0 |

Student Participation

Attendance

The actual attendance rate for students during the 2020-2021 school year was 96.39%.

The Consistent Attendance as measured by the North Star Reporting system was 86.1%

Educational Approach and Curriculum

Describe the school's key pedagogical approaches and how they align to the vision/mission.



Bluffview's vision is "Empowered learners unfolding their full potential as whole and unique persons in a global community." We pursue this vision through a distinctive Montessori approach that embodies individualized instruction, mixed age groupings, an international curriculum, a prepared environment, and Montessori teaching materials.

The Montessori Method of education is based on the principle that education is to be an aid to life, and that it should go far beyond the simple acquisition of factual knowledge in various areas. Montessori schools help children develop a positive attitude and a curiosity toward learning. Bluffview's educational philosophy is inspired by the research of Dr. Maria Montessori, by her models for the classroom, and by the developmental learning materials she created.

The following are the basic tenets of the Bluffview Montessori School curriculum:

- Individualized instruction and a respect for each child's interests and style of learning
- Extensive use of Montessori materials designed to help develop concentration, coordination, and independence, as well as to give concrete experiences of academic concepts
- A classroom community founded on respect for self, others, and the environment that allows the child to develop his or her social sense and awareness of others in a natural and unhurried way
- Opportunities to ask questions, to seek many answers, and to work on projects of special interest
- Class groupings where children of different ages work together. Older children inspire younger children, and by helping them, gain confidence and a sense of responsibility
- An orderly and peaceful educational environment in which the child develops enthusiasm, self- motivation, concentration, and the joy of learning

The academic program at Bluffview Montessori School is based upon specific grade level outcomes and is aligned with Minnesota academic standards. Classes at the school are organized in mixed-age groupings.

Children's House (Ages 3-Kindergarten)

Dr. Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. The young child possesses what Montessori termed "the absorbent mind" and seeks to build or construct his very being. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn.

For that reason, most lessons in the Children's House environment are given as individual presentations.

This objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his/her own choice rather than by being taught; and second, by helping the child perfect his natural tools for learning, so that the child's abilities will be maximized for future learning situations.

Didactic Montessori materials have this dual, long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.

Math, language, geography, and science are introduced and explored. Sensorial exercises, social graces, self-care, and care of the environment are also key components of the Children's House. Kindergarten students continue their education within this mixed-age environment and emphasis is put on continued personal development in the areas of advanced reading and mathematics, science, geography, and cultural subjects. Self-care, independence, and social graces are also taught and encouraged.



Elementary



The physical and psychological characteristics of the child begin to change as he or she enters the elementary years. At this age, children have an intellectual power unsurpassed at any other and are natural explorers of the world around them. They bring to their work two important tools: powerful reasoning minds and the ability to imagine. These intellectual tools, combined with a natural urge to collaborate with peers, opens a field of exploration so vast that virtually any concept or system can be explored and integrated into a comprehensive whole.

In these learning environments, children delve deeply into the process of researching, classifying and ordering phases of history, botany, geology, geometry, language, and mathematics. Subject areas are integrated throughout the curriculum rather than being presented as separate disciplines. Teachers use stories, pictures, charts, and timelines to enrich the children's understanding and spark their interest in learning.

Mixed age learning continues in the elementary years. At Bluffview, our Lower Elementary program serves students in first through third grade and our Upper Elementary program serves students in fourth through sixth grade.

Lessons change from individualized to small, collaborative group lessons.

Middle School

Bluffview's middle school program addresses the needs of the adolescent student in an environment created specifically for seventh and eighth grade students. Students and teachers work together to promote a community atmosphere of learning. The middle school strives to fill the needs of the early adolescent and provides a safe, secure and developmentally appropriate environment to assist students in reaching their full potential.

Bluffview's middle school curriculum is focused on developing world citizens and cultivating life/work skills. These skills are acquired and refined through the application of language, mathematics, science, and cultural studies to specific enterprises and community involvement projects. Preparation for becoming and developing as a contributing member of society is woven into all aspects of the program.



The program also allows students to pursue research in areas of interest and to extend their learning beyond the classroom. This is accomplished through independent study, extended field trips, outreach, a student-run business, and community internships. Parents, teachers and students work in partnership to guide the self-actualization of the student.

Specialist programs



Art, physical education, vocal and instrumental music programs provide students with a balanced approach to integrating academics and daily life. Licensed teachers in each specialty area are employed to ensure that high quality programs are delivered.

Art, Vocal and Instrumental Music, and Physical Education programs provide students with a balanced approach to integrating academics and daily life. Licensed teachers in each specialty area are employed to ensure that high-quality programs are delivered.

Describe the school's key process to review and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum.

District curriculum is reviewed on a continuous-cycle to identify strengths and weaknesses of instruction and curriculum and to ensure career and college-readiness leading to the world's best workforce.

District curriculum and instruction will be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness in relation to best practice and student outcomes. Strategies for improving instruction, curriculum and student achievement will be identified and implemented. Instruction and assessment are aligned with local, state or national academic standards, instructional strategies are evaluated, and new instructional strategies may be embedded in the curriculum. Staff are expected to monitor student progress and adjust instruction as needed to facilitate student learning.



The elements below are connected to a continuous improvement process that reviews, supports and/or evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

- Curriculum review cycle which includes curriculum alignment to MN State Standards
- Curriculum implementation of new / innovative ideas
- Review of disaggregated MCA data and District Benchmark Reports by Pearson
- Teacher evaluation system that targets improving instruction through reflection and professional growth
- Peer Learning Communities developing “I Can” statements and Common Formative Assessments to guide instruction
- New teacher mentoring program
- ADSIS program provides supplemental reading, math and behavior instruction
- Title I program supports reading and math instruction
- School wide culture/climate initiatives
- District Technology Committee provides direction for the technology needs of our district
- Culture of continuous improvement: PLC Teams, Educator Evaluation and Peer Review
- MTSS team/admin/general education teachers review of FastBridge data each month
 - Tier 1 students - Core instruction provided for all students
 - Tier 2 students - Supplemental instruction and/or classroom interventions provided for students identified as needing additional assistance
 - Tier 3 students - Problem Solving Teams follow the Response to Intervention process to assist students needing more intensive interventions

Describe the process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards.

All students are evaluated each semester on their progress through the classroom curriculum using a narrative report.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Bluffview utilized Fastbridge assessments in Reading and Mathematics in the fall, winter, and spring. Data from these assessments combined with teacher input is used to place students into interventions. Students in interventions are progress monitored to evaluate growth. We use the Fastbridge behavioral screener, SAEBERS, with K-8 students as well as with the Preschool students to populate a population for the Behavioral Interventionist.

Bluffview utilizes MN State Assessments (MCAIII) in math, reading, and science along with the Pearson District Benchmark Reports to examine student progress towards meeting MN state standards. The school DAC put forth great effort to ensure that we had maximum participation for the 2021 MCA assessments.

Describe the special education program.

Bluffview Montessori School has staff members licensed to provide special education and related services for those students who meet criteria and have special education needs. Parents and students are directly involved with school and appropriate outside agency staff in the development of the special education program and the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) for school-age children.

Students are eligible for special education services until the IEP Team decides to terminate services. Students remain with their general education peers in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to the extent the IEP Team determines is appropriate. Special education program evaluation is accomplished through a single strategic plan to improve due process compliance and program results for students with disabilities.

Describe the English learner program.

Bluffview Montessori School offers an educational program to meet the needs of students who are English Language Learners in grades K-8. This program addresses two areas: language acquisition and cultural adjustment.

In the area of language acquisition, the goal is to provide students with the opportunity to develop communication skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, thereby enabling the students to be successful within the academic general education classroom.

The program will assist the students through their cultural adjustment by helping them develop an understanding of American culture. At the same time, the students will be encouraged to share their cultural backgrounds and realize the importance of their role in a multicultural society.

Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers

WBWF requires districts to have a process in place to ensure low-income students, students of color, and American Indian students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers. The legislation also requires that districts have strategies to increase equitable access to effective and diverse teachers.

Bluffview places great value on and invests in excellent teachers. We always strive to hire quality, in-field licensed teachers. One aspect of teaching at Bluffview is that 10 of 13 general education teachers are sent back to school upon being hired for at least one year of Montessori Pedagogical instruction and practice. The school reimburses them over a five-year period for the tuition incurred.

If a teacher is identified as ineffective within our Evaluation Framework (Danielson) then administration evaluates the potential of the teacher, and may choose to either dismiss the teacher or help them create a targeted Professional Improvement plan.



Regarding annual student placement assignments to new classrooms, we undergo a thorough process to balance classrooms by evaluating academics, behaviors, and personalities of the students to match them with teachers and classroom environments that will help them flourish as learners. Economic status/race, has no place in the discussion.

| 56/216 students identified as FRP SY 2020-21 | % of students taught by an experienced teacher | % of students taught by effective teacher | % of students taught by in-field, licensed teacher |
|--|--|---|--|
| Free/Reduced Price Students | 36/56 = 64.3% of Low-income students taught by experienced teacher | 100% All teachers classified as effective according to the District Teacher Evaluation Model | 100% All general education teachers are licensed in-field |
| Non FRP Students | 160/216 = 74% of Non-low-income students taught by experienced teacher | 100% All teachers classified as effective according to the District Teacher Evaluation Model | 100% All general education teachers are licensed in-field |

School goals and benchmarks for instruction and student achievement

| |
|---|
| Bluffview Montessori School 2018-2019 Reading Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 73% in 2018 to 77% in 2019. Result: 69.6% |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2019-2020 Reading Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 69.6% in 2019 to 74% in 2020. Result: Unable to report |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2020-2021 Reading Goal |
| Goal: Increase the percent of students scoring at the 30 th ile or higher on the Fastbridge areading assessment from 83% in the fall to 87% on the spring areading assessment. Result: 84% not met |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2021-2022 Reading Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 64.6% in 2021 to 67.1% in 2022. <i>*Our proficiency scores from 2019 to 2021 dropped 5%. This goal represents year one of a 2 year plan to return to a pre-covid proficiency rate of 69.6% on the 2023 MCA III.</i> Result: |

| |
|--|
| Bluffview Montessori School 2018-2019 Math Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 58.4% in 2018 to 63% in 2019. Result: 54.1% |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2019-2020 Math Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 54.1% in 2019 to 62% in 2020. Result: Unable to report |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2020-2021 Math Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students scoring at the 30 th ile or higher on the Fastbridge amath assessment from 83% in the fall to 87% on the spring assessment. Result: 86% not met |
| Bluffview Montessori School 2021-2022 Math Goal |
| Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 49.2% in 2021 to 51.7% in 2022. <i>*Our proficiency scores from 2019 to 2021 dropped 4.8%. This goal represents year one of a 2 year plan to return to a pre-covid proficiency rate of 54.1% on the 2023 MCA III.</i> Result: |

| |
|--|
| Bluffview Montessori School All Children Ready for School Goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: The PK4 students will increase their phonetic awareness from an average of 5.6 cursive letters/sounds mastered in mid-November to an average of 11 letters/sounds mastered during the spring Fastbridge screening window. Result: 14.8 sounds/student Met |
| Bluffview Montessori School All Children Ready for School Goal 2021-2022 |
| Goal: The PK4 students will increase their phonetic awareness from an average of 1.8 cursive letters/sounds mastered in mid-November to an average of 10 letters/sounds mastered during the spring Fastbridge screening window. Result: |

| |
|---|
| Bluffview Montessori School Read Well by Third Grade Goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of third grade students meeting or exceeding FastBridge literacy benchmarks (areading) from 74% on the Fall screener to 80% on the Spring screener. Result: 81% Met |
| Bluffview Montessori School Read Well by Third Grade Goal 2021-2022 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of third grade students meeting or exceeding FastBridge literacy benchmarks (areading) from 84% on the Fall screener to 87% on the Spring screener. Result: |

| |
|--|
| Bluffview Montessori School All Students College Ready Goals 2020-2021 |
| Goal: All grade 8 students will participate in a career exploration assessment. Result: Met |
| Bluffview Montessori School All Students College Ready Goals 2021-2022 |
| Goal: All grade 8 students will participate in a career exploration assessment. Result: |

Reading Achievement Gap Reduction Goals

| |
|--|
| Bluffview Montessori School FRP student reading achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of FRP students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 54.2% in 2019 to 60% in 2021. Result: 61.3% Met |
| Bluffview Montessori School SPED student reading achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of SPED students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 12.5% in 2019 to 20% in 2021. Result: 14.3% not met |
| Bluffview Montessori School SoC student reading achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of SoC students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 50% in 2019 to 58% in 2021. Result: 58.3% Met |

Note: No 2020 MCA data is available, so we have chosen to extend this set of achievement gap reduction goals to span two school years: from 2019 to 2021.

Reading Achievement Gap Reduction Data 2019 vs 2021

| % proficient on MCA | 2019 Reading | 2021 Reading | Result change |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Free/Reduced Non Gap | 20/37 54.2% 74/98 75.5% 21.3% | 19/31 61.3% 64/98 65.3% 4% | 7.1% -10.2% 17.3% net gap change |
| SPED Non Gap | 2/16 12.5% 92/119 77.3% 64.8% | 2/14 14.3% 81/115 70.4% 56.1% | 1.8% -6.9% 8.7% net gap change |
| Students of Color Non Gap | 9/18 50% 85/117 72.6% 22.6% | 7/12 58.3% 76/117 65.0% 6.7% | 8.3% -7.6% 15.9% net gap change |

Math Achievement Gap Reduction Goals

| |
|--|
| Bluffview Montessori School FRP student math achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of FRP students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 35.1% in 2019 to 50% in 2021. Result: 38.7% not met |
| Bluffview Montessori School SPED student math achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of SPED students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 6.3% in 2019 to 15% in 2021. Result: 14.3% not met |
| Bluffview Montessori School SoC student math achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021 |
| Goal: Increase the percent of SoC students proficient on the MCA III math assessment from 16.7% in 2019 to 40% in 2021. Result: 33.3% not met |

Note: No 2020 MCA data is available, so we have chosen to extend this set of achievement gap reduction goals to span two school years: from 2019 to 2021. The chart below shows 2018-19 for reference.

Math Achievement Gap Reduction Data 2019 vs 2021

| % proficient on MCA | 2019 Math | 2021 Math | Result change |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Free/Reduced Non Gap | 13/37 35.1% 60/98 61.2% 26.1% | 12/31 38.7% 50/97 51.5% 12.8% | 3.6% -9.7% -14.3% net gap change |
| SPED Non Gap | 1/16 6.3% 72/119 60.5% 54.2% | 2/14 14.3% 61/115 53.0% 38.7% | 8.0% -7.5% 4.1% net gap change |
| Students of Color Non Gap | 3/18 16.7% 70/117 59.8% 43.1% | 4/12 33.3% 59/117 50.4% 17.1% | 16.6% -9.4% 26% net gap change |

Achievement Gap Narrative

Though we are mindful of the small number of students included in each subgroup, we fully intend to close the achievement gap. There is work to be done. The school is tackling this work energetically and with a sense of urgency and optimism. A variety of strategies are in place to improve student performance including:

- Ensuring alignment of Montessori curriculum to State Standards. Our focus remains on math specifically continuing our focus on Tier 1 math instruction and the generation of data that directly correlates to areas that need improvement
- Evaluation of cross membership of multiple subgroups: how many and how can we help the students in multiple subgroups in a more targeted manner
- Providing new teachers with teacher mentors and a clearly laid out plan
- Meeting in data teams/level intervention teams at least one time/month to:
 - Determine whether Tier 1 instruction is meeting at least the needs of 80% of students
 - Identify students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 support
 - Review data on which specific skills appear to be relative strengths or weaknesses

Additionally, we intend to:

- Continue to develop MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) plan, with research around Standard Treatment Protocol for Title and ADSIS interventions and the use of EduClimber as our data warehouse
- Complete a Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) with Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED) in the areas of reading, math, and PBIS and an MTSS Action Plan from the data that we generate through the TFI process
- Continue to provide specific training on using data to guide instruction, including the examination of the Pearson District Benchmark reports for the last 4 years to identify consistent weaknesses
- Include level teams, including both general and special education staff, in examining progress monitoring data more frequently
- Conduct fidelity checks to monitor if curriculum and interventions are being implemented as intended
- Re-examine the effectiveness coefficients of the intervention programs that are being used, replacing ineffective curriculum programs with new, research based effective ones- notably in the area of math
- Refine the additional focused Tier 1 time 3 days/week of math foundational practice for grades 4-6.

Innovative Practices

Character-based Learning

The Bluffview Montessori curriculum offers many opportunities to integrate character-based learning with elements of the Peace Curriculum. Students learn practical skills necessary to develop qualities of being a good citizen. Respect for self, others, the environment and the community is expected of all students and is the guiding force in everything students do during the school day. Thematic learning activities also encourage student learning to extend outward into the community. During the 2020-2021 school year, educators also used strength-based strategies from The Virtues Project and Core Virtues to further create a culture of caring and character.

Focus on Peace

Bluffview Montessori is an International Peace Site. International Peace Sites commit to five peace actions:

- Seek peace within yourself and others
- Reach out in service
- Protect the environment
- Respect diversity
- Be a responsible citizen of the world



Explorers of the Week are often recognized for displaying virtues.



Multi-age Learning Environments

The multi-aged classrooms of Montessori schools, like Bluffview, allow students to stretch their minds rather than being constrained by artificial barriers such as grade or age. When a teacher gives a lesson intended for seven-year-olds, for instance, any student in the room may attend, including younger students who are interested. Teachers consciously prepare the environment so that instruction is inclusive and differentiated as much as possible. Multi-aged classrooms also give students additional opportunities to learn leadership skills and learn how to live in a cooperative social environment.



Response to Intervention (RTI)

Bluffview's tiered intervention program continues to be an outstanding success. The school received ADSIS funding for 2021-2022 and the school board budgets for ADSIS interventionists (Tier 3) to work closely with Title 1 teachers (Tier 2) and provide additional instruction to students needing extra instruction in reading or math.

Immersions



The Encarta Dictionary defines the word immerse as: to become completely occupied with something, giving all your time, energy, or concentration to it. Immersions at Bluffview Montessori School are key experiences specifically planned for Erdkinder (junior high) students to travel, study, and work together and usually involve several days away from school and home.

During a normal school year, our 7th and 8th grade students spent three days at Whitewater State Park. They also may have had an overnight canoe/camping trip at Prairie Island along with several other day-long immersion trips. Many of these were suspended due to Covid.

Erdkinder students also participate in the community and explored future careers through internships. The junior high students initiate contact with community businesses, created resumes, and interviewed for internship opportunities. Each student spent

several days working alongside community business leaders and shared their experiences with classmates upon returning to school.

Micro-economy

Our adolescent program includes a business education typically not experienced until adulthood.



Bluffview middle school students help to run a community coffee house once a month. This foundation provides a deeper understanding of adult life and the role that finances play in personal responsibility and social organization.

Running a business first hand offers students early exposure to the meaning of money and the basis of economic systems. Students plan, operate, and account for business ventures related to the coffee house. The students come to understand principles of supply and demand, marketing, accounting, use of capital resources, and division of labor as they contribute to the local economy.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is a school-wide framework for organizing and creating a positive school climate. It is used to build the capacity of school teams to identify clear behavior outcomes for all staff and students, utilize evidence-based practices to achieve those outcomes, and understand data/information used to support sustainable, safe and positive learning environments.

In 2015, the Bluffview PBIS leadership team completed two years of training with the Minnesota Department of Education to support understanding and implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS). Our shared behavioral expectations for student expectations are based upon the “3 Respects” at Bluffview- Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for the Environment.



Educational Partnerships

Bluffview works collaboratively with two local universities and a Technical College in Winona to increase their student involvement. Students in teacher education training programs serve as volunteers, complete field experiences, and student teach in our school whenever possible. This provides our students with extra tutoring and leadership models, and creates beneficial community partnerships with Winona State University, St. Mary’s University, and Southeast Technical College.

Mental Health

Bluffview partners with Hiawatha Valley Mental Health (HVMH) to deliver mental health support to our students. HVMH engages Bluffview students in School Linked mental health services by providing therapists that come to the school to administer their services. Bluffview provides the referrals, and the space for the therapists to work with our students. This is currently funded through a County grant. If that grant were to end, Bluffview is committed to continuing to offer this important service to our students.

In SY 19-20 Bluffview contracted with HVMH to create a pilot program for our Middle School students. We are committed to renewing the program for SY 21-22. The goal of this program is to utilize the mental health professionals at HVMH to design and implement a proactive skill building and resilience program. They used the RCAD as a way to collect data and evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Bluffview also engages a local professional to provide 16 sessions of Mindfulness training with our elementary students during the fall. The goal is to make this an annual component of the school curriculum.

Service-Learning Plan and Outcomes

This plan is being developed by the Bluffview Pedagogy Committee and administration in preparation for next school year. It will be completed and ready for implementation in SY 22-23.

*This is Bluffview's first year with VOA. Bluffview did not have a Service Learning Plan in place last school year.

Assessment Plan

Universal screening (FastBridge) takes place three times a year to identify students who may be at risk for reading and math difficulties. Criterion-referenced target scores have been established for each measure at each administration that reflect the expected grade level performance. FastBridge SAEBRS is also used as an initial screening tool for populating our behavior intervention programming.

Bluffview always has very high participation in the spring MCA III assessment as well, and may administer the MTAS as deemed appropriate.

Classroom assessment is the constant and ongoing observation and assessment that occurs in the Montessori classroom. Informal assessment and qualitative or anecdotal notes are consistently taken, and at the elementary level the exit ticket concept is employed with group lessons. If a student demonstrates mastery, they are excused. Those that need additional support receive it in an extended lesson. There is not a lot of quantified data in the Montessori format. That said, we are reviewing ways to generate more data. The Erdkinder program does, as a transitional program to more traditional high school settings, provide a traditional grading framework and reports that through a system called Think Wave. Student reports can be viewed in real time by parents and students, and may be set for scheduled email updates.

Assessments are used for a variety of purposes:

1. to screen students for reading and math proficiency, including FastBridge early reading and CBM reading for dyslexia specifically,
2. to systematically monitor progress over time for students in interventions,
3. to determine students' level of proficiency and whether they have met grade-level reading goals,
4. to determine or diagnose potential sources of difficulty for students not making adequate progress despite the use of intense intervention,
5. and to provide useful data to grade/level teams for planning and instruction.

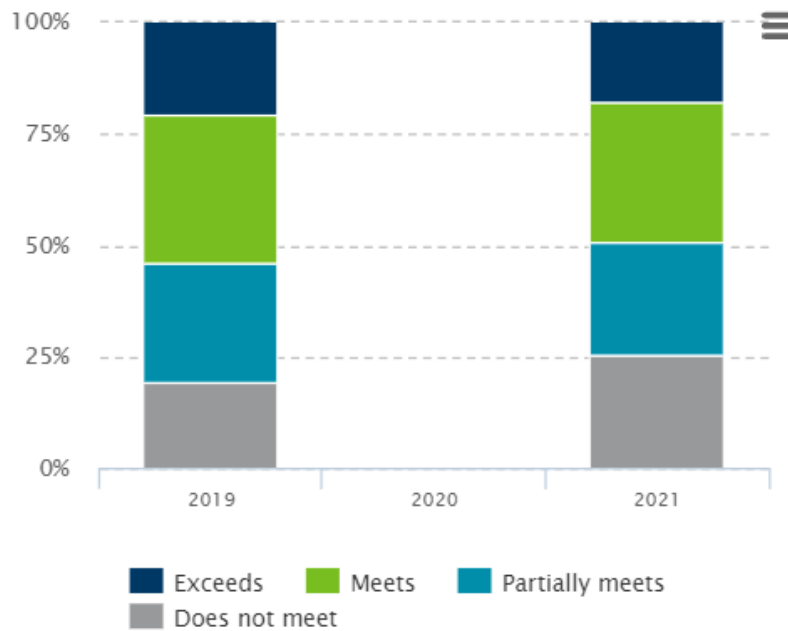
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments

MCA Comparison Chart

| MCA (% proficient) | BMS | MN / State | WAPS | La Crescent Mont |
|-----------------------|------|------------|-------|------------------|
| Math 19' | 54.0 | 55.0 | 48.5 | 27.5 |
| Math 21' | 49.2 | 44.2 | 32.7 | 12.5 |
| Change | -4.8 | -10.8 | -15.8 | -15.0 |
| Reading 19' | 69.6 | 59.2 | 49.2 | 62.7 |
| Reading 21' | 64.6 | 52.5 | 40.2 | 49.1 |
| Change | -5.0 | -6.7 | -9.0 | -13.6 |
| Science 19' | 58.1 | 50.7 | 50.5 | 30.0 |
| Science 21' | 48.9 | 43.1 | 33.7 | CTSTR |
| Change | -9.2 | -7.6 | -16.8 | NA |

*WAPS (Winona Area Public Schools) and La Crescent Montessori are our comparable schools.

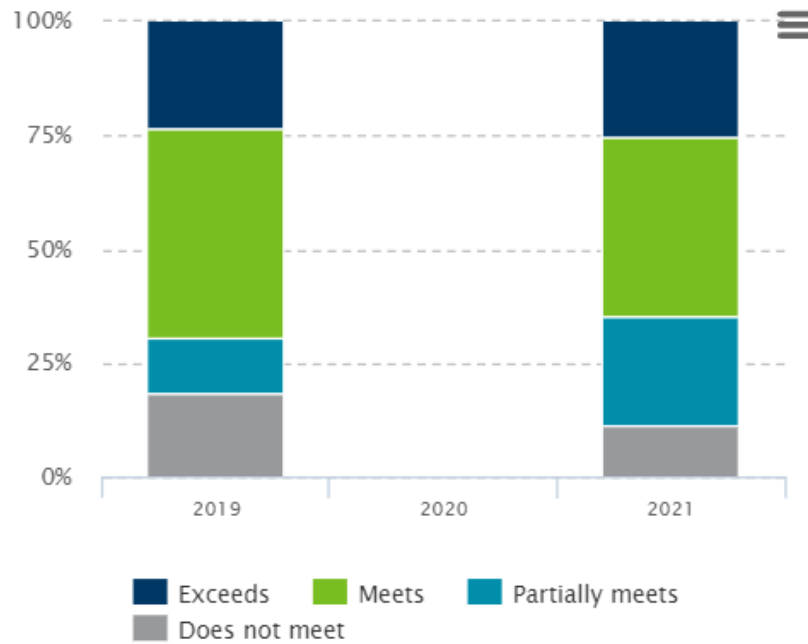
Summary Proficiency MCA III Math 2020-21 All Grades



🚫 Due to COVID-19, no summarized assessment data is available for 2020

| Year | | Exceeds | Meets | Partially meets | Does not meet |
|------|---------|---------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2019 | Count | 28 | 45 | 36 | 26 |
| | Percent | 20.7% | 33.3% | 26.7% | 19.3% |
| 2020 | Count | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Percent | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2021 | Count | 23 | 41 | 33 | 33 |
| | Percent | 17.7% | 31.5% | 25.4% | 25.4% |

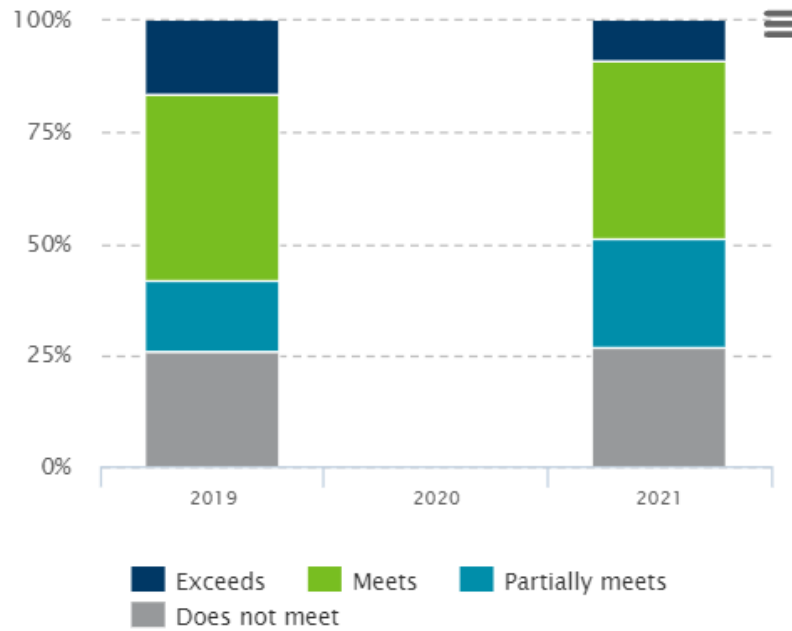
Summary Proficiency MCA III Reading 2020-21 All Grades



! Due to COVID-19, no summarized assessment data is available for 2020

| Year | | Exceeds | Meets | Partially meets | Does not meet |
|------|---------|---------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2019 | Count | 32 | 62 | 16 | 25 |
| | Percent | 23.7% | 45.9% | 11.9% | 18.5% |
| 2020 | Count | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Percent | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2021 | Count | 33 | 51 | 31 | 15 |
| | Percent | 25.4% | 39.2% | 23.8% | 11.5% |

Summary Proficiency MCA III Science 2020 All Grades



❗ Due to COVID-19, no summarized assessment data is available for 2020

| Year | | Exceeds | Meets | Partially meets | Does not meet |
|------|---------|---------|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2019 | Count | 7 | 18 | 7 | 11 |
| | Percent | 16.3% | 41.9% | 16.3% | 25.6% |
| 2020 | Count | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Percent | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2021 | Count | 4 | 18 | 11 | 12 |
| | Percent | 8.9% | 40.0% | 24.4% | 26.7% |

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Parent Survey

Parents of students were asked to complete a survey in the spring of 2021.

- Bluffview received a 4.8 average out of a possible 5.0 points response to the question “I consider my child’s school to excellent school
- “I would recommend my child’s school to a friend” received a 4.9 average out of 5 points.
- Areas of greatest strength for Bluffview Montessori School revolved around culture/community and education. The themes included:
 - Small school culture that creates a community of strong respect, values, learning, engagement, and connection
 - Safe environment
 - Accessible staff that is courteous and helpful, put forth a strong effort to meet family needs during Covid
 - School communication
 - An education that is individualized for each child
 - An education that incorporates Montessori principles
- Areas of greatest improvement revolved around communication and school services. The themes included:
 - Board communication is in need of improvement
 - Discipline/bullying-too many perceived instances of “bullying” were not reported again this year. Only 63% of respondents reported bullying even though 90% stated they ARE aware of the school bullying policy. This was a point of emphasis at the beginning of the year as the gap was bigger the previous year. We tried to educate parents on what bullying really is, and how to address it at the school level the beginning of the year parent orientation

Staff Survey

Staff employed at Bluffview during SY 20-21 were asked to complete a spring survey also.

- Strengths
 - Overall, 93.1% of staff agree or strongly agree that they would recommend BMS to a family member seeking a school for their children.
 - Communication to staff is effective
 - Accessibility of admin, support
 - Preparation and planning for Covid related issues
- Weaknesses
 - Only 34.5% agree that the school does a good job of meeting staff financial needs
 - Lack of consistent outgoing parent communication from staff

Program Challenges

Maintaining an Authentic Montessori School



Quality Montessori environments include a Montessori-trained teacher and a teaching assistant. Bluffview's commitment to staff classrooms in this manner greatly impacts our budget and teacher salaries. We will continue to seek out funding from other sources, including fundraising and grant opportunities that will increase our general revenue.

Many skills that are taught in a Montessori school are difficult to measure. We emphasize development in independence, self-direction, inner discipline and peaceful resolution skills. We focus on practical life skills and how they can be applied through service to the community. All of these skills, while necessary for success, are very difficult to measure.

Testing presents a challenge to some of our students, simply because it is not a common practice here, and doesn't always reflect accurate student progress. The use of Montessori materials offers students concrete experiences which guide them toward abstraction. Although we consistently

observe student mastery in our classrooms, our students are not always able to demonstrate mastery through standardized tests. We implement test-taking skills into our curriculum and provide opportunities for students to practice simulated tests prior to actual assessments.

Where we see the most discrepancy between what children do in the classroom and what they demonstrate in their standardized assessments is in math. The school upgraded its subscriptions to an on-line math and ELA practice software (IXL) for the 2021-2022 academic year in an effort to help the children make the leap from the concrete world of Montessori math to the abstract world of demonstrating their skills on the computer. This software is used in the classroom in limited amounts and for the purpose of supporting the children in learning how to demonstrate what they do know on the computer vs. the Montessori materials. The program is also available for students to utilize from home for additional practice.

Future Plans

Bluffview discusses plans for the future quite often. The school does have a 5-year strategic plan that we are working to implement. The plan has five overarching goals:

1. Increase annual fundraising efforts to sustain school programs
2. Increase staff retention by increasing compensation while maintaining the financial health of the school
3. Increase awareness of the benefits of a Montessori education
4. Grow the staff culture at Bluffview
5. Develop a plan for the future of the school facilities

This plan was updated in 2019 and extends into 2025. It contains some aggressive but attainable goals. This plan was devised to have all five goals that will grow together in a way that takes the already very strong foundation of Bluffview Montessori and grows it into an organization that is prepared to possibly take a much bigger step in the future-adding a high school. This is something that is often discussed but never very seriously. If we are successful in implementing our strategic plan, it could become a reality.

Beyond a high school expansion, we do have a few other “brick and mortar” plans. The school needs a garage, as the small storage shed is no longer adequate to meet our needs. Plans for the garage are drawn up, but we lack the capital to execute the plans. This is also the case when it comes to a new gym (the current one is also the cafeteria and auditorium) and a new art room which would allow us to expand internal storage and add 2 offices.

Curriculum wise, one goal is to continue to build on the strong work of the math alignment project by aligning science curriculum in 2021-2022, then aligning the language arts curriculum after that. This will be done in a way that emphasizes and brings to the forefront the strengths of the Montessori method and philosophy.

One final goal for the financial future of the school is to get to a place where we can afford to pay for Montessori training for new teaching staff up front as opposed to the current method of making them pay for it and reimbursing over a few years after the completion of the degree.

Finances and Budget

Bluffview contracts with to manage our accounting services, audit preparation, payroll processing, grant management, financial reporting and other financial management services. Partnering with BKDV's professional business management team allows Bluffview's administration to concentrate on keeping its teaching mission clear and focused.

Bluffview Montessori School undergoes an annual audit (CliftonLarsonAllen) after June 30 of each year, which must be completed by the end of November as per our Bond agreement. The fiscal audit for the year ending June 30, 2020 was recently completed and the school has been issued a clean audit. The audit documents are available upon request.

As a charter school, Bluffview's financial health and stability is primarily dependent on student enrollment. Therefore, maintaining full enrollment is key for our financial health.

Long Range Budget

[Long Range Budget \(5 years\)](#)

The school's financial management company can be contacted at:

BergenKDV

22488 Chippendale Avenue
West Farmington, MN 55024

Phone: 651.463.2233

Fax: 651.463.3605

Email: Brenda.Kes@bergankdv.com

Authorizer

Effective July 1, 2021 Bluffview Montessori is Authorized by Volunteers of America. BMS signed a 5-year contract with VOA. The contact for VOA is:

Stephanie Olsen
Volunteers of America MN
Charter School Authorizing Program
924 19th Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55404
solsen@voamn.org
(612) 375-0700
[VOA MN website](#)

School Report Card

The data previously included on the school report card pages is now available through the Minnesota Department of Education's Data Center. The center was designed to provide parents, educators, schools, districts and citizens with easy access to test results, revenue and expenditure data, demographic information and other critical data in a centralized location. This information can be accessed at <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/>

Non-Profit Status

The Minnesota Non-Profit Status follows this page in printed versions of this report and can be accessed by means of the following link in electronic versions of this report:

[Bluffview Montessori non-profit status](#)