



Bluffview Montessori

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



Submitted to:

**Winona Area Public Schools
903 Gilmore Avenue
Winona, MN 55987**

**Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36
West Roseville, MN 55113**

November 2020

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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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Student Attrition Rates	<u>11</u>
Board Governance: Elections, Roster, Training	<u>3</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 parents of Bluffview students.

The Bluffview Montessori School Board of Directors is a seven-member board. All 2019-2020 Board members completed School Board Training in Governance, Financial Management and Employment Matters. All board members had satisfactory attendance at board meetings.

The 2019-2020 members of the Board of Directors included:

Name	Board Position	Group Affiliation	Date Elected	Email Address	Ongoing Training
Meghan Booth	Member	Teacher 486642	Appointed Sept. 18, 2019	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	June 2017	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	May 2015 Re-elected May 2018	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	Appointed 11/28/18 Elected May, 2019	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	May 2013 Re-elected May 2016, 2019	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	May 2015 Re-elected May 2018	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
Kelly Dicke	Member	Community Member	May 2017 Resigned 10/19	kdicke@ 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	Appointed 4/20	dkirk@bluffviewmontess ori.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 2020-2021 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
- Ensure preparations for full onsite, hybrid, and distance learning are completed
- Continue work on the new Strategic Plan, including finalizing the Core Values and creating a PD workshop(s) for all staff to be introduced to the Core Values and why they are important which will also serve as proactive building of School Culture
- Secure a new Charter Authorizer as ours was terminated by MDE
- Analyzing assessment data to evaluate curriculum scope and sequence and align Montessori curriculum to updated Minnesota state standards
- Build/generate more staff accountability measures for all staff
 - Use new job descriptions to create staff self-evaluations for all staff

Faculty Information SY 2019-2020

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	Returned for 20-21
Knutson, Renee		Receptionist	Y
Bacon, Greta		Program Paraprofessional	Y
Cloutier, Lori	334515	Assistant Head of School	N
Callahan, Sarah		Classroom Assistant	N
Foley, Stirling		Program Paraprofessional	Y
Hill, Esther		Program Paraprofessional	Y
Richardson, Andy		Maintenance	Y
Gifford, Sheena		Program Paraprofessional	N
Hansen, Evangeline		Classroom Assistant	Y
Heim, Cody		Program Paraprofessional	N
Johnson, Carly		Food Service	Y
Kerr, Carol		Classroom Assistant	Y
McCullough, Jena		Classroom Assistant	Y
Metz, Lorrie		Classroom Assistant`	Y
Meyer, Joyce		Classroom Assistant	Y
Pasche, Amber		Librarian	Y
Polachek, Cheryl	405969	Behavior Interventionist	Y
Polachek, Criss		Classroom Assistant	Y
Price, Diana	430989	Classroom Assistant	Y
Rourke, Ruth		Administrative Assistant	Y
Serjogins, Kendra		Classroom Assistant	N
Schantzen, Henry	385789	Head of School	Y
Shea, Jen		Program Paraprofessional	N
Skillicorn, Kelly	304706	School Counselor	Y
Simmons, Stephanie		Transition Assistant	Y
Smith, Cynthia		Food Service	Y
Stenberg, Louise		Transition Assistant	N
Wenger-Vaughn, Roz		Program Paraprofessional	N

Teachers

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

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Returned for 20-21
Aarre Anna	421025	Kindergarten Teacher/Pre-K	8	Y
Bell, Kim	382280	Special Education Teacher	4	Y
Booth, Meghan	486642	Math: Grades 7 & 8,	5	Y
Borkowski, Sandra	347177	Art	25	Y
Dubis, Chris	478314	Music, Instrumental Music	4	Y
Fink, Brianna	416148	Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3	14	N
Fischer, Michaela	485123	Special Education Teacher	2	Y
Heim, Rachel	485226	Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6	5	N
Hohensee, Pat	161429	Title I – Math	13	Y
Kinneberg, Katie	423840	Kindergarten Teacher/Pre-K	12	Y
Leifeld, Molly	462786	Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3	9	Y
Webber, Susan	512149	Language Arts: Grades 7 & 8	1	Y
McClatchey, Eldridge	510858	Physical Education	2	Y
Merchlewitz, Shelly	333395	Intervention Teacher	10	Y
O'Connell, Amy	494596	Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6	3	Y
O'Grady, Kate	337836	Science: Grades 7&8	8	N
Schmit, Anna	503214	Upper Elementary: Grades 4-6	1	N
Salzmann, Linda	504716	Intervention Teacher	1	Y
Carlson, Josh	510709	Kindergarten/Pre-K	1	Y
Swogger, Kristine	462637	Title I, EL	8	Y
Wagner, Shelby	480351	Social Studies/History: Grades 7 & 8	2	Y
Weaver, Brooke	482591	Special Education Teacher	5	Y
White, Mariah	478840	Lower Elementary: Grades 1-3	5	Y

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 course work, a practicum in the developmental area of assignment, and final written and oral examinations.

Our faculty turnover from 2019-20 to 2020-2021 was 23%. Reasons for departures were primarily monetary. Two staff retired.

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

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 enrollment in Bluffview Montessori School.

GUIDELINES 501

I. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Children's House

1. Children must be 33 months of age by their first date of attendance.
2. Children must be toilet trained.
3. Enrollment of classroom shall not exceed 20 children with a ratio of one adult per every ten children enrolled.
4. Continued enrollment is subject to the child's ability to contribute to the classroom community and flourish in the Montessori learning environment as determined by the teaching team.

B. Kindergarten through eighth grade

1. Children must be age 5 by September 1st of the current school year to enter Kindergarten. The parent of a child whose fifth birthday falls between September 2 and September 30 inclusive may request early admission of that child to kindergarten under conditions described in Policy 502.
2. Students must live in the State of Minnesota.
3. One of the following conditions must be met
 - a. The custodial parent of a student must live in Minnesota.
 - b. A Minnesota Driver's license is required for proof of residency.
 - c. The parents of a student who live together must live in Minnesota.
4. Eligible students who submit a timely application shall be enrolled, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of classroom (elementary-25, and middle school-40), Montessori program level (kindergarten-25, lower elementary-75, upper elementary-75, and middle school-40) or entire school program (215). The classroom or program level may only be overenrolled under special circumstance and at the discretion of the teaching level team.
 - a. If the number of applications exceeds the number of openings, then students shall be accepted by lot. Lottery drawing takes place in February.

- b. A drawing shall be held at each grade level if the number of applicants exceeds the positions available.
 - c. Preference for enrollment shall be given to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that student's parents before accepting other students by lot. Preference for enrollment shall also be given for children of school staff.
5. Waiting Lists: 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.

II. REQUIRED FORMS

- A. Enrollment form (for new students)
- B. Student Information Form
- C. Health form including immunization records
- D. Emergency information
- E. Contract form and deposit for Children's House
- F. Early Childhood Screening records (Kindergarten only)
- G. Previous school records including any Individual Education Plan (IEP) information.

Legal References:

MN Statutes 124E.11: Admission Requirements and Enrollment

Application

Bluffview Montessori School
1321 Gilmore Avenue
Winona, MN 55987
507-452-2807

2020-2021

SCHOOL APPLICATION FORM

FOR 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 afterschool 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 2016-2017 to the 2019-2020 school years. Data is based on October 1 Average Daily Membership.

GRADE	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Kindergarten	24	22	23	26	24
One	23	25	26	25	26
Two	21	23	25	25	26
Three	23	24	25	25	23
Four	26	22	25	25	23
Five	24	29	22	26	24
Six	22	23	29	25	25
Seven	23	22	19	23	20
Eight	14	17	21	14	21
Total	200	207	215	214	212

Other Student Demographics

2019-20

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 2019-2020 school year was 95.28%.

The Consistent Attendance as measured by the North Star Reporting system was 84%

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.

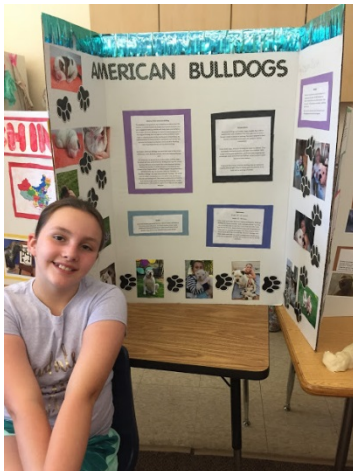
This objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his/her own choice rather than by being taught; and second, by helping the child perfect his natural tools for learning, so that the child's abilities will be maximized for future learning 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 2019-2020 school year, Bluffview utilized Fastbridge assessments in Reading and Mathematics in the fall and winter. Normal years (Non-Covid years) would be three times per year (K-8). 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 Pre-school 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. There are no MCA results to post for SY 19-20.

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.

During the Spring school closure and distance learning period all IEP's had IDLP's (Individual Distance Learning Plans) added to them.

Describe the English learner program.

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.

58/232 students identified as FRP SY 2019-20	% 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	36/58 = 62% 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	110/174 = 63% 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 2017-2018 Reading Goal
Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the 2018 MCA III reading assessment from 67.2% to 70% Result: 73%
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.

Bluffview Montessori School 2017-2018 Math Goal
Proficiency Goal: Increase the percent of students proficient on the 2018 MCA III math assessment from 59.1% to 63% Result: 58.4%
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 a assessment.

Bluffview Montessori School All Children Ready for School Goal 2018-2019
Goal: The PK4 students will increase their phonetic awareness from an average of 3.1 letters correctly (sound) recognized during the fall screening window to an average of 12 letters correctly (sound) recognized during the spring screening window. Result: 9.2
Bluffview Montessori School All Children Ready for School Goal 2019-2020
Goal: The PK4 students will increase their phonetic awareness from an average of 3.2 letters correctly (sound) recognized during the fall screening window to an average of 10 letters correctly (sound) recognized during the spring screening window. Result: Unable to report-no spring screening
Bluffview Montessori School All Children Ready for School Goal 2020-2021
Goal: The PK4 students will increase their phonetic awareness from an average of ?? letters correctly (sound) recognized during the fall screening window to an average of ?? letters correctly (sound) recognized during the spring screening window.

Bluffview Montessori School Read Well by Third Grade Goal 2018-2019
Goal: Increase the percent of third grade students meeting or exceeding FastBridge literacy benchmarks (areading) from 80% on the Fall screener to 90% in the Spring. Result: 87%
Bluffview Montessori School Read Well by Third Grade Goal 2019-2020
Goal: Increase the percent of third grade students meeting or exceeding FastBridge literacy benchmarks (areading) from 86% on the Fall screener to 91% on the Spring screener. Result: Unable to report-no spring screening
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:

Bluffview Montessori School All Students College Ready Goals 2019-2020
Goal: All grade 8 students will participate in a career exploration assessment. Result: Met
Bluffview Montessori School All Students College Ready Goals 2020-2021
Goal: All grade 8 students will participate in a career exploration assessment. Result:

Achievement Gap Reduction

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. Increase the percent of Non-FRP students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 75.5% in 2019 to 79% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 2.3%. Result:
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. Increase the percent of Non-SPED students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 77.3% in 2019 to 81% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 3.8%. Result:
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. Increase the percent of Non-SoC students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 72.6% in 2019 to 77% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 3.4%. Result:

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.

Reading Achievement Gap Reduction Data 2018 vs 2019

% proficient on MCA	2018 Reading	2019 Reading	Result
Free/Reduced	21/36 58.3%	20/37 54.2%	-4.1%
Non	80/102 78.4%	74/98 75.5%	-2.9%
Gap	20.1%	21.3%	-1.2% net gap
Actual Reduction			-2.9% + (-4.1%) = -7% reduction
SPED	2/15 13.3%	2/16 12.5%	-0.8%
Non	99/123 80.5%	92/119 77.3%	-3.2%
Gap	67.2%	64.8%	2.4% net gap
Actual Reduction			-3.2% + (-0.8%) = -4% reduction
Students of Color	9/17 53%	9/18 50%	-3%
Non	92/121 76%	85/117 72.6%	-3.4%
Gap	23%	22.6%	0.4% net gap
Actual Reduction			-3.4% + (-3%) = -6.4% reduction

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 reading assessment from 35.1% in 2019 to 50% in 2021. Increase the percent of Non-FRP students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 61.2% in 2019 to 65% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 11.1%. Result:
Bluffview Montessori School SPED student math achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021
Goal: Increase the percent of SPED students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 6.3% in 2019 to 15% in 2021. Increase the percent of Non-SPED students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 60.5% in 2019 to 65% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 4.2%. Result:
Bluffview Montessori School SoC student math achievement gap reduction goal 2020-2021
Goal: Increase the percent of SoC students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 16.7% in 2019 to 40% in 2021. Increase the percent of Non-SoC students proficient on the MCA III reading assessment from 59.8% in 2019 to 65% in 2021. This would be a gap reduction of 11.5%. Result:

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 2018 vs 2019

% proficient on MCA	2018 Math	2019 Math	Result
Free/Reduced	18/36 50%	13/37 35.1%	-14.9%
Non	63/102 61.8%	60/98 61.2%	-0.6%
Gap	11.8%	26.1%	-14.3% net gap
Actual Reduction			-0.6% + (-14.9%) = -15.5% reduction
SPED	1/15 6.7%	1/16 6.3%	-0.4%
Non	80/123 65%	72/119 60.5%	-4.5%
Gap	58.3%	54.2%	4.1% net gap
Actual Reduction			-4.5% + (-0.4%) = -4.9% reduction
Students of Color	6/17 35.3%	3/18 16.7%	-18.6%
Non	75/121 62%	70/117 59.8%	-2.2%
Gap	26.7%	43.1%	-16.4% gap reduction
Actual Reduction			-2.2 = (-18.6%) = -20.8% reduction

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
 - How to parlay the weaknesses into strengths

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 (no spring 2020 data)
- 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 2018-2019 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 2019-2020 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 the 2019-2020 school year, our 7th and 8th grade students spent three days at Whitewater State Park. They also had an overnight canoe/camping trip at Prairie Island along with several other day-long immersion trips.

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 use 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. 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 engage a local professional to provide 16 session of Mindfulness training with our elementary students during the fall. The goal is to make this an annual component for the students as well.

Bluffview is currently building a friendship garden with a pergola and benches to serve as an outdoor SEL classroom. This project was inspired by a conversation with a school family that lost a child to suicide. The goals of the project were to create a welcoming space to teach about friendship and inclusion, to offer “buddy benches” for students that are seeking a friend to play with, and a calming outdoor space to offer students when they are self-managing and need a space to retreat to.

Two other opportunities we have been researching are Trauma Informed Practices including Restorative Practices professional development for the staff. If resources allow, a goal of Restorative Practices training during the summer of 2021 may be possible.

Service-Learning Plan and Outcomes

This will be added in SY 2020-21 after a transition to VOA as our authorizer.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments
Summary Proficiency MCA III Math 2020 All Grades

Unable to report: No SY 19-20 MCA scores

Summary Proficiency MCA III Reading 2020 All Grades

Unable to report: No SY 19-20 MCA scores

Summary Proficiency MCA III Science 2020 All Grades

Unable to report: No SY 19-20 MCA scores

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Parent Survey

Parents of students were asked to complete a survey in the spring of 2020.

- Overall, 93.2% of respondents consider Bluffview to be an “excellent school”
- 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
 - 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 46% of respondents reported bullying even though 93.2% 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 19-20 were asked to complete a spring survey also.

- Strengths
 - Overall, 91.4% of staff agree or strongly agree that they would recommend BMS to a family member seeking a school for their children.
 - 88.6% stated that communication to staff is effective
 - 94.3% agree or strongly agree that school procedures and practices support student achievement
 - 91.4% agree or strongly agree BMS is an excellent school
- Weaknesses
 - Only 28.6% agree that the school does a good job of meeting staff financial needs

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 common place 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 renewed subscriptions to on-line math practice software (Study Island) for the 2019-2020 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 and complete. 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.

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 after June 30 of each year. The fiscal audit for the year ending June 30, 2020 was recently completed and the school has been issued a clean audit.

Links to financial documents for the 2019-2020 school year are included in appendices to this report.

As a charter school, Bluffview's financial health and stability is dependent on student enrollment. Cash flow challenges arise as the result of state holdbacks. Bluffview's need to borrow money to maintain operating needs of the school is directly related to the percentage of owed revenue held back by the State of Minnesota.

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

Winona Area Public Schools has authorized Bluffview Montessori School continuously since its first year of operation in 1993. A five-year Charter Agreement with the Winona Area Public Schools was renewed in June 2016.

Bluffview Montessori School is authorized by:

Winona Area Public Schools

Annette Freiheit

Superintendent of Schools

903 Gilmore Avenue

Winona, MN 55987

(507) 494-0861

annette.freiheit@winona.k12.mn.us

Winona Area Public Schools Liaison to Bluffview Montessori School:

Karla Winter

Director of Learning and Teaching

903 Gilmore Avenue

Winona, MN 55987

(507) 494-0866

karla.winter@winona.k12.mn.us

**Bluffview will transition to Volunteers of America as it's Authorizer in July of 2021.*

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](#)