




Strategic Plan
2022 - 2027

Lee Montessori Strategic Plan 2022-2027



OUR MISSION

**Lee Montessori exists to create
a more just, liberated world.**





From Our Board Chair

It has been eight years since Lee Montessori opened its doors in Washington DC's Edgewood neighborhood, with 74 students in four classrooms. As Board Chair, I am proud of the progress we've made since then: We became the first public school in Washington, DC to be recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale for the United States (AMI-USA); we opened the first standalone public Montessori school east of the Anacostia River; and we now serve more than 400 families from across Washington, DC – over 40% of whom live in Ward 7 or Ward 8, communities where progressive educational models have been historically absent.


Our educational philosophy begins with the belief that all children – regardless of their race, zip code, or disability – have the ability to transform the world. To support children in meeting their full potential, we combine high-quality Montessori practices with best practices for academic development and social-emotional and equity learning principles.

In shaping our roadmap for the next five years, we sought to determine how Lee Montessori is delivering on that belief for all children, in particular for children who have historically been underserved – Black children, children with disabilities, and children designated “at risk” by the city. We spoke with our families, our teachers, our Board, and our partners across the District and beyond. We asked ourselves what we do well, and where we could improve. We did this until we arrived at our “north star” goal: ***We will make significant progress in closing opportunity and learning gaps among our students.***

This goal will keep us focused on our core belief – that providing an excellent education empowers the children we serve to create a more just, liberated world. We owe nothing less to the children and families who have chosen Lee Montessori.

On behalf of the full Lee Montessori Board of Directors, we are energized by the future and look forward to working together with everyone in the Lee Montessori community to bring our vision to life.

Best,



Catharine Bellinger
Board Chair, Lee Montessori

Our Values



EQUITY

We acknowledge the outsized, generational impact of White Supremacy on historically underserved communities and endeavor to ensure that supports for students are provided equitably. This means that some students will receive more services or materials than others – in the areas of intervention strategies, supplies, face-time with Guides, and/or other ways that we support students.

BRAVERY

We achieve our mission in service to our students by making the best decisions we can with the information we have available. We will work to ensure that decisions are communicated promptly and clearly to all stakeholders.

GRACE

We strive to treat children, families, and staff with the utmost grace at all times. We understand the impact that the dynamic nature of everyday life can have on children and families, and will be flexible as families adjust accordingly. In exchange, we ask that families extend grace to school staff and other families as well.

GROWTH

We design programs to maximize students' academic, physical, developmental, and social-emotional growth. This includes designing daily work that focuses on growth while also monitoring progress throughout the year using various assessment strategies.

JOY

We believe that it is critical for children, families, and staff to remain active and engaged in daily activities and work – and that's why we design our programs and supports to be enjoyable and manageable.

Our Process

We are guided by the hopes, dreams, and questions of our community; data pointing us to where Lee Montessori most needs to grow; and our collective vision of a Lee Montessori student – while staying rooted in our commitment to equity.

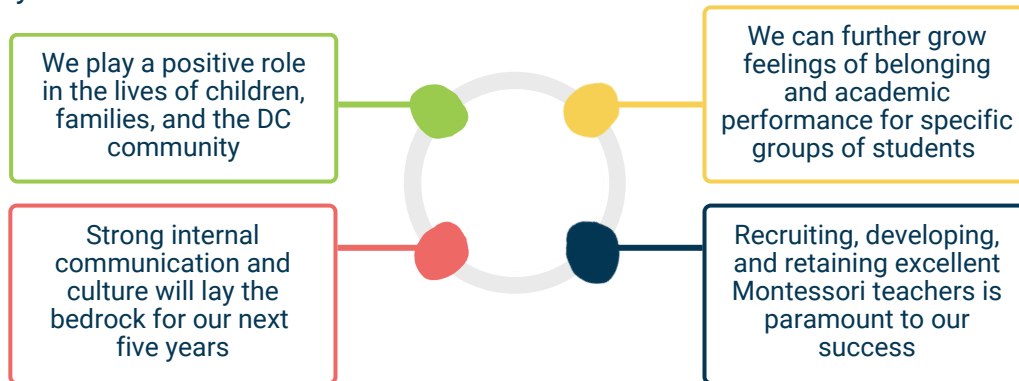
- **COMMUNITY AND PARTNER FEEDBACK**
- **DIVING DEEP INTO OUR DATA**
- **DEFINING A PROFILE OF THE LEE STUDENT**

GUIDED BY OUR COMMUNITY

We connected with families and staff through an online anonymous survey, rounds of individual and group conversations, and deep brainstorming and planning with our Leadership Team and Board of Directors.



Community members identified four themes:



GROUNDING IN DATA

Recent information about student performance and growth reflect that learning gaps between our Black and White students have persisted or increased. Since 2017, learning gaps between Black and White children have persisted or grown, with the COVID-19 pandemic serving to exacerbate the inequity. Furthermore, we identified significant differences between students who are not considered “at risk” and those who are.

THE LEE MONTESSORI STUDENT

Our student profile – developed from conversations with staff and families – defines who we want our students to be when they leave our doors, both as learners and as community members. Students who complete their elementary and middle school education at Lee Montessori exemplify characteristics connected to our five core values.

GROWTH

- Continues to seek out learning experiences, even outside of formal learning environments. They apply foundational skills to real-world problems and challenges.
- Shows academic achievement and growth, as measured by proficiency on city standardized exams (NWEA MAP, PARCC).
- Meets or exceeds Social-Emotional Literacy (SEL) expectations.
- Equipped with the academic, social, and emotional skills to succeed in middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

EQUITY

- Respectful and inclusive of all members of our community, caring about the well-being of others, and able to navigate differences and disagreements with empathy.





GRACE

- Demonstrates curiosity about the world around them, asks questions, and engages with new perspectives.

JOY

- Demonstrates pride and confidence in their own learning and unique background, experiences, and culture. Knows their own strengths and interests.

BRAVERY

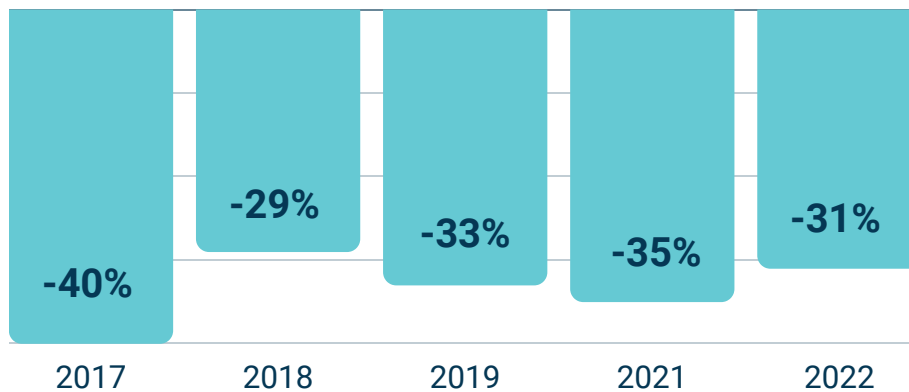
- Takes charge of their own learning, development, growth, and behavior in a diverse learning community. Takes risks in seeking knowledge.
- Shows agency in identifying and embarking on their own path, and helps others develop agency and self-advocacy.

Our North Star: Unlocking the Potential of Every Child

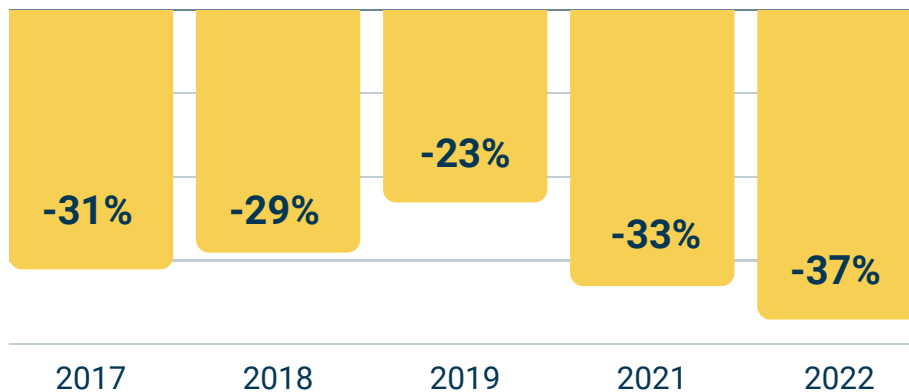
To live up to our mission, we are re-committing to creating a learning community that is joyful, welcoming, and equitable for every child and family we serve.

By 2027, Lee Montessori will make significant progress in closing opportunity and learning gaps between groups of students – prioritizing gains for Black children, children with disabilities, and children who are designated “at risk.”

GAPS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS IN MATH

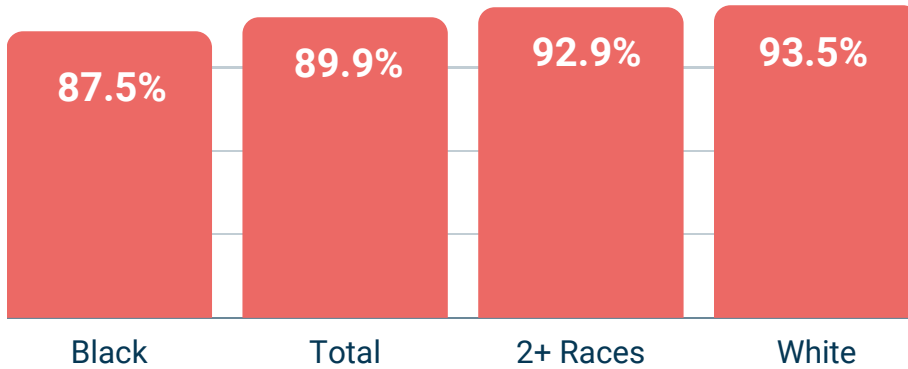


GAPS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS IN ELA

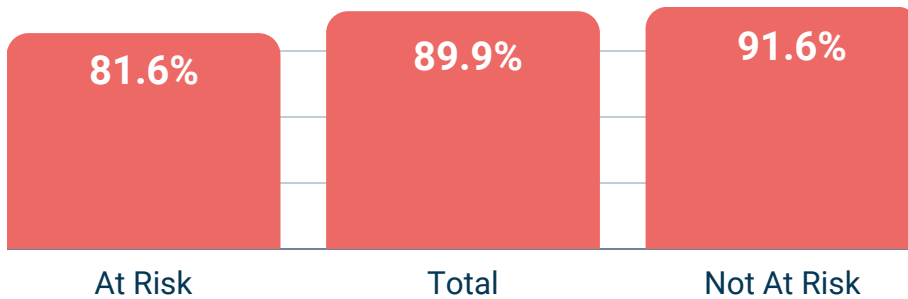


1 Lee Montessori’s population largely consists of Black, White, and Multi-Racial children, with significant gaps between Black and White children. Based on this population, efforts will largely be focused on closing gaps between Black and White children, while monitoring other racial groups potentially in need of targeted supports.
2 “At-risk” status is defined by the District of Columbia as a child whose family receives SNAP or TANF benefits, is homeless or in the foster care system, or is overage for their grade in high school.

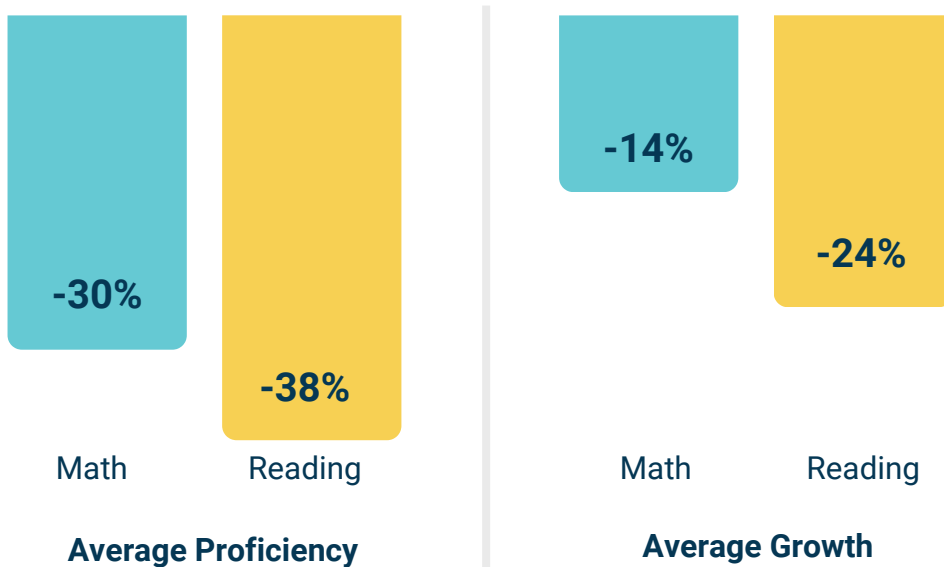
STUDENT ATTENDANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY (SY2021-22)



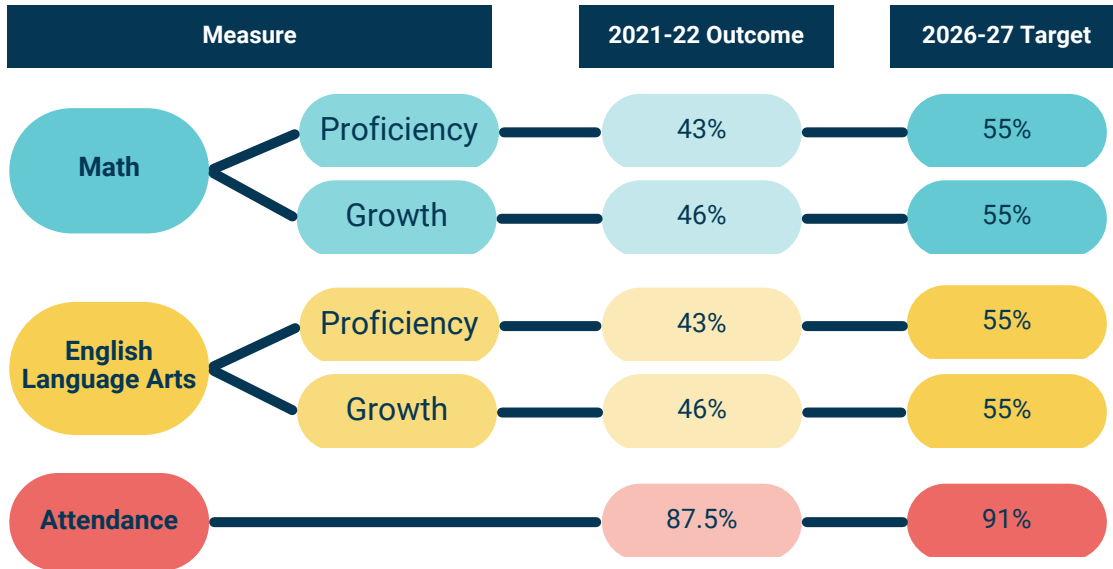
STUDENT ATTENDANCE BY "AT-RISK" STATUS (SY2021-22)



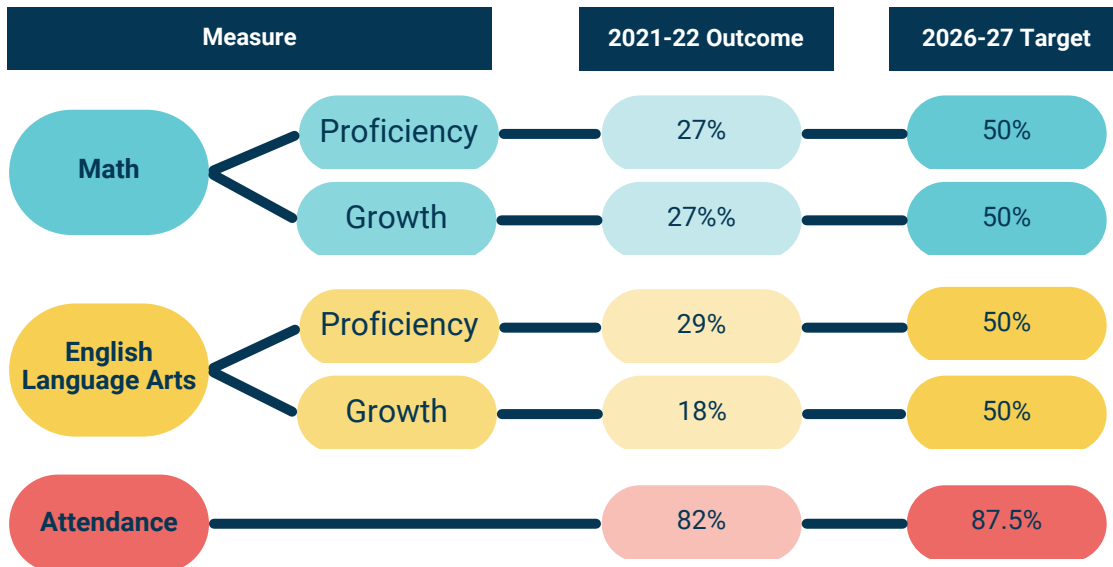
AVERAGE PROFICIENCY AND GROWTH OF LOW-ATTENDANCE STUDENTS COMPARED TO HIGH-ATTENDANCE STUDENTS (SY2021-22)



BLACK STUDENTS



STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS "AT RISK"



Our Roadmap

We've identified four pillars that will support us in reaching our north star goal.

Closing Opportunity Gaps



Invest in Our Teachers



Build a Mission-aligned Culture



Improve Communication & Collaboration



Ground Our Practices in Data

Equity



Bravery



Grace



Joy




Growth



Invest in Our Teachers

We know that a great teacher is the best investment we can make in a child's learning and development. By June 2027, Lee Montessori will excel at recruiting and retaining diverse, high-performing educators.





■ **KEY RESULT 1: 100% OF STAFF RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND MEANINGFUL COACHING**

How we will get there: Develop robust and effective professional development that all staff contribute to and participate in; launch intensive coaching to address gaps; connect performance and coaching, and use data to better understand growth challenges and needs

■ **KEY RESULT 2: 90% OF STAFF RATED AS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS**

How we will get there: Develop evaluation mechanism and process with opportunities for staff input; ensure all staff are appropriately evaluated and connected with appropriate supports; and explore compensation and bonus structure based on outcomes

■ **KEY RESULT 3: 100% OF TEACHERS TRAINED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PRIORITY POPULATIONS, INCLUDING OF BLACK AND AT-RISK CHILDREN**

How we will get there: Create growth track for teachers and guides; implement performance and evaluation systems and provide coaching when needed; and implement individual and cohort professional development

■ **KEY RESULT 4: 85% OF STAFF AGREE THAT LEE MONTESSORI IDENTIFIES TALENT PIPELINES AND PROVIDES RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

How we will get there: Create growth track and articulate expectations for teachers (novice, mid, lead); implement monthly department meetings alongside comprehensive professional development and supports; and develop pipeline roles for lead guides and lead classroom assistants

■ **KEY RESULT 5: RETAIN 85% OF OUR HIGH-PERFORMING TEACHERS OF COLOR, AND 95% OF GUIDES, ASSISTANTS, AND COACHES OF COLOR HAVE A CLEARLY ARTICULATED PATH FOR ADVANCEMENT**

How we will get there: Assess staff growth objectives and supports needed; develop individual annual growth plans and report outcomes to the Board



Build a Mission-Aligned Culture

Furthering our mission starts with joyful, welcoming, and inclusive school communities for children and their families, staff, and partners. By June 2027, our culture will strongly reflect support and engagement of all members of our community.





■ **KEY RESULT 1: THE EMPLOYEE NET PROMOTER SCORE EXCEEDS 60**

How we will get there: Begin conducting “stay” interviews for staff; analyze results from stay interviews to develop comprehensive retention strategy; assess retention results and adjust as needed

■ **KEY RESULT 2: 75% OF FAMILIES FEEL THEY ARE PARTNERS IN THEIR CHILD’S EDUCATION, ALONGSIDE STAFF AND TEACHERS**

How we will get there: Develop tool to measure family feedback; continue to proactively share about the goals and philosophy of Montessori education; and expand family engagement efforts such as Transparent Classroom and learning observations

■ **KEY RESULT 3: 50% OF FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS AT RISK PARTICIPATE IN 1+ FAMILY UNIVERSITY SESSION PER YEAR**

How we will get there: Form an outreach and engagement committee; expand Family University; implement new engagement model to reach out to families in new communities; and reassess and adjust strategy as needed

■ **KEY RESULT 4: 75% OF STAFF AGREE THAT OUR CORE VALUES AUTHENTICALLY GUIDE THEIR APPROACH TO WORKING WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND EACH OTHER**

How we will get there: Form a staff core values working group; develop a core values-oriented communication plan to connect with families; and embed core values in Lee Montessori’s performance management framework

■ **KEY RESULT 5: 80% OF STAFF FEEL THEIR VOICE AND INPUT ARE VALUED AND USED**


How we will get there: Expand avenues for staff engagement and feedback; host network and leader office hours to increase communication and transparency; and conduct regular staff “pulse checks” on progress



Improve Communication & Collaboration

We believe collaboration and communication are the building blocks of community. By June 2027, our organizational communications will support connections between all and drive us toward our goal of closing opportunity gaps.





■ **KEY RESULT 1: 90% OF STAFF REPORT KNOWING ABOUT AND UNDERSTANDING HOW MAJOR POLICY, OPERATIONAL, AND PROGRAMMATIC DECISIONS ARE MADE**

How we will get there: Create an organization-wide and campus-specific calendar of events; standardize meeting cadence across campuses to ensure equity of information flow; and explore further ways to communicate major decisions to all staff, such as biweekly leadership updates

■ **KEY RESULT 2: 12 PERCENTAGE POINT INCREASE IN FAMILIES REPORTING FEELING “IN THE KNOW” ABOUT IMPORTANT EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POLICIES AT BOTH THEIR CHILD’S CAMPUS AND LEE MONTESSORI AS A WHOLE**

How we will get there: Share organization-wide and campus-specific calendar of events with families; develop and implement protocol for frequency of family communication with all staff; and establish a family engagement and communication learning committee to guide ongoing work

■ **KEY RESULT 3: 75% STAFF REPORTING THAT CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES HAVE LED TO IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR PRACTICE**


How we will get there: Develop committees for organization-wide professional development strands such as Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism and Montessori 101; ensure representation from East End and Brookland campuses; and create opportunities for cross-campus consultancies on priority issues



Ground Our Practices in Data

Looking holistically at data will shine a light on where Lee Montessori is most successful now and where we need to change our practice. By June 2027, everyone in our organization will know how to access and actively use data to make decisions and advance our progress.





- **KEY RESULT 1: 90% OF STAFF HAVE ACCESS TO OUTCOME-DRIVEN DATA AND 85% OF STAFF HAVE ACCESS TO DATA TO DETERMINE OWN PERFORMANCE**

How we will get there: Develop data dashboard to collect and analyze key indicators of child and teacher performance; conduct audit of data systems and organizational data literacy; revise data systems to support teacher use of data; and implement systems for collecting and reporting qualitative classroom data

- **KEY RESULT 2: 80% OF TEACHER MANAGERS REPORT TEACHERS USING DATA TO INFORM CLASSROOM STRATEGIES**

How we will get there: Train our full team on data-driven instruction and data literacy; provide support for teachers in implementing data-driven practices through coaching and professional development strand

- **KEY RESULT 3: 80% OF STAFF AND 90% OF FAMILIES BELIEVE THAT LEADERS ARTICULATE A CLEAR OVERARCHING VISION THAT DRIVES PRIORITIES, GOALS AND DECISION-MAKING WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

How we will get there: Create staff-, department- and leadership-level goals around data-driven instruction and decision-making; model data-driven, goal-oriented practices at the organizational leadership level; and leverage Board of Directors to assess ongoing use of data to achieve our goals

Thank You

We are deeply appreciative of each and every parent, caregiver, teacher, staff, Board member, and partner who shared their views and questions with us and helped our five-year vision. We are also grateful to CityBridge Foundation for their generous support of our planning development process.

Special thanks to:

- Lee Montessori Strategic Planning Committee
- Lee Montessori Staff Advisory Committee
- Lee Montessori staff
- Lee Montessori Board of Directors
- Brookland Family-Teacher Association
- East End Family-Teacher Association
- Breakthrough Montessori
- CityBridge Foundation
- DC Charter Alliance
- Education Forward DC
- DC Public Charter School Board
- Sojourner Truth Public Charter School
- Trust for Learning
- Walton Family Foundation

...and all others who contributed their thoughts, ideas, and feedback to this work.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Learn more about Lee Montessori and support our journey at leemontessori.org.