



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

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## MONTESSORI PROGRAM MONITORING AND EXITING GUIDELINES

AP No. 6192

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

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- I. **PURPOSE:** To identify steps for monitoring and exiting students enrolled in the Montessori program and who are experiencing difficulty in school.
- II. **POLICY:** The Prince George's County Board of Education firmly believes that the academic achievement of all students is paramount. Student academic achievement is supported by providing equitable access to a high quality education and resources to guarantee that every child graduating from the Prince George's County Public School System is college and career ready. (Board Policy 0118.)
- III. **BACKGROUND:** The Board of Education is dedicated to support programs of choice that offer a unique or specialized curriculum or instructional approach. These programs are designed to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Entry into Montessori programs is generally managed through a computerized, random selection process called lottery.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
  - A. **Entry Level** – The age at which the program instruction begins is three and four by September 1. For the Montessori specialty program, students ages three and four are accepted on a probationary status for the first eight weeks, beginning with the day a student becomes an active participant in the class.
  - B. **Montessori Specialty Program** – A program that provides options following the model created by Maria Montessori. It is designed to address the needs and interests of students and parents/guardians beginning at the entry age of three or four years old by September 1 of the enrollment year.
  - C. **Out of Boundary** – A school that resides outside of the school system's defined boundaries for a residential address.
  - D. **Reciprocity** – Entrance granted upon a space available basis when a student first enters PGCPS from outside the county after attending four consecutive quarters

- and/or two consecutive semesters at a public, charter or private school Montessori program that is affiliated with American Montessori Society (AMS) or American Montessori Internationale (AMI).
- E. **Specialty Program** – A program that provides options in addition to the broad spectrum of programs in each comprehensive school. Designed to address the needs and interests of students and parents/guardians, these programs allow for exploration and development of interests and needs, while following state and school system mandates.
  - F. **Student Intervention Team (SIT)** – SIT is a school-based, problem-solving team comprised of faculty members (usually general educators) who meet to help teachers identify and implement appropriate interventions for students who need support so that they are ready and able to learn, as well as students who need academic acceleration. Most often, the team will discuss a student who is having academic or behavioral difficulties. Challenges with attendance/tardiness or emotional/health issues may also be addressed.
  - G. **Student Support Team (SST)** – SST is a multidisciplinary team with expertise in teaching and learning, problem solving, and interventions. It is used when strategies and/or interventions for a student have proven unsuccessful. Additionally, the collaborative problem-solving processes followed by SST promote shared ownership for student, school, and system success, and help to reduce the disproportionate identification of certain student groups for special education services.
  - H. **Transfers** – A permission to attend a school that is not within the defined boundaries for a residential address.

## V. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. All Montessori programs adhere to general procedures pertaining to promotion, retention, and acceleration of students following Administrative Procedure 5123.2, with the exception of Early Entrance (see Administrative Procedure 5111.1). See Administrative Procedure 6148 for additional guidance.
- B. Selection and Enrollment
  - 1. Age of Entry - Entry into the Montessori program for children ages three and four is managed by the lottery. There is no early entrance for students. For Montessori programs, students ages three and four are accepted on a probationary status for the first eight weeks, beginning with the day a student becomes an active participant in the class.
  - 2. Sibling Preference - For students who gained entry to a Specialty Program through the lottery, Prince George's County Public Schools provides special

consideration for the entry of a sibling into the same program at the entry level only. Entry level is defined as Pre-Kindergarten ages 3 and 4 for the Montessori program.

A sibling is a brother or sister by blood, marriage, or adoption living in the same household. Friends, cousins or two separate families living under the same roof do not qualify as siblings. The older sibling must continue attending the same Specialty Program for the upcoming school year for which a sibling placement is being requested. A current Specialty program student who is in the terminal grade of a program at a school cannot bring in a sibling.

Sibling applicants must complete a sibling application, which can only be obtained by contacting the specialty school of the already enrolled student. This consideration is made on a space available basis after lottery placement and only under certain conditions. (See [Administrative Procedure 6148](#).)

3. Reciprocity – When a student first enters PGCPs from outside the county after attending four consecutive quarters and/or two consecutive semesters at a public, charter or private school Montessori program in the jurisdiction where the parent/guardian was a resident, the student may apply for reciprocity placement in a PGCPs Montessori program. The student must have current Montessori enrollment prior to seeking reciprocity. No lapse in Montessori instruction will be accepted. The prior program must at least have a professional affiliation in good standing with AMS or AMI. Reciprocity is not available to students from unaffiliated public or private Montessori schools. Placement via reciprocity is made on a space basis only and does not offer guaranteed placement.
  - In order to request reciprocity, the parent/guardian must submit a written request to the Department of Pupil Accounting within thirty days of establishing residence in the county. The written request must include the following:
    - current written program description from the school that the student previously attended;
    - most recent report card and/or transcript for the student;
    - contact information and website for the school previously attended; and
    - documentation validating the recent establishment of a Prince George's County residence.
  - The Department of Pupil Accounting will send a request to the Division of Academics to determine if a student meets eligibility requirements. A determination that eligibility criteria have been met does not guarantee placement.
  - If the Division of Academics determines that programs are not comparable, no offer of reciprocity will be extended.
  - The decision to offer reciprocity will be made on a case-by-case basis jointly by the Department of Pupil Accounting and Division of Academics

considering pending requests and relevant factors. There is no assurance that reciprocity will be made available.

4. Early Entrance procedures do not apply to specialty programs, including Montessori (see Administrative Procedure 5111.1).
5. Lottery applications will be available and can be submitted electronically online through the PGCPs website at <https://www1.pgcp.s.org/lottery>.
  - Applications are available in January of each school year. Each application is date stamped and an email confirmation is provided.
  - Exceptions to the deadline will not be permitted.
  - A separate lottery application must be submitted for each child in a family that desires entrance to the Montessori program.
  - Program placements are based upon the principal residence of the parent/guardian, which is stated on the lottery application at the time of submission. Each program location serves a defined geographic area. If a student resides in the geographic area for the Montessori school, that boundary is where the student may be invited to enroll should he/she become eligible for the lottery process.
6. In keeping with the Board of Education's non-discrimination policies, students with disabilities will be afforded the same access to Montessori admission through the lottery. The IEP team at the Montessori program shall meet within 30 days of admission to review the student's IEP and discuss implementation.

#### C. Continuance Enrollment

##### 1. Attendance

- a. Refer to [Administrative Procedure 5113, Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy](#) regarding attendance policies.
- b. All students admitted to the Montessori program and currently enrolled at the end of the year will automatically continue in the school provided they meet the enrollment criteria, unless they are officially withdrawn or transferred to another school. If a student is absent for ten (10) consecutive days due to an unlawful absence, they will be automatically withdrawn and may not be re-enrolled in the Montessori program.
- c. If a family has to travel internationally due to an unexpected emergency, a letter must be submitted to Pupil Accounting. Pupil Accounting will work with the school Principal to determine if the student will be able to re-enter the program.
- d. Whenever it is determined that a student's attendance requires intervention, written notification of that determination will be provided to the parents/guardians.
- e. School Administrators, coordinators, and teachers may request a review of a student's attendance in PGCPs the student information system (SIS) under the following circumstance:

A student incurs **eight (8) unlawful absences from a class** in a quarter, **fifteen (15) unlawful days in a semester or twenty (20) or more unlawful absences from school in a year.**

- f. Attendance interventions initiated by Administrators, coordinators and/or school counselors will include a parent conference(s) and strategic intervention(s) provided by the Student Intervention Team (SIT).

## 2. Attendance Withdrawal

- a. Students who have received attendance interventions and were unsuccessful with improving attendance will be referred to the principal and program coordinator for a final decision.
- b. If withdrawal is the recommendation of the school team, documentation must accompany the written request for removal from the program and be forwarded to the Chief of School Support and Leadership or designee, Associate Superintendent, and Instructional Director for review. Withdrawal supporting documentation must include: (1) the student's withdrawal letter; (2) the student's action plan, including a description of intervention efforts that were unsuccessful; and (3) any other documentation pertaining to the student's withdrawal (e.g., report card, behavioral plan, attendance record, etc.).
- c. The principal will send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the Department of Pupil Accounting. A copy will be in the student's program file inside the cumulative folder.

## 3. Transfers

- a. Transfers between Montessori schools may be permitted if a student moves out of a boundary area and the requested school has unfilled seats at the grade level after considering placements for all eligible, in-boundary lottery applicants.
- b. Requests must be made in writing to the Department of Pupil Accounting after the first round of lottery placements.
- c. If approved, transportation is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. The student must arrive on time and be picked up on time from school and student activities for after hour events.
- d. Failure to meet time and attendance expectations may lead to removal from the program.

## 4. Academic Expectations

- a. Montessori schools provide an interdisciplinary discovery based approach to learning presented sequentially over the years a child spends in the program. Parents must sign an agreement to adhere to the expectations of the program once accepted and each year enrolled in the program (see

Attachment A). Children are placed in multiage classrooms (Primary Level - ages 3-5; Lower Elementary School - Grades 1-3; and Upper Elementary School - Grades 4-5).

- b. Three to five year olds are guided in developing coordination, concentration, a sense of order, and independence. Six to nine, and nine to twelve year olds learn through interdisciplinary and hands-on learning activities. Middle school students are offered experiences designed to help them delve into interconnections of ideas and events.
- c. Primary Level (ages 3, 4, and 5 years old) do not receive report cards. Their academic progress is provided by the teacher using classroom observations and the information gathered is shared in confidential parent/teacher conferences, twice a year.
  - PR = Proficient – child can demonstrate indicator independently 90 – 100%
  - IP = In Process – child can reliably demonstrate indicator 80 – 89%
  - EM = Emerging – child demonstrates indicator with assistance 70 – 79%
  - ND = Needs Development – child does not demonstrate indicator 50 – 69%
- d. Grading Scale for Lower Level (grades 1-3) and Upper Level (grades 4-5) is:
  - ABL = Above Grade Level – child can demonstrate indicator independently
  - OGL = On Grade Level – child can demonstrate indicator; may sometimes need guidance
  - BGL = Below Grade Level – child has difficulty demonstrating indicators with assistance
  - EM = Emerging – child is just beginning to learn the new indicator of study
  - IP = In Process – child is reliably demonstrating indicator
  - ND = Needs Development – child does not have a grasp on indicators taught with or without assistance
  - PR = Proficient – child can demonstrate indicator independently; from time to time may need assistance
- e. Montessori middle school students in Grades 6-8 use the same grading scale as listed in Administrative Procedure 5121.2. Those students who fail to attain a “C”: average, 70% or 2.0 or better in one or more of the core academic courses, in any marking period, will be given academic support.

## 5. Academic Support

- a. Whenever it is determined that a student needs academic support, the teacher of record will provide written notification of the need to the administrators and parent/guardian.
- b. Academic support, initiated at the end of any marking period in which the student experiences academic difficulty, as identified by the teacher, will include a parent/guardian conference and strategic intervention provided by the SIT team.
- c. The SIT team will determine the academic support provided. If there is further need for academic support, the student will be referred to the school's SST for additional assistance (see Administrative Procedure 5124).
- d. Students who have received academic support in Grades K-8 will be referred to the school's SIT team/SST team for review. If withdrawal is the recommendation of the school team, documentation must accompany the written request for removal from the program and be forwarded to the Chief of School Support and Leadership or designee, Associate Superintendent, and Instructional Director for review.
- e. At any time, parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, and/or administrator/coordinator may request a review of the student's grades/progress

## D. Removal

### 1. Academic Withdrawal

- a. Students who have received academic interventions for a minimum of 2-6 weeks and were unsuccessful in consistently improving academic achievement will be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) for further strategies and/or interventions. The program coordinator/SST chair or Principal's designee will provide written notification to the parent that the student has been referred to SST.
- b. Once the student is referred to SST, the plan developed should be re-evaluated every 6-8 weeks.
- c. If, after the 6-8 week period, the student does not make academic progress, the SST should determine if referral to the Section 504 team or Special Education team is necessary.
- d. If the student is ineligible for a 504 plan or special education services, the Principal shall consult with the program coordinator to make the decision regarding the student's status in the program.
- e. Once a recommendation for withdrawal is approved by the Chief of School Support and Leadership, the Principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing via email and certified mail of the decision to return the student to his/her regular attendance area school at the end of the grading quarter of the present school year.

- f. A student may return to his/her boundary school between the first and third quarter. Should the quarter be the fourth grading period, the student will begin their school year in regular attendance at the boundary school at the beginning of the next school year. The student's withdrawal papers are to be sent to the student's boundary school.
- g. The Principal will send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the Department of Pupil Accounting. The student will be removed from the program file.

## 2. Voluntary Withdrawal

- a. If a student is voluntarily withdrawn, the parent/guardian will sign the Montessori Program Voluntary Withdrawal form (Attachment B).
- b. Any student voluntarily withdrawn from the program forfeits enrollment in the program. Re-entry to the Montessori program within ten (10) days may be permitted on application to the Department of Pupil Accounting, who will consult with the school to see if space is still available. Only in extraordinary circumstances will reentry be permitted more than ten (10) days after a withdrawal.
- c. Parents/Guardians will receive a letter from the Principal to complete a withdrawal process that includes a brief exit interview with the Montessori Program Coordinator and a 30-minute withdrawal appointment with the Registrar. A sample letter is attached (Attachment C).
- d. If a transfer is recommended, the Principal will send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the Department of Pupil Accounting. The student will be removed from the program file.
- e. The school counselor/registrar will advise the parent on withdrawal and registration processes (see Administrative Procedure 5111 Registration and Withdrawal of Students).

## 3. Behavioral Difficulties

- a. A student is considered to be experiencing behavioral difficulty when exhibiting disciplinary conduct that significantly disrupts the educational environment, indicating their unwillingness to continue participation in the Montessori program; or causing actual or potential harm to other students, staff or him/herself.
- b. Behavioral support initiated by administrators, coordinators, and or school counselors will include a parent conference, strategic intervention provided by the SIT/SST and written action plan.
- c. Whenever it is determined that a student needs behavioral intervention, written notification of that determination will be provided to the parents/guardians.
- d. At any time, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators/coordinators may request a behavioral review of a student's conduct.



- e. Due to the unique settings in which Montessori students are taught, certain behaviors may be grounds for a student forfeiting their placement in the program. The SIT/SST and school principal will weigh the unique factors of each case and range of interventions, management strategies and responses needed in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
- f. The school SIT/SST will reconvene as appropriate to discuss students' progress.

#### 4. Behavioral Withdrawal

- a. If substantial improvement has not been made on a student's behavior plan, the principal shall consult with the program coordinator to make the decision regarding the student's status in the program and notify the parent, Instructional Director, and Pupil Accounting of the decision, as needed.
- b. If withdrawal is the recommendation of the principal and program coordinator, documentation to include progress monitoring notes, and all other documentation must accompany the written request for removal from the program and be forwarded to the Instructional Director and Chief of School Support and Leadership.
- c. If withdrawal is recommended and approved by the Chief of School Support and Leadership, the principal will send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the Department of Pupil Accounting.
- d. The student will be removed from the program file.
- e. The school counselor/registrar will advise the parent student on withdrawal and registration processes (see Administrative Procedure 5111 Registration and Withdrawal of Students).

#### 5. Appeals

- a. The Chief of School Support and Leadership or designee shall make determinations regarding removal from the program under this administrative procedure. The Office of Appeals serves as the Superintendent's designee.
- b. A parent/guardian who wishes to appeal a withdrawal decision must submit a written appeal to the Office of Appeals within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the decision. The student is enrolled at their boundary school pending the decision of the appeal. The parent/guardian should indicate the reason for seeking a review of the decision and may include additional information for consideration.
- c. The Office of Appeals will determine if there was a material departure from the policies and procedures by the program coordinator, principal or Instructional Director which adversely impacted the appellant.
- d. An appeal from the decision by the Office of Appeals to the Board of Education must be made in writing and received by the Board Office within

ten (10) days of the date on the decision letter by the Office of Appeals, acting as the Superintendent's designee.

- e. If there is additional information in the appeal to the Board of Education, the Office of Appeals will be given an opportunity to respond in writing and shall provide a copy of its response to the appellant before the Board of Education considers the appeal.
- f. The Board of Education's decision shall be final and rendered in writing.

## **VI MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:**

In an effort to ensure that the enrollment and appeals processes are implemented, the following monitoring tools and processes will be utilized annually.

- A. Grades, attendance, and behavior will be monitored by the Program Coordinator semiannually.
- B. The school team will review the enrollment file and appeals process by September 30 of each school year. A record containing the staff signature to signify completion of this task will be kept on file in the principal's office for four years and made available for review.

## **VII. RELATED PROCEDURES:**

- Administrative Procedure 5111- *Registration and Withdrawal of Students*
- Administrative Procedure 5111.1 - *Admission to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade*
- Administrative Procedure 5113 - *Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy*
- Administrative Procedure 5121.1 - *Grading and Reporting Elementary Schools Early Childhood through Grade Five*
- Administrative Procedure 5121.2 - *Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools Grade Six through Grade Eight*
- Administrative Procedure 5123.2 - *General Procedures Pertaining to Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students*
- Administrative Procedure 5124 - *Student Intervention Team (SIT) and Student Support Team (SST)*
- Administrative Procedure 5166 - *Personal Care and Toileting*
- Administrative Procedure 6148 - *Lottery and Audition Administration and Selection Procedures*
- Administrative Procedure 10101 – *Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*

- VIII. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure originates with the Division of Academics and will be updated as needed.
- IX. CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** None. This is a new procedure.
- X. EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2024

Attachments:

Attachment A - Specialty Programs Agreement.pdf

Attachment B and C - Voluntary Withdrawal from the Montessori Program Sample Letters.pdf