

## **Montessori and State Pre-K Summit**

March 1, 2007

### **Participants**

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Linda Alexionok, *Children's Campaign, Inc. (FL)*

Ed Condon, *California Head Start Association*

Libby Doggett, *Pre-K Now*

Krista Ericson, *Myrtle Farm Montessori School (CA)*

Danielle Gonzales, *Pre-K Now*

Heidi Larson, *Xavier University (OH)*

Norman Lorenz, *California Department of Education*

Sara Moleski-Rice, *Early Care and Education Consortium*

Connie Murphy, *American Montessori Society*

Anna Perry, *Montessori Education Centers Associated Teacher Education Program and Lab School (IL)*

Jennifer Rosenbaum, *Pre-K Now*

Jason Sabo, *United Ways of Texas*

Denny Shapiro, *Public School Montessorian*

Doris Sommer, *The Barrie School (MD)*

Cynthia Thomas, *Especially for Children (FL)*

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Margie Wallen, *Ounce of Prevention Fund (IL)*

### **Purpose**

In November 2006, Pre-K Now and several Montessori leaders began a to share perspectives and discuss ways we can collaborate to provide voluntary, high-quality pre-k for all. As a follow up, we decided to hold a one-day summit to discuss important policy issues and brainstorm ideas for future collaboration. We invited a strategically selected group of pre-k advocates and Montessori stakeholders to come together and discuss:

- Shared principles
- Individual state perspectives
- Policy challenges, solutions, and strategies
- Recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers

### **Montessori background**

#### **Philosophy and characteristics**

Montessori education embodies the best practices of early childhood, even if it doesn't conform to all of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality benchmarks. It's rooted in a scientifically based philosophy that has grown around the world through a grassroots movement; the curriculum comes from the teacher's Montessori training (shown by their credentials) and is guided by the materials in the classroom. Montessori programs are characterized by mixed-age groupings and large classes (ideally with teacher:child ratios of 2:30,

but sometimes lowered to 3:30 to meet state standards) that allow for children's independence within the larger classroom community.

## Teachers

Montessori Accreditation Council Teacher Education (MACTE) is an autonomous, international, nonprofit, postsecondary accrediting agency for Montessori teacher-education programs. It is currently the only such accrediting organization in the U.S. that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The MACTE accredits (1) independent postsecondary institutions that offer comprehensive, in-residence certification courses, and (2) programs or departments located within institutions already accredited by another recognized agency. MACTE-accredited early childhood programs typically require 300 hours of training plus a nine-month internship. The entire process is typically completed in 14-18 months. Two credential levels are offered: full and associate. The full credential requires a bachelor's degree (in any subject), while the associate credential does not require a college degree. Six MACTE programs are recognized under the U.S. Department of Education's Title IV, assuring that training programs provided by institutions of higher education meet required levels of quality. MACTE is authorized by six organizations within the International Association of Montessori Educators (IAME).

## Schools

There are approximately 22,000 Montessori schools worldwide. Of these, 4,370 are in the United States and comprise approximately 4,000 private, 250 public, and 120 charter schools. They represent a mix of for profit, nonprofit, Head Start, college based, lab schools, mom and pop, etc.

1,100 of the US Montessori schools are accredited by and/or affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS). Virtually all of these schools have a program for three to six year olds (this age range represents the foundation of the Montessori method), but some public programs start in kindergarten because of funding constraints. AMS-accredited schools require each classroom to have a teacher from a MACTE-accredited education program for each age level offered. AMS conducts tuition and salary surveys every other year and posts the information on their website [www.amshq.org](http://www.amshq.org).

## Children

The Montessori philosophy was originally focused on serving low-income children, but today, largely due to their heavy reliance on parent fees, Montessori schools typically serve children from middle- and upper-income families. Most Montessori programs are mom and pop organizations or small not-for-profits. Also, the Montessori model depends upon on stability and consistency within classes and among students. So, schools and families benefit when children remain in the program for several years.

## Quality control

The quality of Montessori programs varies widely because the brand is not trademarked. Any school can technically call itself Montessori without adhering to the pedagogy, but schools associated with AMS (either through accreditation or affiliation) must adhere to quality standards

as discussed earlier. Fortunately, non-AMS schools don't tend to last long. Most Montessori schools adhere to the basic philosophy outlined on the AMS website.

AMS lists all its member schools on the website. Jola Montessori and Montessori Connections have listings of all the schools that call themselves Montessori, regardless of their professional affiliation. AMS's accreditation process for Montessori schools also follows the accreditation guidelines established by the Commission on International and Trans-regional Accreditation (CITA) and/or the National Council on Private Education (NCPE).

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) is also strong in the United States, although they have slightly different philosophies and teacher-training programs than AMS. AMI is an important voice that needs to be included as this collaboration grows.

### **Montessori and broader early childhood community**

Most Montessori teachers see themselves as separate but related to the broader early childhood community; they are invited guests but not regulars at the table. AMS and NAEYC have had a joint school accreditation process for years, but NAEYC's new accreditation rules may now exclude some Montessori programs.

### **Shared principles**

Montessori and state pre-k leaders both want to:

- Focus on the children, particularly children at risk of school failure
- Secure more funding to serve more children
- Employ high quality, well educated teachers
- Professionalize teaching by requiring a bachelor's degree
- Provide competitive salaries that encourage teachers to remain in the field
- Focus on the whole child and community
- Engage families (this has previously been a problem in some AMI programs because they don't want families to be in the classroom, but it can be overcome)
- Develop governance structures that allow (and encourage) state pre-k to be delivered in Montessori programs

### **NIEER Standards**

State pre-k programs are typically measured against the 10 quality benchmarks developed by the National Institute for Early Education Research. High-quality Montessori programs typically meet five of these benchmarks. They could likely easily meet two more, and they would likely have trouble meeting the remaining three.

#### **High-quality Montessori Programs should already Meet**

BA degree teacher

Teacher specialization in pre-k (provided states recognize the Montessori credential)

Assistant teacher CDA or equivalent

15 hrs/year in service (provided states recognize Montessori professional development)

Site visits

High-quality Montessori programs should, with minimal effort, be able to meet Comprehensive early learning standards (show how state standards for early childhood align with Montessori programs)  
Support services (much easier to implement if getting public dollars)

### Potential challenges

Class size of 20 or lower  
Staff-child ratio of 1:10 or better  
1 meal per day

## California

### Political Background

Teachers' unions, policymakers and advocates see pre-k as a way to improve student achievement and as a school reform issue.

### Proposition 82

The main arguments against California's Prop. 82 from the child care community and some Montessorians were (1) that the existing system provides parent choice and works well as is and (2) that the new program would require unwanted tax increases.

Many leaders within the Montessori community, feared that Prop. 82 would be problematic because of:

- Regulation, cost, and competition. There was a lack of administrative funding, although the per-child reimbursement was reasonable. Montessori education in CA costs \$5,200-\$6,500 per pupil plus additional costs including professional development, facilities, etc. California state pre-k currently pays providers about \$3,800 for a part-day program (Head Start education component is about \$4,800).
- A school district-focused approach. Providers worried that they would be ineligible for funds.
- Ratios, teacher qualifications, early learning standards, etc. Montessori providers were afraid they would be "crowded out."

Opponents of Prop. 82 from within the Montessori community effectively took each component of the proposal and talked about how it wouldn't benefit them: There is money for teacher education, but not *our* teachers; there is money for facilities, but not *our* facilities; etc.

The Prop. 82 campaign also fueled concerns about big government, which likely was detrimental to the effort. Additionally, charter schools have a huge presence within the Montessori community, and the campaign was unable to engage them regarding the benefits of Prop. 82. Charter school Montessori teachers in CA have to meet the minimum requirements of highly qualified teachers under NCLB in addition to their Montessori credentials.

### Division within the Montessori Community

Everyone wanted what was best for children, but people had different ideas about what that was. Some communities invited Montessori leaders to the table when developing Prop. 82 plans, while others didn't. The Bay Area Montessori Association was supportive, but the California Montessori Council was opposed. The rift was primarily caused by personal politics – anti-tax, government, and public schools – and exacerbated by a lack of infrastructure in the Montessori community. Additionally, there was a fear of the unknown among some Montessori providers. Montessori tends to serve middle- and upper-income children while pre-k tends to prioritize serving low-income children first. Therefore, Montessori providers weren't always sure how to incorporate a new demographic.

### **Standards and assessments**

Montessori stakeholders were not invited to participate in the development of standards, and this was problematic. California's assessment system – the desired results development profile – works for children in all types of programs, which is good. CA also uses the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), which isn't comprehensive, but it's a decent start. However, ECERS is problematic when assessors don't know how to adapt the standards to fit Montessori programs. For example, ECERS calls for blocks and dramatic play.... Montessori programs don't have these two specific components, but they teach the same skills in different ways. It's challenging to explain this difference to assessors unfamiliar with the Montessori curriculum. High-quality Montessori programs typically have an ECERS score of 5-7 (out of 7).

## **Florida**

### **Collaboration**

When Florida's *Voluntary Prekindergarten Education* (VPK) was in the planning phase, the Montessori community was not invited to the table. This wasn't perceived as intentional, good, or bad; it's just a fact. Florida did not experience the same "fear factor" as California.

### **Provider perspective**

Private Montessori programs are at risk of losing students to the free VPK program. Additionally, the state's class-size regulations (VPK currently has a maximum class size of 20 and ratio of 1:10; by 2010 all pre-k-to-three classes will be capped at 18 students) make it very difficult for Montessori providers to participate in the state program. In Florida, the pre-k reimbursement rate (\$2,600 per child per year) is not enough to pay teachers, and state law prohibits programs from charging parents any fees for the three-hour VPK program, although programs can charge for any additional hours offered. Montessori schools are forced to either absorb the difference or lose the kids – neither situation is ideal. Innovative providers are able to lessen the financial challenges by offering the summer program and thus spreading costs throughout the year, but it's not easy.

Florida is just beginning to feel the effect of VPK on Montessori. Right now they're doing a lot of watching, listening, and trying to plan for the future.

## **Illinois**

### **Pre-k and Montessori**

Any provider in Illinois can apply for pre-k funding through *Preschool for All's* competitive grant process. The reimbursement rate for a half-day program is \$3,000 per child. Currently, no Montessori programs receive pre-k funding. Some school districts tried to adopt Montessori models for their pre-k programs but determined that it was too expensive to properly train the teachers.

*Preschool for All* funding currently gives priority to programs serving children at risk of school failure, but to the state is phasing in access for all three- and four-year-old children over the next four years. Montessori programs typically serve middle- and upper-income children. This means that now is the perfect time to begin helping Illinois Montessori providers to participate when pre-k truly is available to all children.

### Potential challenges and solutions

*Preschool for All* funding includes three and four year olds but not five year olds who generally attend public kindergarten. This could be problematic for Montessori providers who rely on the three- to six-year-old age group.

Other challenges and potential solutions include:

- The state of Illinois requires screening for health and special education in all state pre-k programs. Montessori programs are not generally able to do this currently, but may be able to with an influx of public dollars.
- Teacher credentials. Perhaps the legislation could be amended to include teachers with a BA and specialization in ECE or MACTE.
- Teacher unions
- Including Montessori in the list of approved curriculums
- Linkages to other community services (this is a requirement for programs receiving *Preschool for All* funding). This isn't a challenge philosophically, but just requires some work in practice.
- Fear among providers that if they lower tuition for three and four year olds, the families will leave when their children are eligible for kindergarten. This would be problematic financially and philosophically for the schools.
- Class size and ratios

## Ohio

### Mixed-age settings

Ohio presents a unique challenge to Montessori providers whose approach focuses on multi-age grouping. In 2004, legislation was passed that prohibits kindergarteners from being educated in the same physical space as pre-kindergarteners. This restriction applies to all public schools, including public Montessori schools, and schools cannot be licensed if they do not comply within one year. This is a regulation, not a law. Montessori providers were able to obtain a waiver for the mixed-age restriction, but not for class size or teacher credential standards.

## Texas

### Curriculum

The biggest obstacle to incorporating Montessori programs into the Texas pre-k program will be curriculum requirements. Texas community-based pre-k providers are required to use the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) for curriculum and assessment. Thus, Montessori providers need either to get an exemption from this requirement (most likely through an amendment to the legislation to permit use of the Montessori curriculum), or they must incorporate TEEM into their programs while still maintaining their own identity. Additionally, it would be easier for Montessori to participate if Texas devised a set of standards that was not directly tied to the curriculum.

Texas is moving to create a quality rating system (QRS) that will be child-outcome driven, but this isn't likely to pose a problem for Montessori providers. Montessori children tend to test as well or better than their peers in traditional schools.

## **New York**

### **Public Schools and Montessori**

In general, there is a total disconnect between New York's Montessori programs and its public schools. There are a few exceptional programs in Yonkers, Albany, and Rochester, but these have not been replicated elsewhere in the state. Additionally, some Montessori schools in New York City do accept state vouchers for low-income children.

### **Advocate**

Marlene Barrons recently retired from the West Side Montessori School and may be a good consultant to work in NYC.

## **National**

The Early Care and Education Consortium represents private providers in 38 states and the District of Columbia, and Montessori involvement varies from state to state. Sometimes Montessori providers feel like they don't need to integrate into the broader early childhood system, but this isn't true.

Montessori schools have an exemption from child care regulations, and this structure could be a feasible model to follow for pre-k regulations as well. National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) just did a 50-state child care licensing study.

## **Standards and Alignment for Curriculum**

### **Challenge**

State early learning standards and Montessori curriculums don't necessarily correspond.

### **Solution**

Align Montessori curriculum with state standards. Get Montessori name on sanctioned curriculum list in every state.

### **Strategy**

Form a committee of AMS and MACTE constituents to develop a document that aligns the Montessori curriculum with state standards in all 50 states. Montessori and other stakeholders should approach lawmakers (hopefully with the support of advocates) with this plan. Find a way to get a Montessori national or state policy director to mobilize people on the ground. Policy person should represent the entire Montessori community (including AMS and AMI). Pre-K Now will ask all of its state partners to invite Montessori representatives to the table. Pre-K Now will host a call with state specialists and advocates to help raise awareness of the Montessori community, explain the outcomes of this meeting, and encourage them to listen to Montessori stakeholders. AMS and Pre-K Now will share state contact lists.

## **Standards and Alignment for Assessment**

### **Challenge**

There is a lack of standardized assessment measures in Montessori programs. Montessori philosophy stipulates that assessment is embodied in the child and the self-teaching tool that child is using.

### **Solution**

Montessori programs must adhere to basic standardized assessment tools based on their state requirements. The Montessori community needs to clearly articulate its well-founded principles regarding assessment and student learning.

### **Strategy**

Montessori and state pre-k leaders need to be innovative when planning the implementation of standardized assessments for early childhood programs. Montessori leaders need to understand the benefits of participating in the state pre-k assessment. Montessori teacher-training programs need to address ways in which Montessori programs can integrate standardized assessments into the curriculum. States need to ensure that the pre-k assessment is developmentally appropriate.

## **Accreditation**

### **Challenge**

Montessori school accreditations and teacher accreditations are not recognized state-wide or nationally.

### **Solution**

States need to accept Montessori school accreditations (AMS and AMI in particular) and MACTE teacher accreditations (Montessori organizations are accredited by MACTE to give credentials to teachers).

### **Strategy**

Develop talking points on Montessori protocol that can be delivered to policymakers via a lobbyist and/or coalition.

## **Program standards (ratios, class size, mixed-age grouping)**

## **Challenge**

Each state has different policies regarding program standards. Therefore, it is hard to do a quick fix; work will need to be done in all 50 states. Teacher-certification requirements, class size, and teacher-child ratio tend to be the standards that present the greatest challenge for Montessori programs.

## **Solution**

Montessori program guidelines need to be cross walked with state pre-k program standards.

## **Strategy**

The Montessori community needs to embark on a process to validate its pedagogy; they need to demonstrate how they are maintaining high quality through non-traditional means. This research and validation will lay the foundation for lobbying for revisions to program standards.

On a national level, it might be helpful to crosswalk the Montessori and NIEER standards. This would provide a template and rationale for explaining how Montessori meets or does not meet various state standards.

## **Teacher certification**

### **Challenge**

There is a general lack of knowledge regarding Montessori teacher credentials. Montessori and pre-k teacher credential requirements are different and often difficult to transfer. When Montessori teachers have MACTE credentials but not a BA, they may not be able to teach in state-funded pre-k. Additionally, the credentials of assistant teachers are often unclear. Montessori teachers are typically excluded from teacher unions. There are disparate professional development requirements for state-funded pre-k and Montessori teachers.

### **Solution**

Encourage Montessori teachers and stakeholders to engage in discussions with unions and pre-k advocates. Policymakers and advocates need to recognize MACTE certification as an alternate teacher qualification.

MACTE and/or AMS can adjust their standards so that Associate-level certifications would be awarded as provisional credentials, and teachers would have up to five years to finish their BA and get the full certification.

Need to coordinate professional-development programs for traditional pre-k and Montessori teachers.

### **Strategy**

Legislation needs to be amended to recognize MACTE credentials as equivalent to a BA. The Montessori credential may be included as an “alternate route to certification.” Additionally, Montessori certification should be counted as equivalent when states require education less than a BA (i.e. AA, CDA).

There need to be articulation agreements between and within MACTE programs, four-year universities, and two-year colleges. This will make it easier to align Montessori training with standard college credits and thus demonstrate its validity. Montessori leaders should also form a committee to look into where MACTE may belong in the USDE beyond Title 4. This may help MACTE programs adapt to higher education standards of quality and delivery.

The Montessori community needs to commission a workforce study to collect data regarding:

- How many teachers have a BA
- How many teachers don't have a BA but would be willing to get one within the next five years. Under what conditions (salary incentives, paid studies, etc.) would they consider this?
- Capacity of teacher-education programs (TEP) to accommodate an influx of new students and adjust their practices to include the Montessori pedagogy.

Montessori leaders need to engage in a dialogue with teachers' unions and pre-k stakeholders. Ideally, this can be done at the national level. NEA and AFT need to come out in support of pre-k and Montessori.

Montessori leaders should consider whether CDA preparation would be helpful for assistant teachers. They should determine if it would be helpful for assistant teachers to take online courses and have MACTE formalize and track the process. This would require 120 clock hours of training, one year of college, and the acknowledgement that Montessori is an optional provider of these programs.

MACTE and school accreditation programs should consider implementing annual professional development requirements (15 hours per year) to maintain credentials. This would also support teachers working towards completing bachelor's degrees and other advanced training. For states that require professional development, Montessori programs should provide release time and encourage their teachers to participate. Montessori and traditional state pre-k programs should consider doing joint trainings so that they get to know one another and understand similarities and differences between the philosophies.

## **Policy considerations**

### **State and local**

Need to consider policy recommendations on both the state and local levels. One superintendent in Florida, for example, wants to enroll all the four year olds in *VPK* and leave the threes for private providers. This would be extremely difficult for the system to accommodate and would likely be disastrous for Montessori programs unless the reimbursement rates are raised.

### **Voucher debate**

Diverse delivery of pre-k receives mixed reviews from both sides of the isle. Republicans are concerned about publicly funding education for four year olds, while Democrats are concerned about the mixed delivery system being tantamount to vouchers. The Montessori community needs to be conscious of this debate and make a concerted effort to educate policymakers on the benefits of including Montessori providers in state pre-k programs.

## **Governance**

Governance is vastly different across states and ages (governance for three and four year olds is often separate from kindergarteners). Some states have a choice of where to classify programs, and, with regard to Montessori education, it would be best to have the early childhood governance as close to the education department as possible. In general, it is challenging for Montessori programs to maintain continuity with families and children when there is fragmented and differential funding for early childhood education.

## **Terminology**

Language needs to be inserted into legislation and regulations that enables Montessori providers to participate in state-funded pre-k programs, but the exact terminology for these stipulations needs to be discussed and vetted. Essentially it's a conflict between providing a "waiver," "exemption," or "alternative" to the current pre-k requirements (typically for class size, ratio, teacher degree, etc.). "Waiver" and "exemption" have more negative connotations and are more likely to draw negative attention from other non-traditional education groups. An "alternative" would likely be more politically viable and ensure a higher level of quality. Regulations could essentially say that participating programs have to meet X, Y, and Z requirements or be AMS or AMI affiliate.

## **Ideal partnerships**

Determining the ideal setting for state-funded Montessori pre-k is a challenge. Private providers often have trouble implementing state-funded programs because the pre-k reimbursement rate is too low for them to sustain a high-quality program (this is especially difficult in states like FL where state-funded programs are not allowed to charge any extra money). Public schools have more funding to support overhead costs. So, they often are better financially equipped to offer pre-k, but they tend to have trouble maintaining the mixed-age groupings that are central to Montessori education. The ideal situation is to have state-funded pre-k for three and four year olds that operates in a Montessori charter school. This ensures a seamless transition between ages and funding streams.

## **Overarching challenges**

### **Montessori community**

The Montessori community does not have a unified position on state pre-k. There was huge division within the community in CA regarding the Prop. 82 ballot initiative. Also, the inability to regulate which programs call themselves "Montessori" presents an added challenge.

A lack of uniform structure within the Montessori community and a lack of awareness regarding Montessori among early childhood advocates has made state-level collaborations challenging to initiate. Stakeholders in both communities are often unsure about who to contact.

### **Schools v. Teacher-education Programs**

Always need to think about both Montessori schools and teacher education programs; can't look at either in isolation. They represent two different schools of thought, sets of goals, and

organizations. Additionally, there is a general shortage of Montessori teachers and these teachers are typically excluded from traditional teacher and child care unions.

### **Class size and ratios**

Class sizes and teacher-student ratios continue to be a challenge. Montessori philosophy relies on large classes and high teacher-student ratios, but state pre-k programs typically require class sizes of 20 or less and ratios of 1:10 or lower.

### **Curriculum**

Curricular differences are a challenge but can be easily overcome with a little flexibility from both parties. As long as the state doesn't require programs to use X, Y, or Z curriculum explicitly, Montessori programs can typically conform to more general curricular standards. Most pre-k curriculums (i.e. Creative Curriculum) are based on research but haven't actually been researched; the same is essentially true for Montessori.

### **Alignment with K-12 standards**

This is a challenge initially but can be remedied on a state-by-state basis with minimal effort. Indiana, California, and Florida have already aligned Montessori programs with their K-12 standards. Ohio has aligned Montessori with its kindergarten early learning standards.

Theoretically, Montessori meets and surpasses most state standards. It's just a matter of demonstrating this alignment. The biggest challenge in this arena is likely to be that state standards tend to be broken up by age, but Montessori relies on mixed-age grouping. This can be overcome as long as the assessments, which are left up to the rigor of standards, are flexible.

### **Mixed-age grouping**

Mixed-age grouping is critical to the Montessori method, but it is often challenging when programs receive public funds. State pre-k tends to cover four year olds and kindergarten covers five year olds, but the two typically have separate governance structures and different per-child reimbursement rates. Also, three year olds tend to be left out of the equation. This often results in inconsistent fees for parents, which leads to inconsistent enrollment, which, in turn, is challenging for Montessori schools both philosophically and financially. Many Montessori schools have a dearth of five year olds because they go to public school kindergarten.

## **Overarching recommendations**

### **Governance**

Explore state governance structures. One of the biggest hurdles faced by public Montessori programs is the disparate funding and oversight of state early childhood systems. Need to see if there is a way to integrate these systems on a state-by-state basis. May be helpful to seek advice from state early childhood specialists to get more information about which state early childhood programs either include five year olds and/or have a clear articulation with K-12 system.

### **Research**

Conduct research regarding Montessori and state pre-k to inform advocacy. Potential topics include:

- Using pre-k to remedy declining enrollment
- Data about Montessori teacher credentials, turnover rates, etc.

### Education

Educate Montessori leaders about the myths and realities of participating in state-funded pre-k; more people will want to participate if they understand that they don't have to change their curriculum and classroom structure. Underscore the fact that Montessori and state pre-k leaders both want what's best for children.

### Next steps

Start working now. Identify areas where the Montessori community has a good message that is supported by data and start there while simultaneously pursuing further research and development.

## TO DO

- AMS produce position statement in support of pre-k for all three and four year olds on both the national and state level
  - Finalize meeting notes and circulate among participants (**late March**) - **done**
  - Finalize recommendations (**April 1**) - **done**
  - Share meeting notes and recommendations with Pre-K Now state partners and advocates (**mid April**) - **done**
  - Host call for state/national partners (**May 3**). Featured speaker: Mary Mazarky
  - Write position paper
  - Get AMS board approval of the position paper (**August?**)
- Exchange state contacts information (**March 7**) - **done**
- Present Pre-K Now to the AMS board (**August?**)
- Write articles about Montessori and state pre-k collaborations for prominent publications
  - Public School Montessorian (**April 15 then ongoing**)
  - Montessori Life (**September 1 then ongoing**)
  - Young Children [talk to Pre-K Now/NIEER contacts] (**ongoing**)
- Meeting, reception, session, or other forum to host an open dialogue about Montessori and state pre-k at November NAEYC conference in Chicago (**plan by April 1**)
  - Maybe something with state AEYCs as well?
- Denny and Norm find examples of successful state pre-k and Montessori collaborations. Share and feature profiles of these programs, write articles about this is how they're working, what the teacher says, etc.
- Find high profile Montessori advocates (i.e. Google guys, Blagojevich) to endorse state pre-k (**June 1**)
- Invite Doris to ECEC stakeholder meetings in DC
- Talk to partners in GA to inform them about the meeting and get their perspective
- Call/webinar with state specialists (**June 1**)
- Statement on Pre-K Now website (**June 1**)
- Come up with two documents – one aimed at Montessori leaders and the other aimed at policymakers – that pose possible solutions to the common challenges faced by Montessori and pre-k collaboration
- Develop a plan for research and data sharing (**July**)
  - Montessori try to get accurate data regarding the number and demographic characteristics of children in Montessori programs.
  - Explore Montessori Made Manageable or some other service that crosswalks Montessori curriculums with state standards
  - Explore ways in which assessment tools can be effective in both traditional and Montessori pre-k programs
  - Strategy for workforce study. Funders? Likely cost a couple hundred thousand dollars. Are there less expensive ways? Could it be self administered at the October AMS conference?
  - Share data regarding programs and number of children
- Arrange meetings with teacher unions (AFT, NEA)
- Mailer to teacher education programs?
- Identify policymakers who are Montessori parents – Govs of MI and IL?
- Ed coordinate for workshop on pre-k for all for AMS conference (**October**)

- Margie will form a work group on financing state Montessori programs (i.e. pre-k provides \$X per child and Montessori costs \$Y per child, how can we crosswalk the two numbers)