

Strategic Plan 2023-2028



selkirk
MONTESSORI
school

Introduction

Selkirk Montessori School has much to celebrate and be proud of. What began in a small humble outbuilding on the grounds of Oaklands Elementary School in 1980, through the hard work and passion of 3 local parents, has grown into one of the highest achieving and sought after schools in British Columbia.

The *2023-2028 Selkirk Montessori School Strategic Plan* aims to build on our tremendous shared success and chart a path for the future, while grounded by our **Vision, Mission, and Values**. The formation of this plan is a timely and important step for the school. Originally, a strategic planning process was intended to take place in 2020 – however, the uncertainties of the Covid pandemic dashed those plans as the School’s Board of Directors shifted their focus to the immediate health and wellbeing of our school community. Since then, much has changed and many things remain uncertain, but it is time to reassess our priorities and plan for the years ahead.

While the School continues to have strong academic, organizational, and financial foundations, we are faced with significant challenges in the post-pandemic world. Inflation continues to strain budgets and, as the cost-of-living in our region climbs, continuing to attract and retain the most qualified Montessori teachers is becoming an important priority. Changing expectations from parents and the Ministry of Education, requires we adapt more quickly than ever. Our beloved school building still provides an exceptional educational environment, and we need to proactively work to ensure it continues to be a beautiful and welcoming space as it ages. These new realities create both challenges and opportunities.

Continuing to make Selkirk Montessori an exceptional educational experience for our children will always be a priority and it is the strength of our staff and parent community that makes Selkirk such a unique and special school. We also remain committed to providing low student-to-teacher ratios and an excellent work environment for staff, all while striving to keep our tuition fees as affordable as possible.

This document is the result of extensive input from the school community, including surveys, working groups, and roundtable discussions. It incorporates the advice and feedback from parents, teachers, administration staff, and the Board of Directors over the past year.

This Strategic Plan is designed to be focused and actionable; ambitious yet practical. It will guide the Board of Director’s priorities over the next 5 years, and it will be the Board’s duty to turn our aspirations within this plan, into reality.

Our Vision

Our vision is to cultivate a life-long love of learning in our children and inspire them to realize their full potential while enjoying life's journey and positively contributing to the world around them.

Our Mission

Guided by the Montessori philosophy, our mission is to provide a caring school community that nurtures every child's natural curiosity for learning and supports full development of academic, social, artistic, physical and life skills.

Our Values

Being a member of the Selkirk Montessori community ROCKS! Our interactions, behaviours, and problem-solving centres around the following:

R – Respect: Seek to understand each other, take care of our environment, and work to create a positive community

O – Open Mindedness: Celebrate diversity, try new things, be flexible thinkers, approach collaboration with curiosity

C - Communication: Listen actively, speak thoughtfully, honour and express our own feeling and ideas, acknowledge, and consider the feelings and ideas of others

K – Kindness: Help and inspire others, include everyone, use compassion, solve problems, take great care with our community

S – Success: Challenge ourselves and persevere when obstacles arise, make a difference in our community, work together to accomplish big things, participate in service work, live in truth and integrity



Strategic Directions

The process of strategic plan development identified a comprehensive list of opportunities and desired outcomes that the school could pursue. However, we cannot do all things all at the same time. Therefore 5 strategic directions were selected as the primary areas that the school and Pacific Montessori Society would address over the next five years. For each strategic direction an objective has been defined, along with a list of some strategies and tactics that can be implemented in support of each objective.

The five strategic directions are:

1. Staffing
2. Competitiveness
3. Teacher Education Program
4. Facilities
5. Community



"The work of the child consists of creating the human being that it must become. The adult works to improve the environment while the child works to improve themselves."

- Maria Montessori

#1: Staffing

Context

Our staff is the school's most valuable asset. As the cost-of-living rises, we look at ways to fairly compensate our staff while keeping tuition fees affordable and working within independent school and licensed program regulations. This work includes succession planning, training opportunities, salaries, benefits, non-monetary incentives, and team-teaching environment.



Objective

Be an employer of choice through a combination of competitive salaries, benefits, perks, ongoing & continuous professional development, employment flexibility, job satisfaction, and work environment.

Strategies

Strategies to achieve this first objective may include the following:

1. Strike a *Compensation Committee* to evaluate and revise Selkirk's total compensation package for staff.
2. Direct *Compensation Committee* to assess the following options:
 - a. Increasing salaries and/or bonuses to be closer in alignment with market compensation rates.
 - b. Adjustments to student-teacher ratios and classroom configurations
 - c. Scaling of compensation based on education and years of experience.
 - d. Increasing employment flexibility with options such as: working part-time, offering "flex days", banking days off, a set number of "no questions asked" days off each year, etc.
 - e. Non-monetary employment perks (e.g. free personal computer every 5 years)
3. Task Compensation Committee to monitor government Early Childhood Educator wage enhancements on an ongoing basis to ensure compensation for ECEs remains competitive.
4. Strike a Program Responsibility Committee of experienced staff (6+ years of employment at Selkirk) to define and clarify staff roles in programs/classrooms, including clear expectations on non-instructional aspects of employment.
5. Offer leading professional development and mentorship, including Montessori accreditation program (see Objective #3)

#2 Competitiveness

Context

As the cost of living rises and people increasingly feel financial pressures, we want to ensure Selkirk maintains a healthy enrolment waitlist, high family retention between grades, and a rich diversity within our parent community. Achieving this will require a mix of demonstrating what the school has to offer to prospective and existing families, keeping tuition rates competitive, and offering tuition bursaries to families in need.

Objective

To be a school of choice and attract families who best fit with the Montessori approach, while maintaining demographic inclusivity and cultural diversity.



Strategies

Strategies to achieve this the objective on Competitiveness may include the following:

1. Continue to provide exceptional value to families by maintaining academic excellence.
2. Promote and highlight school achievements to the Selkirk parent community through the Newsletter, school events, website, and social media.
3. Continue to provide bursaries for existing families to reduce financial barriers and encourage diversity and inclusion.
4. Continue to foster a safe space for students to explore and celebrate their own and other's individuality and diversity.
5. Continue to reflect and grow as best practice evolves in all aspects of policy and governance.

#3 Teacher Education Program

Context

Selkirk Montessori is seen as a star example in the Montessori educational community and, for a couple of years now, the school administration has considered applying to become an accredited Montessori training program. This would help the school recruit new Montessori-qualified teachers, provide ongoing training opportunities for existing staff, provide new revenue to improve financial resiliency, and help Montessori education blossom in Greater Victoria.

Objective

Selkirk Montessori School will pursue the goal of becoming an accredited Montessori teacher education program.

This objective is well under way after positive assessment after detailed research and analysis



Strategies

Strategies that may be leveraged, for the objective of becoming a Montessori Teacher Education Program, include the following:

1. Strike an *Accreditation Committee* to research and assess the feasibility of becoming an accredited Montessori training program, including assessment of:
 - a. Training program age level (3-6 or 6-12 years)
 - b. Expected implementation costs, operational costs, and revenues.
 - c. Program structure and governance
 - d. Staffing resources
 - e. Market positioning with existing training programs
 - f. Consideration of ongoing training programs (e.g. "micro-master class")
2. Incorporate training program into ongoing professional development of staff.
3. Use new revenues to improve academic excellence, total compensation to staff, and overall financial resilience.
4. Explore partnerships with existing teacher and ECE programs to access suitable applicants to our Montessori Teacher Education Program.

*"The training of the teacher is something far more than learning ideas. It includes training of character. It is a preparation of the spirit."
- Maria Montessori*



#4: Facilities

Context

Our school building is now 25 years old and will need a additional upkeep as it begins to age to ensure beautiful and welcoming spaces. Additionally, we are always looking for ways to make the most of the school site and provide new educational opportunities, such as revamping the rooftop playgrounds and expanding amenity rooms. The school's reliable financial history positions the school to invest in repairs and improvements, ensuring Selkirk remains an exceptional

Objective

Proactively service and maintain school facilities to ensure they continue to meet the school's long-term enrolment, employee satisfaction, and educational goals.

Strategies

Strategies that may be leveraged, for the objective Facilities related objectives. include the following:

1. Prioritize functional maintenance and upgrades, over esthetic improvements.
2. Strike a *facilities Committee* to work with Karen L. Colussi Foundation to establish a *10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan* and a *5-Year Working Facilities Plan*:
 - a. The 10-year strategic plan will identify school requirements and funding plans for fulfilling those requirements.
 - b. The 5-year plan will include a survey of school facilities with all subsystems such as heating, plumbing, electrical, IT, security, playgrounds and building envelope. For each subsystem maintenance or upgrade requirements will be identified and a unified plan with estimated budget requirements will be included.
3. Review 5- and 10-year plans on a bi-annual basis.



#5: Build on Sense of Community

Context

The passion and commitment of our school community has always been a strength of Selkirk Montessori. However, when the public health orders were put in place during the pandemic and we were forced to remain physically apart, the relationship between our parent community and the school changed. As we adjust to our new reality in the post-pandemic world, we aim to reinvigorate parent-school connections, build on our strengths, and extend our influence.

Objective

The pacific Montessori board will seek to broaden a sense of community and commitment to volunteerism within the school community.

Strategies

Strategies to achieve community commitment objective may include the following:

1. Create an Alumni Association to help foster an ongoing sense of community, while celebrating the school and its alumni.
2. Create regular opportunities to encourage parents to come into the school building.
3. Include a Board sponsor at community events.
4. At Open House, highlight expectation (and value) of volunteering at the school.
5. Formally structure and organize classroom specific and school wide volunteer opportunities.
6. Use digital sign-ups for volunteer opportunities and make links easily available (e.g. QR codes on hallway posters, shared through Newsletter)
7. The Board to sponsor at least one community event per year to encourage community engagement.

Acknowledgments

The Planners

The Pacific Montessori Society Board would acknowledge and thank the educational staff, administration and parents who all took significant time from their personal lives to contribute and fully participate in the development of this strategic plan.

Facilitator

Special thanks go to Julian West who graciously gave of his abundant skill, limited time and expansive patience in leading the strategic plan workshops and extended process.

Staff

The board also thanks our fabulous staff for their decades of work in building such an amazing school as a place for our children to learn to grow to feel safe to build community. We think the staff, especially for their hard work and dedication to the students through the last few years of turmoil in the world.

"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field...Our aim is so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core...to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical."

- Maria Montessori

Parents

To all our fellow parents, thank you for the dedication, caring, and support, you put into your children's development and well-being. Choosing such a phenomenal school and community as Selkirk Montessori has been a fantastic step for all of our children, but it is magnified so much more by your contributions of time and skill in volunteering with the school and its community. The thousands of small acts of contribution and leadership demonstrated by parents each day, in and around the school, provides a phenomenal and irreplaceable lesson to all of our children on how to live and contribute in a community.

Where We Live and Learn

Selkirk Montessori School is located on the traditional territories of the Lək'wəḡən speaking peoples, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.