



Walnut Farm
Montessori School



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Position Starts July 1, 2025
Bentonville, Arkansas

MISSION

The nationally accredited Walnut Farm Montessori School offers children a Montessori education honoring individuality, authenticity and the natural world. We promote peace and equity, empowering and inspiring all for life-long learning.

ABOUT WALNUT FARM MONTESSORI

Founded in 1991, Walnut Farm welcomes children ages 18 months to 12 years from diverse backgrounds, abilities, religions, and cultures. The school community includes families from Northwest Arkansas and Southwest Missouri.

Walnut Farm Montessori School is the first American Montessori Society accredited school in the state of Arkansas. In addition to a full Montessori curriculum, WFMS provides a variety of prepared learning environments, enrichment programs, and activities to the students.

The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a child-centered approach based on scientific observations of children's development from birth to adulthood. With over 100 years of global success, it views children as naturally eager to learn and capable of initiating their own education in a supportive environment that nurtures their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth.

Montessori education is self-paced and student-led, with guidance from experienced teachers and peer leadership. In multi-age classrooms, children engage in multi-sensory learning, following their curiosity and taking the time to fully understand concepts. This approach fosters independence, accountability, and community citizenship.



ABOUT WFMS

- Founded in 1991
- Ages 18 months to 12 years
- Number of students: 148
- Minority student enrollment: 27.7%
- Overall student-teacher ratio is 8:1
- Programs: Toddler, Primary, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary
- Six-acre campus consisting of indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Current Board of Trustees: 11

Nurtures Learning

Peaceful, nurturing,

academically inspiring learning environments

Outdoor Experiences

Outdoor environment with designated guide featuring various gardens, wood working, and science exploration

Nationally Accredited

Nationally accredited curriculum utilizing a fully implemented Montessori methodology and philosophy

Supportive

Supportive, involved, and welcoming parent community



CLASSROOMS/ACADEMICS

Indoor Environments

Toddler

The toddler community at Walnut Farm offers a nurturing, “home away from home” environment for children ages 18 months to 3 years, fostering individual growth and cooperative learning. The carefully prepared classrooms support the 11 human tendencies for discovery identified by Montessori, focusing on emotional and cognitive development through activities that build independence, trust, and problem-solving skills. Toddlers engage in sensory exploration, motor development, language skills, and social interactions, practicing grace, courtesy, and cooperation. Teachers provide warmth, patience, and consistency, encouraging each child to reach their potential.

The program includes a 2-hour morning work cycle, access to the outdoor classroom, playground, and nature walks, as well as Spanish and music with specialists. Toddlers also develop practical life skills like pouring water, serving snacks, and cleaning up spills. They attend Monday through Friday, with half-day (7:40 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.) and full-day (7:40 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.) options available. Prospective students are required to visit the classroom before enrollment.

Primary Program

The primary classrooms at Walnut Farm are for ages 3 years through kindergarten. They are designed to nurture children's natural curiosity and love of learning, aligning with Montessori's 11 human tendencies. The environment fosters academic growth while helping students develop concentration, independence, self-regulation, and social skills like empathy and personal responsibility. Teachers provide guidance, warmth, and encouragement, promoting reflective listening and grace in everyday interactions.

The curriculum integrates subjects like math, language, reading, writing, biology, and geography, using engaging, developmentally appropriate materials. The 3-hour morning work cycle supports concentration and mastery, complemented by outdoor experiences in gardening, science projects, and life-cycle lessons. Students also enjoy Spanish, art, and music, with extended learning opportunities in the afternoon for third-year (kindergarten) students.

Primary students attend school Monday through Friday, with half-day (7:40 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) and full-day (7:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) options available.

Elementary Program

The Elementary program builds on the Montessori foundation, offering increasing academic challenges and responsibilities for elementary-aged children first through sixth grade. The classroom is designed to foster independence, collaboration, exploration, and experimentation, with an emphasis on both concrete and abstract learning. Students engage in student-led, inquiry-based projects that require them to demonstrate understanding in diverse ways. The curriculum integrates subjects like math, language, history, science, geography, and world cultures, with field trips and guest speakers enhancing the learning experience.

Weekly work plans help students track progress and develop time management skills, while Spanish, art, and music are taught with follow-up opportunities for daily work. Students also participate in naturalist classes, community service projects, and learn conflict resolution through peace talks and class meetings. The program operates Monday to Friday, from 7:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Enrollment is primarily for previously enrolled Montessori children, with priority given based on developmental readiness. Children from outside the Montessori environment can apply after approval from the Head of School, with admission based on various factors.



OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

The campus includes a variety of outdoor spaces designed to foster exploration and learning. In addition to the classrooms, there are two nature-immersed playgrounds, nature trails, and natural areas for students to engage with the environment. At WFMS, students embrace outdoor activities even in light rain, donning rain boots and coats to enjoy nature. The school's commitment to outdoor engagement is evident with one of Arkansas' first natural playgrounds, offering a canopy of trees and various interactive elements like slides, a climbing wall, sand pits, a rock creek bed, and a child-size amphitheater.

Outdoor classrooms are integral to the educational experience, with dedicated spaces for each age group. These classrooms are rich in hands-on science lessons and practical life tasks, including gardening, composting, and animal care. Students engage in activities such as bird watching, volcano experiments, and life-cycle lessons, blending nature exploration with math and language extensions. The school also features a greenhouse accessible to Primary and Elementary students, offering an exciting space for gardening and outdoor learning.

The Toddler Outdoor Classroom provides sensory-rich experiences for younger students, where they can explore the wonders of gardening and engage in gross motor play. The Primary and Elementary outdoor classrooms encourage independent exploration and responsibility, with Primary students moving freely between the indoor and outdoor environments. Elementary students take on leadership roles, serving as caretakers of gardens and leading various activities. The outdoor classrooms create an immersive and dynamic learning environment, making outdoor education an essential part of the curriculum.

“There must be provision for the child to have contact with nature; to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature.”

– Dr. Maria Montessori

“This seems clear enough: When truly present in nature, we do use all our senses at the same time, which is the optimum state of learning.”

–Richard Louv



ACCREDITATION

WFMS is the first American Montessori Society accredited school in the state of Arkansas. In March 2010, Walnut Farm Montessori School received accredited status by both the American Montessori Society and AdvancEd, (Now Cognia). With passion and enthusiasm, the school successfully completed the self-study and standards necessary to be granted full accreditation by both nationally recognized institutions. Walnut Farm's staff and Board of Trustees continually assess and prepare for re-accreditation every seven years.

SUMMER CAMP

Walnut Farm offers a summer program for enrolled students, including half-day and full-day options for currently enrolled students.. The Toddler program features a morning work cycle, weekly themes, water play, art projects, and outdoor time, followed by a rest period after lunch. The Primary and Elementary programs run for eight weeks, with activities such as gardening, art, science, theater, and special guests. Children under 6 have a rest period each day, and all children receive a morning snack, with an afternoon snack provided for aftercare participants. Parents are required to pack a nutritious lunch, while drinks are supplied by the school.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Walnut Farm Montessori School is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), non-stock education corporation governed by a Board of Trustees.

The WFMS Board meets each month and is guided by a set of bylaws that contains provisions dictated by law as well as the Board's own procedures. The Board elects a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary and may elect other officers if it deems it appropriate to do so. All Trustees volunteer their time. Developing and overseeing the fulfillment of the school's strategic plan, the board ensures that the school will continue to achieve its mission and continue to thrive in the areas of financial stewardship and momentum.

The Head of School is the chief executive officer of the School. The Head is charged with implementing the School's long-range plan and overseeing the effective





ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

"Walnut Farm taught me how to feel capable and confident in my community, plus a love for learning."

"My experiences at WFMS were some of the best foundational Montessori experiences. Not only did WFMS provide me and environment that allowed me to grow, but one that encouraged education, compassion, empathy and independence."

THE WALNUT FARM ENVIRONMENT

This is an amazing opportunity in a vibrant community that is poised for significant growth. The lifestyle offered in Bentonville is superb, often sought out by outdoor enthusiasts for hiking, biking, and water sports, as well as patrons of the arts who frequent the world-renowned Crystal Bridges and numerous galleries throughout the area.

Many regard Bentonville as a "best-kept secret" due to its affordability, safety, and thoughtful planning as it continues to develop as a remarkable destination.

Leadership and Personal Attributes of the Successful Candidate

- A self-aware, confident, and transparent leadership style
- A passionate educator with a deep understanding of the value of Montessori education
- The ability to be an active guide and resource to all faculty and staff
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice
- A leader with the vision to consider the "big picture" while effectively attending to every aspect of day-to-day operations
- An understanding of the value of parents as partners in the education of their children
- Demonstrated experience in distributive leadership in a school environment
- Experience in finance, human resources, risk management, and general operations of a school
- The ability to hire and retain highly competent faculty and staff who are committed to excellence and to develop pathways for their continued professional growth
- A leader who welcomes an opportunity to partner with a creative and supportive board
- Dedication to continue to foster a nurturing, inclusive environment
- A creative problem solver who embraces challenges

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Walnut Farm Montessori School is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of any type of discrimination, and where students, staff and everyone associated with the school is treated with dignity and respect. Further, WFMS embraces the American Montessori Society's stance on equity and inclusion.

The AMS website states, *"A commitment to basic human rights such as freedom, dignity, safety, equitable treatment, and a standard of living adequate for health and well-being drive the Montessori commitment to education for peace and social justice."*



4208 E Central Ave
Bentonville, AR 72712

www.walnutfarmmontessori.com



SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a single merged pdf file to Mary Seppala no later than **March 20 2025**. Dossiers will be reviewed upon receipt.

- EC Summary Sheet (Contact Mary Seppala for this document)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (name, relationship to candidate, phone and email address)
- Disclosure Statement (Contact Mary Seppala for this document)

Send application materials via email to:

Mary Seppala, Partner, Educators Collaborative

Email: mseppala@educatorscollaborative.com