



**Harbor  
Montessori  
School**



## **HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH**

**Position Starts July 1, 2026**

**Pierce and Kitsap County in  
Washington**





## MISSION

Harbor Montessori School is dedicated to nurturing the whole child through intentional academic guidance, purposeful learning environments, and peace minded community support.

## Vision

Harbor Montessori School cultivates engaged, innovative thinkers who transform lives.

## Values

Harbor Montessori school is a community that values inclusivity, respect, connection, optimism, and integrity.



## ABOUT HARBOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Harbor Montessori School is an accredited Montessori school serving 8 weeks old to 8th grade students across three campuses in Pierce and Kitsap County.

Harbor Montessori School, founded in 1981 in Gig Harbor, WA, is an accredited institution through the American Montessori Society (AMS) and Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS). The school offers personalized lessons in small classes, serving infants through 8th grade across three campuses in Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, and Bremerton.

## Equity Statement

The inclusion of diverse perspectives, traditions, and backgrounds in the Montessori curriculum reflects the school's vision of cultivating innovative peacemakers prepared to affect change at home and around the world. At HMS, we strive to weave a rich tapestry with diverse fibers of learning. We embrace diversity and its ability to empower mutual respect, equity, humanity, and peace. Teaching diversity fosters an environment in which ideas are able to flow freely, preparing students for life in a global society.



## THREE CAMPUSES

Harbor Montessori School is now comprised of three campuses that are located in Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, and Bremerton. We serve children from 8 weeks old to 8th grade.

### Gig Harbor

Our flagship campus, founded in 1981, is located in the quaint community of Gig Harbor, Washington, a small city with a rich maritime heritage. This campus is situated on 4.5 beautiful acres, has four playgrounds, one outdoor classroom, two fields, and a lovely school community garden. We are a fully accredited school through both the American Montessori Society and the Northwest Association of Independent Schools and we pride ourselves on small class sizes with individualized lessons.

At Harbor Montessori School's Gig Harbor campus we offer a truly unique educational experience for children from infant through sixth grade.



## HMS at a GLANCE

- Multi-Age Classrooms
- Staff & faculty with a Montessori credential: 20+
- Total number of students enrolled in Infant through Junior High: 227
- Campus locations throughout Pierce and Kitsap County: 3
- Average teacher to student ratio (varies by program): 1 to 7
- Total number of Board of Trustees: 12
- Years serving the community: 40+





## Creekside

The Creekside campus opened September 2023 with one Early Childhood classroom and one Junior High classroom. Creekside campus is 6 acres of forest, gardens, and creeks nested in the heart of agricultural heritage between Port Orchard and Burley. With two salmon-bearing streams, mature forest, and active gardens, the two classic schoolhouse buildings provide infinite opportunities for purposeful skills and meaningful educational experiences.



## Tracyton

The Tracyton campus is nestled in the scenic Kitsap area of Bremerton, WA. We opened The doors in January 2022 and are proud to offer enriching programs designed to inspire young minds, catering to children from Toddlers to Early Childhood & Kindergarten. HMS's campus provides a nurturing environment where curiosity and learning flourish, setting the foundation for a lifetime of discovery and growth.

## PROGRAMS

### Infant - Gig Harbor Campus Only

*(8 weeks-18 months) Year Round*

The year-round Montessori infant program fosters trust, security, and developmental growth. Montessori-trained teachers create a safe, guided space for exploration, interacting with infants through singing, speaking, and affection. The program emphasizes safety, love, and cognitive development, following each infant's individual schedule for napping, eating, and exploring. Teachers encourage independence and problem-solving, such as placing objects just out of reach to inspire reaching or crawling. More than just daycare, the program nurtures independence, language, and cognitive skills in a caring, supportive environment.



### Toddler - Gig Harbor & Tracyton Campuses Only

*(18 months-three years) Year Round*

At Harbor Montessori, toddlers are encouraged to develop independence by doing as much as they can for themselves, with support and patience from teachers. The program provides daily opportunities for toddlers to meet their physical, social, and emotional needs independently, with minimal adult intervention unless help or encouragement is needed. The curriculum focuses on activities that support math, language, and social development,





including lessons in grace and courtesy. The multi-age environment allows younger children to learn by observing older toddlers, while the older children gain confidence by helping the younger ones, fostering their self-esteem.

## Early Childhood - All Campuses

(ages 2 ½ -6) (Early Childhood-Kindergarten) September - June

Dr. Montessori designed the Early Childhood program to foster a child's development at a crucial age, emphasizing independence, concentration, coordination, and order (OCCI) as foundational skills for success. Beyond OCCI, the curriculum includes Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, Science, and Cultural subjects like geography and peace education, enriched with Art, Music, Movement, Spanish, and Physical Education. Lessons are tailored to each child's learning style, ensuring mastery over rote memorization, and the multi-age classroom allows younger children to learn from older peers, while older children reinforce their knowledge by teaching others. The program also nurtures emotional, social, and motor development, with a focus on grace, courtesy, and leadership.



## Lower Elementary - Gig Harbor Campus Only

(1st - 3rd grade) September - June

Dr. Montessori recognized that children could use their imaginations to transition from concrete to abstract thinking, making connections across subjects like history, science, math, literature, and the world. The Lower Elementary curriculum at Harbor Montessori is based on Montessori's Cosmic Curriculum, with The Great Lessons sparking students' curiosity through storytelling. This stage is where children master core skills and knowledge while learning how to learn, becoming more independent, responsible, and intrinsically motivated. The multi-age classroom provides leadership opportunities and a space for social and moral development. With individualized lesson plans, a low student-to-teacher ratio, and highly trained staff, Harbor Montessori offers a rich, supportive environment for students' growth.



## Upper Elementary - Gig Harbor Campus Only

(4th - 6th grade) September - June

The Age of Imagination begins in the Lower Elementary program at Harbor Montessori and continues into Upper Elementary, where students transition from concrete to abstract thinking. By using their imaginations, students explore early history, travel the world as global citizens, and make real-world connections across subjects. The multi-age classroom, which includes students from grades 4-6, fosters collaboration on large projects, allowing students to

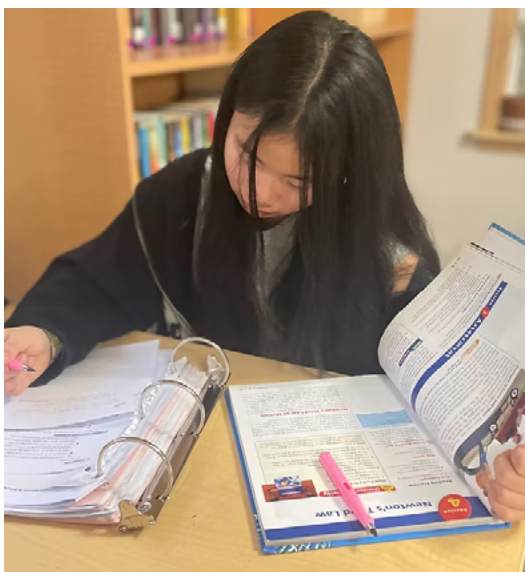


experience both mentee and mentor roles. The curriculum in Upper Elementary is interrelated and based on Montessori's Cosmic Curriculum, with subjects like world history and science studied in three-year cycles, offering in-depth exploration of topics such as Ancient Civilizations, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, US History, Biology, Chemistry/Physics, and Anatomy/Environmental Science. Algebra, geometry, and Latin & Greek are individualized. With both concrete Montessori materials and the flexibility to advance quickly as they master new concepts, students enjoy a balanced learning experience.

## Junior High - Creekside Campus Only

*(7th & 8th grade) September - June*

Harbor Montessori's Junior High program offers a unique approach that reflects the developmental needs of early adolescents, aligning with current brain research and Maria Montessori's observations. The 7th and 8th grade years are marked by rapid growth, and students need movement, purposeful work, a sense of belonging, and to feel that their voices are heard in order to maximize their potential. The program emphasizes trust, self-expression, analytical thought, responsibility, service to others, and valorization, creating a community where students collaboratively solve problems, care for the school gardens, and run their student business. The school year is divided into theme-based cycles, covering a broad range of subjects such as math, literature, history, economics, and science. By the end of Junior High, students develop a learning portfolio that reflects their hard work, interests, and achievements. In addition to strong academics, the program focuses on developing practical life skills such as communication, personal and financial independence, and problem-solving, all while fostering creativity, community bonds, and self-exploration.





## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is committed to nurturing a fiscally responsible, balanced, close community that nimbly delivers quality Montessori education producing well-rounded 21st century leaders.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

### Nurturing Authentic Montessori

- Build community connections through a strong, healthy internal culture.
- Evaluate age groups that align with HMS's mission and adjust the program accordingly.
- Develop a multi-year plan to integrate the enrichment program into core learning goals.
- Offer family engagement opportunities that support school values of inclusion, respect, optimism, integrity, and connection.
- Explore integrating technology into the school while maintaining Montessori philosophy.

### Nurturing HMS Faculty and Staff

- Create systems to support faculty and staff within the school community.
- Use data and staff input to make working at HMS a "Dream Job."
- Determine optimal staffing models based on staff feedback (e.g., admin, lead teacher, assistant, specialist, childcare).
- Enable educators to excel in fostering a learning environment that supports the school's ecosystem.

## THE HARBOR FUND

The Harbor Fund is Harbor Montessori School's annual giving campaign that supports essential supplies, dedicated teachers, and the general operating budget. Contributions to the fund provide the school with flexibility to meet current needs and seize future opportunities, ensuring the continuation of a high-quality Montessori program.

### Nurturing Belonging

- Reduce physical and financial barriers to joining and thriving at HMS.
- Provide support to teaching staff to meet the needs of students and families.
- Form a committee to integrate curriculum reflecting the school's commitment to DEI and launch school-wide initiatives.

### Nurturing HMS

- Maximize spaces to honor the uniqueness of Harbor Montessori School.
- Create auxiliary spaces to enhance student connection.
- Identify factors that foster inclusivity, connection, respect, integrity, and optimism, and create structures to support them.
- Develop an Institutional Advancement and long-term financial plan to support the stewardship of the school, aligning with its mission and vision.





## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The Board of Trustees of Harbor Montessori School is conducting a national and international search to identify its next Head of School. To that end, and to assist them in clarifying the opportunities and challenges, Mary Seppala of Educators Collaborative received input from individuals during a site visit and by means of an electronic survey. Those interviewed and surveyed included faculty, administrators, staff, parents/guardians, trustees, and students. Based on this input and the impressions of the consultant, as well as input from the search committee, the following represents a summary of Harbor Montessori School's strengths and the challenges and opportunities it faces in the next three to five years, as well as the qualifications and attributes of the next Head of School.

### Strengths

As a highly regarded Montessori School, HMS is deeply committed to the values of Montessori education. The prepared environment of the Montessori classrooms invites active exploration for students of all ages guided by faculty and staff who understand the value of self-paced learning and the role the environment plays in each child's development as an inquisitive, confident learner. Deeply committed to social justice, as well as academic growth, a truly collaborative spirit abounds.

#### **Evident at Harbor Montessori School is:**

- A strategic board that plans for the school's future while supporting its current mission and programs.
- A deep appreciation for long-term, consistent, and compassionate leadership.
- A dedicated faculty, staff, and administration committed to the school's Montessori principles and the growth and development of each child.
- Strong financial planning, reserves, and sound strategic and fiduciary stewardship of the school's resources.
- Generous financial and institutional support for continual professional development and growth of all faculty and staff.
- Independent, self-motivated.
- Purposefully organized classroom environments that are developmentally appropriate for multi-aged learners.

## Challenges

The next leader of Harbor Montessori School must preserve and further strengthen the position of HMS as a highly sought-after, life-changing opportunity for students and be a passionate and highly effective advocate of the value of Montessori education. Some of the challenges facing the school in the next three to five years include:

- Ensuring robust enrollment while navigating the challenges of student retention at the kindergarten and junior high levels.
- Continuing to promote a sense of community, considering the distance between the three campuses.
- Determining the feasibility of growing a robust junior high program.
- Continuing to attract and train highly skilled assistant teachers to stem attrition and provide consistency.
- Continuing to assess the capacity of the school to address the needs of neurodivergent learners.

## Qualification and Attributes

The Board of Trustees seeks as the school's next leader an individual whose personal and professional attributes match the Harbor Montessori School culture and who will provide effective leadership in the coming years. To best serve Harbor Montessori School, the next Head of School will be someone with the following skills and dispositions:

### Leadership & Strategic Vision

- Experienced in independent school leadership and management, preferably in a Montessori setting.
- A strategic systems thinker who understands the necessity of long-term planning.
- Innovative and forward-thinking with an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Resilient and capable of making difficult decisions. Committed to working productively and collaboratively with all members of the school community to advance the mission.



## Educational Philosophy

- Deeply values and understands Montessori and child-centered education.
- Knowledgeable of child and early adolescent development.
- Experienced in leading an environment committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Understanding of the importance of community and promoting a positive school culture.
- Committed to engaging with parents as partners in the education of their children.

## People & Talent Management

- Committed to building leadership capacity and delegating to others throughout the school community.
- Experienced recruiting highly qualified faculty and staff and providing professional growth opportunities.
- Committed to modeling high professional standards and holding everyone accountable.

## Financial & Operational Acumen

- Strong financial and budgeting acumen and a proven track record of successful fundraising.
- Skilled in enrollment management.

## Personal Attributes & Leadership Style

- Honest and trustworthy with strong personal integrity.
- Evidences an abundance of characteristics typically found in successful school leaders: present, approachable and responsive, courage with kindness, character above reproach, excellent verbal and written communication skills, an active listener, relationship builder, data-informed decision-maker, lifelong learner, humility, a sense of humor, and the ability to work collaboratively and productively with stakeholders to work through conflict and build consensus.





## 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 as soon as possible. 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](mailto:mseppala@educatorscollaborative.com)



**Harbor  
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#### **Gig Harbor**

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Gig Harbor, WA 98335

#### **Creekside**

13521 Bethel Burley Rd SE  
Port Orchard, WA 98367

#### **Tracyton**

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