



Golden Oak
Montessori School
of Hayward

Golden Oak Montessori Fact Sheet

Who started Golden Oak Montessori School?

A group of motivated local parents who were seeking an alternative to traditional public schools founded GO. Our group is ethnically diverse, with children who have very different talents, learning styles, and needs, but we have seen them all thrive in Montessori preschool and kindergarten. Our kids are advancing academically and are excited to attend school—we want to see this love of learning continue throughout their education.

We also recognize a need within the Hayward Unified School District for a curriculum to address poor attendance, testing challenges, and the large number of English-learning students. We believe Montessori's child-centered philosophy is a great match for this community's ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and academic diversity; in fact, the more diverse the students, the richer the Montessori classroom experience. In January 2008, a group of twenty educators and parents formed a Steering Committee to establish a Montessori charter school to expand the public school options in the area and give back to this wonderfully diverse community.

What is the difference between Montessori and traditional education?

Montessori is child-centered, not teacher-driven, education. Montessori emphasizes:

- Independent learning. Children learn at their own pace and choose activities across the age spectrum, guided by a teacher who helps develop individualized learning plans.
- Small student-to-teacher ratios.
- Dual Teacher Certification. Teachers are both Montessori trained and California State credentialed.
- Hands-on materials for a holistic education. Montessori materials engage the five senses, not relying predominantly on lecture and reading. Students master academic skills but value equally time-management, critical thinking, creative expression, and good citizenship.
- Mixed-age classrooms encourage mutual teaching. Unlike traditional grades, Montessori classes group children ages 6-8 and 9-12, allowing an early emphasis on teamwork where children organically develop their sense of leadership, communication and responsibility and are not constrained by the teacher-centered format.
- Diversity in the classroom. Montessori philosophy acknowledges that children each have a unique learning style and the classroom nurtures this diversity. Children learn to value, learn from, and enjoy their differences.

What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school—it provides tuition-free education. The school is held to the same standards of testing, teacher credentials, and scholastic requirements as a public school, but engages a unique educational philosophy.

Who can attend Golden Oak Montessori?

Golden Oak Montessori School is an school for grades one through eight. We will have grades one through six for the 2010-2011 school year. All children in the Hayward Unified School District are eligible to participate in a lottery for openings; children from outside the district will be considered to fill vacant spots.

Is Montessori right for my child?

Children who struggle with sitting behind a desk in a traditional classroom often thrive in Montessori because they are given the opportunity to challenge themselves, use hands-on materials to explore concepts, and to work together on constructive projects. Montessori has been shown to be one of the best options for children with learning disabilities and disadvantaged backgrounds (National Institutes of Health study, Montessori Life, Summer 2004). Montessori English language learners significantly outscore students from traditional bilingual programs. Side-by-side in the classroom, gifted students find challenges that let them grow ahead of their same-age peers. Montessori provides the ideal environment for gifted learners because students choose their activities based on their own capacity while the teacher carefully guides the student's progress to ensure that the child is working at his optimal developmental level.

How will Golden Oak contribute to the Hayward community?

Golden Oak Montessori is becoming an integral part of the Hayward community. We are establishing a community stewardship program to promote environmental, health and community wellness. Every aspect of the school will reflect this overarching vision, such as:

- an ecologically sensitive and globally aware curriculum;
- a pilot curriculum for health education, with partners such as Kaiser, to be shared with other local schools;
- an energy-efficiency plan to cut costs and showcase a “green” campus;
- After-School and Summer programs focused on topics such as outdoorsmanship and organic gardening;
- community volunteer projects benefiting local habitat restoration;

How do Montessori students perform on standardized tests?

High test scores of Montessori elementary students reflect the educational effectiveness of this method. A recent Science journal article (September 2006) comparing low-income minority students in a Milwaukee Montessori public school and traditional public school revealed that Montessori students significantly outscored their traditional counterparts on a variety of testing criteria. The data from our local Montessori Elementary Charter, Eagle Peak in Walnut Creek, reveals similar success: Eagle Peak's Academic Performance Index (API) for 2007 ranks it among the top 10% of schools in the state, public or private. The California Standard Test data for 2007 for Eagle Peak, reveal a similar story: at the fifth grade level, Math, Science, and English Language Arts scores range between 86 and 93% above proficient. The State average is 37-49%. A Scientific American article (September 2006) emphasized that Montessori public students also outperformed their peers on “tests of executive function” - a measure of leadership.

How does Montessori prepare students for High School, College, and beyond?

Lifelong Learning Skills. The real success of Montessori may be the long-term achievements gained from the practiced skills of collaborative learning, time-management, and self-governance. The Milwaukee study showed that students in the Montessori program “were more likely to respond to social problems with a positive assertive response” and “showed a more developed sense of community and social skills.” (Science, September 2006)

Character Development. Measuring performance will focus equally on meeting State standards and meeting developmental milestones for character development. Students will be evaluated by State competency exams (STAR testing), regular markers of academic progress and cognitive understanding, and by evaluations which focus on the following character traits of life-long learners: confidence and competence, independence, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, ability to handle external authority, social responsibility, good citizenship, and positive self-image.

Long-term Success. When Barbara Walters asked Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of Internet search engine Google.com, if the fact that their parents were college professors was a factor behind their success, they said no, that it was their going to Montessori school where they learned to be self-directed and self-starters. Montessori allowed them to learn to think for themselves, they said, and gave them the freedom to pursue their own interests.

To learn more about GO or to join our email list, please visit www.GoldenOakMontessori.org