

THE GLOBE

Summer 2010



2010 DMS Board of Directors Parent Survey

During the winter of 2010, the Board of Directors of Discovery Montessori School conducted an on-line parent satisfaction survey in an effort to:

1. Determine the overall perceptions of the school.
2. Discover the satisfaction level of parents.
3. Obtain feedback on the quality of the faculty, curriculum, administration and governance.
4. Identify areas parents feel need improvement as well as factors parents consider when choosing the appropriate school for their children.

Overall the survey was a tremendous success and provides valuable insights into the areas mentioned above. More than 2/3

of matriculating families participated in the survey, so that the results reflect the views of most parents.

The results can be broken down into four key response areas including overall perceptions, curriculum, faculty, and governance/administration. Here are some of the highlights:

- 98% of respondents believe that their child is motivated to meet their academic potential
- 95% of respondents believe their child's academic environment is challenging and motivating
- 98% of respondents believe that DMS promotes worthwhile values and attitudes
- In Pre-Primary, 100% of respondents are satisfied with the literacy curriculum

2010 DMS Board of Directors Survey Cont...

- In Lower Elementary, 90% of respondents are satisfied with literacy program and their child's math skills
- 91% of respondents feel that faculty and staff are excited and invested in their work
- 88% of respondents are satisfied with the Montessori experience at DMS
- 98% of respondents feel that their children are safe at Discovery
- 100% are satisfied that the grounds and equipment are well maintained for their child's safety.
- 91% of respondents feel that their children are prepared to transition to a traditional educational environment.

As a result of survey areas of interest, the School will focus additional efforts on the following:

- A feasible lunch program
- An interactive, portal based website to improve communication between home and classroom

- An expansive elementary curriculum that incorporates a sixth grade
- Continuing parent education on the benefits of Montessori education through the elementary years

The 2010 DMS Board will be hosting two community-wide events during the 2010 – 2011 school year: on Wednesday, October 13, 2010 and Wednesday, March 9th, 2011. These evenings will be designed as open forums for the Parent Teacher Organization and Board members to discuss relevant campus-wide issues and strategic plans for Discovery. All Discovery families are encouraged to attend.

The Board is grateful for your contributions to this survey process and looks forward to a bright 2010-2011 Academic Year.

Michael Meyers (Chairman)

Sheila McLenaghan (Secretary)

Coree Cuff (Treasurer)

Jim Menker (Member)



A Year of Literacy

by Dr. Linda Zankowsky



It was my pleasure to work with the teachers and staff of Discovery Montessori School this year as they addressed their approach to reading in the Montessori classroom.

The Discovery Montessori School community was an immediately warm and welcoming place for me to come to. The teachers at Discovery Montessori School spent this year understanding how the AMS (American Montessori Society) indicators for assessment and instruction look and sound in the Montessori classroom.

Specifically, AMS states that teachers and schools:

- Gather, analyze, and use data and research in making curricular and instructional choices.
- Design and use instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system for evaluating progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning across age levels, which may include research based assessment tools.
- Use student assessment data in making decisions that impact continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes.
- Conduct a systematic analysis of instructional effectiveness and uses the results to improve student learning.

We began our work with an overview of the developmental continuums for reading and how to know when a child may be off-track as a reader. Teachers now have a bank of tools to help them monitor children's learning within the classroom environment across all the program levels.

In later sessions, the teachers at Discovery built their knowledge of current research based instructional strategies, such as word sorting and questioning strategies, which complement the Montessori approach to literacy. Teachers also learned the importance of matching the level of books to the child's development so they practice reading strategies within text that is "just right" and supports the child's eventual development as a fluent reader.

Some comments from the teachers include:

- *"I have found that there are many things that I look forward to incorporating in the years to come. First and foremost I have found that there is a great use for assessments in the classroom. I feel that the assessments that we started this year served as great tools for me to use with my students and gain a better knowledge of who they are as learners."*
- *"I feel as though the DRA and Guided Reading will serve as a wonderful tool in ensuring the students are reading at the appropriate independent level."*
- *"Discovery's work with Linda has enhanced our literacy rich 3-6 environments with assessments that are a wonderful complement to our Montessori materials and curriculum."*

From the early childhood to the elementary classrooms, the teachers at Discovery have shared that they are eager to apply what they have learned this year to their classrooms this fall. I know that in the year to come, Discovery will continue to build a learning community among teachers; a community that supports the continued growth of teachers seeking to best meet the needs of each individual child in the classroom.

Maria Montessori

One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child.



Discovery's 2010-2011 Elementary Team

Discovery is excited to introduce a collaborative team of educators for our 2010-2011 Montessori Elementary program. Ms. Jenny Homler will be leading the Lower Elementary environment of first and second grade students and Ms. Joanna Vausberg will be leading the Upper Elementary community of third thru fifth grade students. Both classrooms will benefit from the guidance of Ms. Nita Hurley.

Ms. Homler is a Jacksonville native, Bishop Kenny High School alum and graduate of the University of North Florida Elementary education program, Summa Cum Laude. Ms. Homler is a Florida certified K-6 teacher, with experience in gifted/blended models of elementary education. Ms. Homler is in her practicum phase of the Montessori School of Celebration Elementary I program and brings a profound enthusiasm for children and the profession of education into Discovery's Lower Elementary environment. As an avid gardener and outdoor enthusiast, we expect our Elementary program to continue to blossom under her leadership.

Ms. Joanna Vausberg is returning to Discovery as the Lead teacher in the Upper Elementary environment. Joanna is spending her summer between Naropa Institute in Boulder, CO pursuing her Masters

of Education degree and the Seacoast Center for Montessori Education Elementary II program. Joanna brings 20 years of experience as an educator and a commitment to building community and integrative student portfolios to the Upper Elementary environment.

Ms. Hurley holds a Masters of Science degree from Barry University with a major in Montessori education. Ms. Hurley will continue to share her Montessori materials expertise in both LE & UE environments with an emphasis on creating collaborative learning spaces.

Ms. Betty Story will be joining the Discovery community as our Librarian and Technology Research advisor. Ms. Story comes to Discovery from the Virgin Islands International Academy, USVI. Ms. Story is an experienced librarian with a degree in Library & Information Sciences. Ms. Story is spending the summer cataloguing & organizing our Library and Media Resources. Ms. Story will be instructing students in Library Science, managing weekly check-out and research of books, as well as developing literacy standards for Information Technology classes.

We look forward to a tremendous year in our Discovery Elementary program and encourage all of our families to take the opportunity to visit our Elementary classrooms and meet our new faculty.