



# Renaissance Montessori School

Strategic Plan 2022-2027

## Message from the President of the Board

Dear Renaissance Community,

In the year of Our Lord 2002, a handful of people best described as ‘dreamers’ founded Renaissance Montessori School. Like all the worthiest endeavors, it was launched with a clear vision and profound mission, but no plan to speak of. We simply felt and saw the need for a truly Catholic Montessori school, and then put our hands to the plow. Just like the Feeding of the Five Thousand, God took our faith, good will and hard work, turning the insufficiency into a super-abundance. Of course it didn’t always feel like a super-abundance, but as we walked in trust, every obstacle, setback and error was overcome without fail, and God always provided exactly what we needed, precisely when we needed it. The stories that prove this gentle providence are too numerous to review here. Suffice it to say, they are without number.

Almost as numerous are the people who have contributed to and benefited from this endeavor over the past 20 years. Each in their own way, and for different lengths of time and in different ways, staff, families and community partners have made this “little miracle” of a school not only last, but thrive.

In the most important ways, Renaissance is the school it always has been; dedicated to providing the most authentically Catholic Montessori environment possible, in a way that is affordable for real families. But in many exciting ways, it has changed. Over the last three years alone we’ve grown 36%, we enjoy a gorgeous campus with incredible potential, and we are entering our next 20 years with as solid a foundation as we’ve ever had. About a year ago, inspired by the approach of our 20th anniversary, we began crafting a 5-year strategic plan, to help us prayerfully and thoughtfully map the best ways we can respond to the growing needs of our community, all while remaining true to our core mission. It is that plan that I am very pleased to share with you today.



## Our Mission

As you will see, the Plan is simultaneously aspirational, measured and practical. One thing is for sure, just as in the first 20 years, it will take everyone's active involvement, be it their time, treasure or talent. In order to ensure its successful execution, the Plan is comprised of three Goal Areas, each Goal Area has its own discrete Objectives, and the Objectives for each Goal Area are broken down into specific initiatives or key actions. We've also established a Strategic Planning Committee that will facilitate and coordinate each section, and report to the Board on progress and areas that need assistance. Needless to say, I hope you are as excited as I am to be kicking off this effort and looking forward to what the future holds for Renaissance in its next 20 years.

There's an old, wise saying, "If you want to make God laugh, make a plan." While that is true enough, there is another old, wise saying, "Work like it depends on you. Pray like it depends on God. . . because it does." I think that is the spirit with which we founded Renaissance, and the spirit with which we want to step into the next 20 years of working in the Vineyard.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Sean P Garvey  
President, Board of Directors

*Founded in 2002, our mission is to provide the best environment in which your child can learn and grow at every stage of development.*

**The following points comprise the mission statement of our school:**

- To labor joyfully in Christ's Vineyard, building the Kingdom together, so we may all "have life and have it to the full"
- To foster joy and a strong sense of community for all members, to promote stewardship of the school, and to create a partnership with the parents for the benefit of each child
- To prepare the children for all aspects of life: spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional, by engaging them in the daily rituals of living within a community
- To stimulate the child's natural curiosity and to prepare him/her to become an independent, self-reliant, and compassionate human being
- To prepare an environment that is responsive to the child's needs and tendencies at each stage of development
- To follow the teachings and principles of Dr. Maria Montessori, and to uphold the standards of the Association Montessori Internationale

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*

*John 15:5*



# Objectives & Initiatives

1

Prayerfully and thoughtfully inspire the growth of RMS in order to provide our children with the finest environments and adult guides that enable learning and growth at every stage of development

## Goal Areas

1

Prayerfully and thoughtfully inspire the growth of RMS in order to provide our children with the finest environments and adult guides that enable learning and growth at every stage of development

2

Foster an intentional RMS Community of children, families and adult guides focused on parent education, increased communication, purposeful events, and volunteer opportunities that contribute to the realization of our strategic plan

3

Model and live an Authentic Catholic Montessori Environment in keeping with the original principles laid out by Dr. Montessori



## Objective 1

Thoughtfully expand RMS Environments to meet the increasing interest of families in our growing community

### Key Actions

Commission capital improvements to be completed prior to the '22-'23 academic year that result in a new and larger Toddler environment contiguous to the school, a new and larger Primary Environment, and a new and larger Elementary Environment - each with individual Atrium Environments incorporated

Commission outdoor space expansions to be completed prior to the '22-'23 academic year that result in expanded, covered spaces that are easily accessible for Toddler and Primary Children

Refresh and augment RMS environments with Montessori materials that enable learning and growth at every stage of development

Leverage our growth to offer expanding opportunities for our children in the form of clubs, music, arts, sports, and husbandry



## Objective 2

Promote guide and staff well-being and competency by refreshing and enriching the RMS work environment

Key Actions
Refresh staff workspaces to include resources for convenience and efficiency, to include a new washer and dryer and dishwasher in Toddler, and a wireless access point in the Staff Work Room
Introduce insurance and retirement benefit programs to guides and staff
Budget for and invest in the ongoing training, professional development, and evaluation of guides and staff in order to deliver a consistent and optimal Montessori experience for our children at every stage of development. Seek to have all staff trained in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Nourish and cultivate the spiritual life of the guides and staff to support their own spiritual development and those of the children in their care



## Objective 3

Fiscally manage the growth of RMS in a manner that provides the finest adult guides and environments, while also ensuring that RMS remains accessible for families who are invested in an Authentic Catholic Montessori education

Key Actions
Establish and maintain an RMS Finance Council, reporting to the Board of Directors and in collaboration with the Head of School, that reviews financials quarterly against a financial model and budget in order to ensure that income supports the adult and environment expenses necessary to enable anticipated growth and ultimately sustain the school's mission for the next 20 years
Establish and maintain a financial model that includes assumptions and decision points to support year over year environment growth decisions
Collaborate with the Mardi Gras Committee to align annual fundraising goals to specific environment enhancements and tuition assistance for qualified families
Conduct an annual tuition benchmarking review of other schools considered by new RMS families to ensure RMS is positioned appropriately to welcome families who are invested in an Authentic Catholic Montessori education



*"The child developing harmoniously and the adult improving himself at his side make a very exciting and attractive picture."*

*~Dr. Maria Montessori*



## Objective 4

Establish a persistent Strategic Planning Committee, reporting to the Board of Directors in Collaboration with the Head of School, that convenes at least quarterly to evaluate and communicate progress on Initiatives, while also facilitating the identification of future annual Initiatives over the life of the plan

## Objective 5

Share our inspiring RMS story of growth and Authentic Catholic Montessori education to attract new families to our community



Foster an intentional RMS Community of children, families and adult guides focused on parent education, increased communication, purposeful events, and volunteer opportunities that contribute to the realization of our strategic plan

## Objective 1

Refresh and enhance the Parent Montessori Journey

### Key Actions

Identify opportunities in '22-'23 to reinvent how RMS communicates new and existing families where they can easily find pertinent information and artifacts such as the Handbook, policies, procedures, traditions, annual events, and resources and create a plan to implement changes for the '23-'24 school year

Expand Back to School Orientation nights and make them mandatory for both New and Returning Families to provide highlights of the Parent Montessori Journey and to communicate what should be expected of RMS and what is expected of parents

Refine Parent Education to respond to the identified needs of the community throughout the year, and incrementally increase participation of parents through the piloting of childcare options, and incorporate topic and environment-specific breakout groups and feedback surveys when appropriate



## Objective 2

Intentionally connect Families to foster trust and confidence in their Montessori Journey

### Key Actions

Establish and assemble cohorts of families based upon the developmental stage of their children for a monthly '22-'23 school year pilot; collaboratively iterate via feedback surveys and in person meetings with environment guides and the Head of School to refine for '23-'24

Establish and sustain an annual Mentor Family Program, actively managed by the Parents Guild, that pairs new families to RMS with a veteran family prior to Back to School Night and includes monthly check-ins from September – December to ensure new family needs are being met

## Objective 3

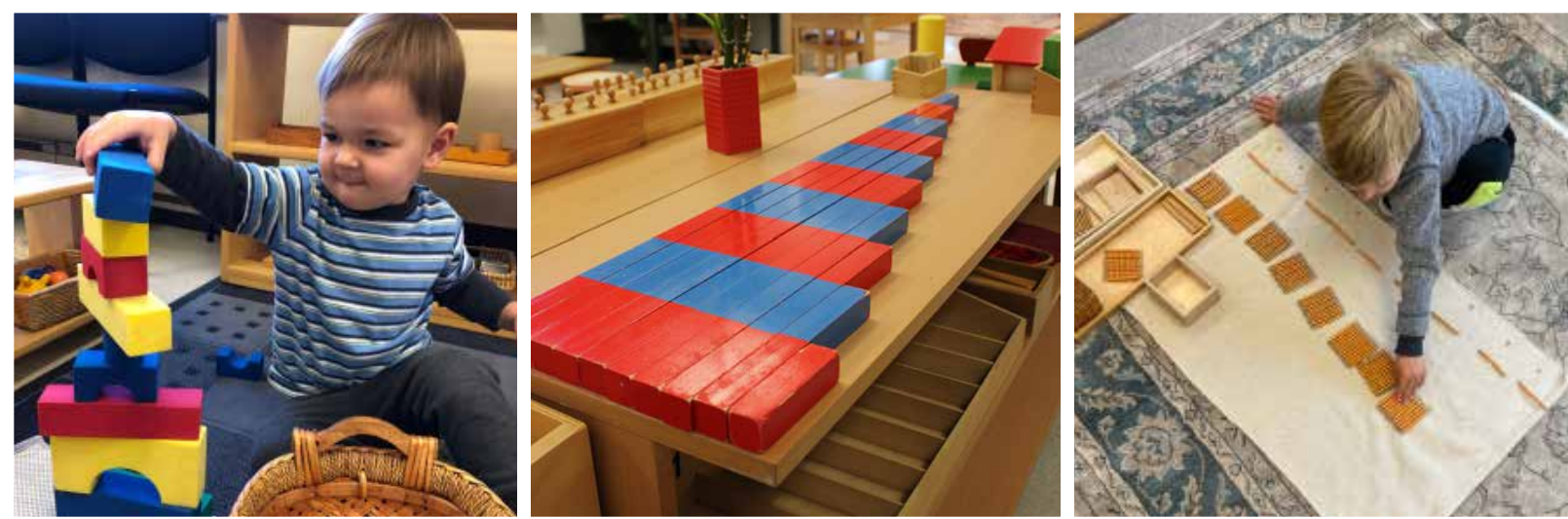
Promote monthly communication between Parents and RMS about educational and developmental milestones along the Montessori Continuum

### Key Actions

Develop, pilot, and iteratively collaborate to provide regular snapshots, between formal Parent Teacher conferences, that give parents a view of their child intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually in the context of the Montessori planes of development

Create a Conference Report Form as a tool for discussion during conferences and as a means to show the child's progression in the context of milestones along the Montessori Continuum

Pilot a monthly open forum/coffee gathering with a Guide or Head of School to enable informal discussions and questions and answers designed to further strengthen the partnership between RMS and Parents



## Objective 4

Establish and maintain community connections among RMS families and measurably increase participation in volunteer opportunities each year over the of our strategic plan

### Key Actions

Via the Parents Guild, foster community connection through intentional events that are scheduled and communicated prior to the start of the school year. Events should include social occasions to build community, spiritual events to contribute to the collective spiritual growth of RMS parents, and parent/child events for relationship enhancement

Via the Parents Guild, identify, communicate, and coordinate volunteer opportunities and new family outreach in order to contribute to the realization of our strategic plan

Model and live an Authentic Catholic Montessori Environment in keeping with the original principles laid out by Dr. Montessori

3

### Objective 1

Utilize the principles laid out by Dr. Montessori to assess which AMI principles/initiatives we uphold and which AMI principles/initiatives we consciously reject and then transparently document and communicate our position, to include highlighting the importance of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to the development of the “whole child”



*"When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength."*

*~ Dr. Maria Montessori*



### Objective 2

Create a compelling outdoor environment, integrated with the education of the “whole child,” that draws the children and families in our community together, engages them with nature, and encourages the praise of the Creator

#### Key Actions

Integrate our RMS curriculum with the outdoor environment through the coordination of a yearly rhythm and schedule of animal care, gardening, and harvesting, while also ensuring that the supporting outdoor infrastructure is efficient, cost effective, and respectful of the existing ecosystem

Refresh existing play areas and build out new features on our campus to make it a space where children and families can work and play together, while also enjoying a variety of nature experiences

Identify and dedicate space on our campus for the creation of future structures and features designed to inspire wonder and praise



## Thank You!

I am so pleased to be able to share this Strategic Plan with you. This Plan could not have come together without the dedication and work of many in our community. I want to start by thanking Tom Klump, who came to us to offer his service and expertise to lead us through this process. He has given countless hours of his time and talent over the last year and a half and this Plan would not have happened without him.

I'd also like to thank Philip Ashton and Erin Van de Voorde, who stepped up during the process to help Tom during the initial phases of the plan and again as goal area leads, as well as our other goal leads Mary Pat Blanchette and Emily Gerald. They all spent many hours gathering and sorting data and galvanizing other parents around this project.

Many other parents, staff and community members participated along the way, attending meetings, giving feedback and helping this plan gain support. Thank you to Jen Ashton, Cecilia Drabbant, Sean and Rosanne Garvey, Sarah Klump, Jenny Leutkemeyer, Claire Nguyen, and Paula O'Keefe for so many great insights and so many hours in meetings. Lastly, thanks to Natalie Mirus and Scott Jemielity for their work on taking photos and designing our beautiful brochure and to our newest faculty members May Breakall and Bob Short, who jumped in mid-stream to lend their perspective and experience during the final stages.

This has been a community driven project that will shape the direction of the community itself. I am excited to embark on the next five years together.

In the Good Shepherd,  
Kristina Fox  
Head of School



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