



THE Montessori School
of Englewood | A Chicago Public
Charter School

6936 South Hermitage Avenue | Chicago, Illinois 60636

Grant Proposal

The Montessori School of Englewood

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Cover Letter

To John Buck Foundation Company,

The Montessori School of Englewood is requesting \$65,000 from the JOHN BUCK COMPANY FOUNDATION to support a Remedial Reading Program that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our 2nd-grade students. A contribution from the John Buck Foundation will give us the jumpstart we need to continue implementing our recently developed fundraising plan. We believe that our program is consistent with the mission and interest of the students living within the Chicago city limits, and we hope you will find it in your hearts and budget to support this program. This grant will support implementing a multi-tiered support system for the school year 23/24 and a fidelity-based reading remediation curriculum.

In the ten years since its founding, The Montessori School of Englewood has played a major role in transforming an alternative curricular approach to serve elementary school students hailing from diverse ethnic, socio-economic, language, and educational backgrounds. MSE is an open enrollment, a free public charter school for students within the Chicago city limits. The town has transformed from one with too many unproductive, unsupervised kids facing the possibility of getting into trouble due to spare time to one providing these youth with a valuable structured program.

Our organization encourages applications from local families in particular. Our school accepts enrollment forms on an ongoing basis. According to us, the best way to meet the challenges of our diversity is by implementing an educational program proven to be effective, a commitment to community involvement, and a student-to-teacher ratio that allows sufficient room for individual attention. Our journey was filled with challenges, allowing us to develop incredible expertise. In the past, we have relied on volunteer or minimally compensated staff. This has resulted in high turnover, continued difficulty attracting qualified personnel, and limited continuity for the participants whose success depends on positive role models and the relationships they build with their instructors.

Rita Nolan

The Montessori School of Englewood

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are an elementary charter school operating within the Chicago Public Schools system. The Montessori School of Englewood is located in Englewood, a suburb of Chicago on the South Side. It is an open enrolment, tuition-free school for children in the Chicago area. The organization was established in 2012 by Rita Nolan (M.Ed.), who continues to serve as its executive director.

In our school in Englewood, we practice Montessori methodology in the same way it was originally developed for underserved communities. Regardless of income, race, or gender, every child is entitled to Montessori education, irrespective of their background. As architects of tomorrow, we believe that we can lift communities by teaching the whole child with our hands, heads, and hearts.

Montessori School of Englewood provides an alternative curriculum geared to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds, including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, and educational background. We believe that the best solution to the challenges of our diversity is to implement an educational curriculum that is proven to be effective, with a strong commitment to community involvement, and with small student-to-teacher ratios that ensure individual attention.

TMSOE will use the John Buck Foundation Grant of about \$65,000 to establish a formal Remedial Reading Program, including dedicated tutors dedicated to 2nd-grade students. Since many of our 2nd-grade students were identified as high-risk in our beginning assessments, we identified them needing specialized support.

Our Mission

We believe meaningful education is rooted in trust at the Montessori School of Englewood. Each day, our students and faculty commit to a life of growth and fulfillment by trusting each other with their intellect, curiosity, and creativity.

Goals

- Set the direction and create a sense of purpose by building consensus on and implementing a shared vision.
 - Consider the demographics of the school community in developing a shared vision.
 - Help stakeholders understand the relationship between the school's vision and its initiatives and priorities.
 - Consistently use informal and formal opportunities to champion and articulate the vision.
 - Act in ways that consistently reflect the school's core values, beliefs, and priorities to establish trust.
 - Ensure the school's identity, vision, and mission drive school decisions.
- Inspire a culture of collective responsibility for the success of ALL students in the whole school (not solely the teacher's students).
- Empower others to make or influence significant decisions.
 - Build shared leadership structures and opportunities for job-embedded leadership training and development.
 - Capitalize on the leadership skills of others.
 - Constantly listen, synthesize what is heard, and learn from all sources.
- Employ the skills to manage change effectively.
 - Master skills associated with large-scale strategic planning processes and implementation of such plans.
 - Steer through the challenges associated with making large and small improvements.
- Create and sustain a coherent instructional program (coordinated and consistent) with learning goals.
- Use the CPS Framework for Teaching to ground instructional guidance and coaching.
 - Model ambitious goals for teaching and learning for all students, including priority groups.
 - Draw from the best available evidence to inform instructional improvement decisions.
- Enable staff to focus and prioritize what matters most.
 - Buffer staff from external distractions to the school's priorities and goals.
 - Limit school improvement goals to a few high-leverage activities.
 - Prioritize teaching challenging content, engaging students in learning, rigor, and ways to raise achievement

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

The Montessori School of Englewood opened in 2012 and now educates over 380 students in grades K-8 and Head Start students. Providing alternative curriculum approaches for elementary school students with diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds is part of the school's mission.

Notably, we encourage applications from families in our local community. The admissions process takes place each spring, with applications accepted on an ongoing basis and families on a waitlist being notified when a space becomes available.

Our school is an educational pedagogy that places a high value on the lived experiences of the community. The Montessori School of Englewood is based on Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). In particular, it considers the norms, beliefs, and behaviors passed down from generation to generation and how cultural differences may impact children's learning.

CRT is in harmony with the Montessori Method, as both pedagogies emphasize the individuality and self-confidence of each student. Self-confident children engage their intellectual curiosity and learn independently by pursuing their intellectual curiosities when they feel that their culture is respected and understood by their peers and teachers at school. Closing the achievement gap is a key objective of CRT.

When we integrate Culturally Responsive Teaching into a Montessori classroom, we must know the families of each student to understand the context in which each child is raised. Educators should not shy away from discussing race, gender, and socio-economic status in the classroom. Black history shouldn't only be studied in February but throughout the year. To further strengthen and highlight the importance of multicultural understanding, CRT challenges our students to work as one community, embracing each other's differences and celebrating them.

Our Values

Uniqueness is Highly Valued at MSE

Through individual and small group lessons, Montessori accommodates the learning styles of all children.

The Purpose of MSE Is to Teach Self-Regulation

Children are taught coordination, concentration, and independence through materials and routines in the classroom.

Children Learn Independently With MSE

Learning remains a lifelong process in the Montessori classroom when students can follow their interests and curiosities.

We Build Community

In a mixed-aged classroom, older children mentor and model younger children, mimicking family structure.

MSE Builds Peace

Teaching using trauma-informed intervention skills models respect, peaceful conflict resolution, and kindness.

MSE Makes Innovators

The Montessori method produces better writers, stronger readers, and more positive interactions between children.

Families Matter to MSE.

MSE values the strength of the community brought about by our parents. MSE's Family and Community Engagement Coordinator (FACE) serves as the principal/executive director's liaison to resolve any issues.

STATEMENT OF NEED

TMSOE will utilize a John Buck Foundation grant of approximately \$65,000 to develop a formal remedial reading program, including dedicated tutors for students in 2nd grade. As a result of our beginning assessments, we identified many of our 2nd-grade students as high-risk students requiring specialized assistance.

Montessori of Englewood Charter ES is a magnet school in Chicago, Illinois. The school serves kindergarten through eighth-grade students with a population of 311 students. The school scored at or above the proficient level in math for 3% of students at Montessori of Englewood Charter ES and for reading for 3%. Minority students make up 99% of the school's student body. Students in the school are composed of 53% females and 47% males.

Approximately 10% of enrolled students at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) are white, 39% of them are black, and 46% of them are Hispanic. However, it is important to note that Chicago Public Schools is an impoverished, racially isolated district with a high rate of English language learners, despite the city's resources. According to CPS, these findings were confirmed in 2020, emphasizing the importance of proper education for dealing with these issues.

It is proposed that to address this issue, the John Buck Company Foundation supports non-profit organizations in the Chicago area working to enrich the lives of children and families. Particular attention will be given to programs that support education.

STRATEGY

Currently, we are seeking teachers who meet our eligibility criteria. Below you will find our criteria.

Position Summary

- Assists students directly with intensive intervention.
- Ensure the development of an MTSS approach that is systematic and school-wide.
- Implements classroom intervention programs by facilitating and coordinating their implementation.
- Directly supports teachers in developing curriculum and instructional strategies, including effective interventions and strategies.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist schools in identifying struggling learners, designing instruction and interventions, and assessing student response to interventions based on screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data.
- Offer individual and small group instruction designed to meet the needs of each student and motivate them within a classroom and pull-out setting.
- Design and monitor interventions for struggling students.
- Assist schools in developing strategic plans for intervention and growth.
- Analyze and report student achievement data associated with multi-tier assessments.
- Maintain a caseload of students requiring intervention.
- Develop and implement MTSS at all levels of school-based problem-solving teams.
- Facilitate the development of appropriate positive behavior interventions through MTSS in collaboration with administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, and psychologists.
- Adapt professional development to the needs of schools in the areas of behavior and MTSS.
- Assist district and school administrators in implementing the system for supporting literacy and behavior using balanced assessments.

- Ensure that appropriate records are maintained as required by the school, district, or state, and make the appropriate reports as directed.
- Communicate and work closely with the regular classroom teachers while developing each student's intervention program.
- Demonstrate an understanding of data collection and progress monitoring in the classroom by modeling lessons and strategies
- Provide colleagues with materials and develop them
- Provide feedback to teachers when requested by them in the classroom
- Organize enrichment activities for students who qualify.
- Discuss strategies and techniques to foster progress with district curriculum/instruction, ESE, and ELL personnel.
- Determine the most effective teaching, instruction, and assessment methods for MTSS.
- By assisting teachers, build an interactive classroom environment that focuses on the content and learning strategies embedded in the State Standards.
- Assist in developing and implementing an integrated curriculum for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps in collaboration with Curriculum staff.
- Lead instruction in an assigned area of schools to accelerate proficiency and academic achievement among all students, with particular attention paid to those groups that have not yet achieved proficiency.

Knowledge, Skills, and Qualifications

- Develop goals and objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of program services by analyzing assessment data and other relevant information.
- In-depth knowledge of the state standards.
- Understanding the culture, lifestyle, and educational and social requirements of ethnic minority students and children living in poverty. Developing interpersonal skills using tact, patience, and courtesy.
- Skills in computer technology and software.
- Identify and demonstrate leadership skills in your professional practice.
- Communicate effectively, listen well and collaborate effectively.
- Experience in teaching in a culturally sensitive manner.
- A background in behavior management is preferred.
- Thorough knowledge of the research findings related to MTSSs, including Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) and Positive Behavior Support (PBIS).
- Ability to work hard and passionately to achieve success for all students. Knowledge of research-based interventions.

EVALUATION

Standard reading tests will be conducted at the program's beginning and end to determine whether a student's reading speed and comprehension have improved. In addition, students who require assistance will be tested to determine if they can pay greater attention to reading.

TMSOE is committed to improving the reading test score for second-grade students. We will use the data collected from our Fastbridge Testing systems to develop a remedial reading program.

[Details about remedial reading and fastbridge testing criteria will be added. Client has to provide some information regarding the assessments.]

The program facilitators will administer students a set of pre-tests and post-tests to determine whether the project meets its objectives to the greatest extent possible. Several outside collaborators (experts in child education) will develop periodic testing methods, which will occur monthly.

Participants will be asked to complete qualitative evaluations at the end of each session to identify areas for improvement and receive feedback from the group.

BUDGET

<i>Item</i>	<i>Qty.</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>
Travel			
Van Services	4	\$2,000	\$8,000
Project Allowance			
Research Assistant	Ten months	\$1,500	\$15,000
Moderator	Ten months	\$1,400	\$14,000
Audio cassette tapes	100	\$5	\$500
Laptop Computer	5	\$2,500	\$12,500
Automation software	Six months	\$20	\$120
Camera and aux. equipment	1	\$750.00	\$750.00
Office space	Six months	\$1,000.00	\$6,000.00
Salaries	5	\$15,000	\$7,500.00
Total Project Allowance			\$64,370
Administrative fee			\$140
Total Grant Request			<u>\$64,510</u>

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Rita Nolan, Executive Director

The Montessori Network, comprising the Montessori School of Englewood and the Montessori Residency of Chicago, was founded and directed by Rita Nolan as its executive director. Rita was previously the Upper School Director for Near North Montessori School in Chicago from 2003 to 2009. Originally from Ireland, Rita received her degree from University College Dublin in geography and Greek and Roman civilization. In addition to holding a master's degree in education in curriculum and instruction, Rita holds Montessori teaching certifications for primary and elementary schools. During her time as a Ryan Fellow at Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management, Rita examined education reform from an entrepreneurial perspective. Aside from helping establish the Montessori Residency of Chicago, Rita also trained teachers who worked in urban Montessori schools. Rita was awarded the Dennis Schapiro Award for Innovation in Montessori Teacher Education and has participated in educational conferences across the country regarding the application of Montessori pedagogy to under-resourced communities.

Thomas Hale, President, Board of Directors

The Montessori Network and Montessori School of Englewood are governed by Thomas Hale, who has served on their board of directors since 2010. Before joining the Near North Montessori board, he served on the facilities and strategic planning committee for six years. His current position includes being a member of the Partners of the Americas board of directors. This organization promotes culture, art, and education in the Americas, and Hale serves as the board's President. The company, Hale Technologies, was founded in 2002 by Thom, who designs, develops, and manufactures ethical pharmaceutical products in the United States and Brazil. He currently serves as President.

In 2010, Thomas Hale was elected President of the Montessori Network and the Montessori School of Englewood. In addition to his daughter attending a Montessori school until eighth grade, he served on Near

North Montessori School board for six years. He served as the Chair of the Facilities Committee and the organization as a whole.

Board of Directors

The Montessori School of Englewood's Board of Directors comprises fourteen parents and Englewood community members committed to the school's present and future. Budgeting and finances are overseen by the Board of Trustees, who also provide direction and guidance to ensure the school follows its mission.

- Karen Gatsis Anderson (President)
- Jim Sulzer
- Marvin Hoffman
- Joseph Motto
- Peter Cunningham
- Peter Talmers
- Gabrielle Sansonetti
- Ebonie Townsend
- Tanesha Peeples
- Marcus Robinson
- Tiffany White

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SIGNATURE