



Guiding Principles articulate a school's vision, values, hopes and ideals to the design team. Guiding Principles will be used to "test" the decisions that are made throughout the design process, since every element of the building must be created to support the school's vision and values.

Guiding Principles: Garden Oaks Montessori School

Montessori education is a philosophy and methodology that promotes the growth and development of the whole child (academic, social, emotional and spiritual). Dr. Montessori wrote that the 6 essential components to a Montessori environment are as follows:

- Freedom
- Structure and order
- Reality and atmosphere
- The development of community life
- Authentic Montessori instructional materials

Montessori education is characterized by a constructivist approach to learning, hands-on materials, self-directed interactive, collaborative learning in a multi-age classroom setting.

As such the following statements are descriptors of our guiding principles:

Freedom

- Space for movement within the child-centered learning environment both inside and outside the classroom facilitated by active and passive supervision
- Differentiated, independent, developmentally appropriate Montessori learning

Structure and order

- Provide a safe, orderly Montessori environment designed to accommodate the diverse needs of the school community (academic, physical and emotional)
- Guiding the whole child on their cosmic path through understanding roles and interconnections in the community, world and universe

Reality and nature

- Learning space outdoors integrated in the natural flow of movement from indoor to outdoor learning areas
- Integration of environmental sciences components to maximize teaching and learning such a LEED certification and the preservation of the campus' historic trees
- Neutral earth tones throughout the campus that complement the natural beauty of the Garden Oaks community



Beauty and atmosphere

- Simplicity of campus, grounds, buildings, classrooms and materials to promote the peace, beauty and serenity of the natural world
- The campus structure and grounds should be considered an integrated Montessori teaching tool/material

The development of community life

- Foster community (classroom, campus, neighborhood, community, globally)
- Facilitate both vertical and grade level planning and interactions for PK3 – 8th grade, multi-age classrooms

Authentic Montessori instructional materials

- Space to ensure an authentic Montessori methodology with room for students to independently and harmoniously manage their learning space (room for students to learn at multiple levels, floor space, collaborative spaces)