Every generation believes they are alive during interesting times, and this particular moment in time is no exception. The 2017 Long Range Plan (LRP) expresses LMS’ response to the new paradigms for educating in the 21st century.

Embedded in the Montessori approach to education is the preparation of children to adapt to and have positive impact on the world they grow into. As one high school history teacher put it, “I think the word is ‘centered.’ LMS kids come to us more centered than their peers. I know [they] will ask good questions and advocate for [themselves]. That’s a great way to be starting out in life.” LMS graduates enter everything from the medical field (think Partners in Health and medical and veterinary school) to technology (think Google and cyber forensics). They return to LMS with gratitude for and acknowledgement of their beginnings. This plan propels the thinking that makes LMS the school it is.

The evolution of technology and our ability to communicate globally in an instant have reshaped our sense of place and time and transformed how we live and work. Preparing our kids for the future requires a thoughtful and committed approach. It requires that we come together in a purposeful, compassionate and clear-eyed way. It requires that we be honest and agile in the implementation of our goals. It requires a deep and heartfelt connection to each other and to our communities. This is how we work and think at LMS, and we present this Long Range Plan in the spirit of what is great about our school.
The Montessori Outside initiative was born of two major influences: 1) Montessori education is closely connected to the natural world, particularly in the context of climate change; and 2) LMS’ acquisition of 19 acres of adjoining woods and wetlands gives physical expression to this deeper mission.

Contributing to this initiative are teachers, parents and administrators who are passionate about the outdoors and want to help integrate the highest and best use of this wonderful place with the broader mission of the school. The initiative is rooted in sustainability and our absolute commitment to be responsible and loving stewards. The 19 acres is already widely viewed as an extension of the classroom by the LMS community. In the coming years, all of us involved in the Montessori Outside initiative will help to foster and support that perspective through trail access, prepared environments in the woods and enhancement of the playing fields and recreation areas.

Establish a comprehensive Outdoor Learning Program at LMS

- Construct trails connecting the classroom campus with special study sites and contemplation areas.
- Create low-impact gathering space(s) using natural materials.
- Expand and enhance the Farming Program.

Enhance outdoor recreation space

- Redesign and plan open field space including a regulation-size middle school soccer field.
- Re-envision play structures integrating the woods and contours of the land.

Explore connecting to the local community

- Form an Environmental Stewardship Committee to foster best practices on the land.
- Seek partnerships with the community and community organizations to link LMS land with other open spaces and provide community trail access.
The **Montessori Applied** initiative evolved from a recognition that science, engineering and mathematics will play an essential role in our kids’ futures and deserve to be approached in a uniquely Montessori way. The effort was built around a passionate group of teachers, administrators and deeply involved parents who have real-world experience in science and engineering.

What started as a conversation about science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM), organically and quickly matured into a deeper discussion around fostering curiosity, character and problem solving in our kids. The Montessori Applied initiative meets and eclipses academic goals, speaking directly and deeply to the kinds of people we want our children to become. True to the LMS approach, science and engineering efforts should be child-led, driven by their innate curiosity, and focused on solving the problems the kids themselves have identified. In so doing they become avid explorers of curiosity, intuition and scientific inquiry.

Our job as parents and educators is about fostering and supporting kids’ curiosity and empowering them with the tools and direction they need to take their inquiries to whatever depths and reaches they can achieve.

**Support the integration of design and engineering into the Montessori science curriculum**

- Integrate inquiry- and design-based learning projects at all levels.
- Organize a “library” of resources to facilitate inquiry- and design-based projects.
- Foster alliances with institutions with access to sophisticated tools.
- Support teachers’ project-oriented science instruction skills with professional development.

**Raise the visibility of LMS’ science curriculum - “science is everywhere”**

- Create outdoor science installations - permanent and temporary (e.g. scale model of solar system and/or mechanism to generate electricity using physical activity).
- Participate in Citizen Science projects (e.g. students tracking water levels in wetlands for Town of Lexington; students monitoring seismic activity for Weston Observatory; students monitoring the canopy of trees, etc.).
Raise the visibility of LMS’ science curriculum - “science is everywhere” (cont’d)

- Organize community events promoting science and LMS science in particular.

Deepen our connection to LMS parents involved in engineering and sciences

- Identify interested parents and alumni with real-world experience and encourage their direct involvement in LMS Science and Engineering projects.
- Organize student visits to science and engineering workplaces.
- Recruit experts in the field of science and engineering who will visit LMS to share knowledge and experiences.
Montessori Amplified came together around the recognition that LMS has been widely respected as an educational leader in the Montessori community over its 54-year history. While this status has attracted educators and parents from all over the world, we need to do a better job of describing and celebrating our significant profile so that it is appreciated locally. The art of storytelling is a major focus of this initiative. Storytelling reaches the heart of listeners because it surrounds information with feelings. LMS stories convey the soul of our school.

In typical LMS fashion, we are looking “big” before drilling down. This initiative seeks to capture and convey the LMS story in an authentic, deeply honest way. Beyond improving the descriptions of our methods, we aim to stimulate robust discussion of the LMS story as a whole, and to employ various media to share these narratives.

Create communications initiative

- Engage a professional resource to help deploy the LMS message across relevant and appropriate channels.
- Collect narratives to develop the “Growing Up LMS” campaign, supporting the case that LMS nurtures parents as well as their growing children.

Gather personal narratives which embody our core message

- Purposefully choose and professionally produce stories about the LMS experience.
- Form a working group to galvanize and implement a storytelling initiative.

On-going promotion of LMS

- Create a comprehensive and flexible marketing campaign focused on our social media presence, our current messages and our storytelling initiative.
- Study the viability of establishing a Montessori Center at LMS, uniting the multiple educational pursuits currently housed at LMS (e.g. Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative, Horizons @ LMS, Montessori Conference on Diversity and Equity).
Closing and Acknowledgements

This Long Range Plan represents the work of the LMS community -- parents, students, educators, administrators and alumni -- to steer us in a wise direction over the next five to seven years. It speaks to our community’s deeply felt connection to the natural world, our commitment to inquiry and creativity, and our desire to tell our inspirational story. Always our aim is helping to prepare our children to be engaged, self-directed and purposeful as they mature into adults who make meaningful contributions to their community. We look forward to the work this plan sets out through the early 2020’s.

Special thanks to Valerie Overton, long-serving Board member and chair of the Steering Committee, who got this process off the ground and kept us on track to get to the finish line.

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Margie Gibbons          Valerie Overton, chair  Wei Zhang
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