

Kennebec Montessori School

Statement on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Kennebec Montessori School values the diversity of our school and surrounding communities. Our intention is for faculty, staff, students, and families of all religions, races, ethnicities, abilities, family structures, gender identities, neurodiversities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses to feel a sense of belonging and have their full humanity affirmed on our campus. We commit to seeking out learning opportunities; having discussions about unconscious bias, racism, sexism, issues related to our LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized populations; and creating school policy and curriculum based on that learning. We recognize the importance of lifting up the stories and histories of all people so our children feel pride in who they are and carry excitement about honoring what makes their peers and their families unique.

Montessori education is cultivated through the uniqueness of each individual and is focused on educating the whole child to nurture a respect and understanding about themselves, their larger world, and their impact on the planet. The respect that we foster in our children aligns with our intent to confront racism, inequities, and biases to create a safer, more welcoming, and accepting environment for all. We believe diversity enhances our community.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion will remain strong and the efforts we make will evolve based on changing needs every school year. The constants will be our focus on affirming all of our children, treating everyone with equity, and fostering a strong belief in justice for all. Anti-bias education does not have a finish line. This is an ongoing process that we must pursue requiring the allocation of time and resources. This will take the form of professional development for teachers and staff, community learning, and additional parent lending library and classroom resources. As a staff and school, we have had the opportunity through professional development trainings to delve into advancing our awareness of how we create our identity, the difference between explicit and implicit bias, and how to actively model and practice antiracism. We also aim to create opportunities for our larger Central Maine community to come together to strengthen community connections, provide opportunities for thoughtful discussion, and create a learning environment where all feel safe, represented, heard, and valued.

To date, we have:

- Formed a Diversity and Inclusion Committee consisting of teachers and family members who work to cultivate equity and a feeling of belonging for all members of our community

- School staff and faculty completed a 20 hour Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism Training in 2021
- Created a school-wide book celebrating our families and varied traditions.
- Hosted a broader community-wide film and discussion event highlighting the value and diversity in Montessori called Inside Montessori
- Invested in additional training to support the application of our learning in curriculum and classroom libraries

As we educate ourselves and address our biases, we will need to revisit program curricula and school policies. We are confident that by empowering and educating members of our community, we will cultivate greater empathy and compassion for understanding, communicate with more inclusive language, challenge discrimination and stereotypes, and provide greater guidance and support. This commitment ultimately leads to us cultivating healthy habits of mind — such as intellectual humility, curiosity, and patience — that will allow our children to weigh opposing viewpoints and think critically as they form their own perspectives. At KMS, we prepare our students to become compassionate leaders who will promote equality, justice, and human flourishing for all. As Maria Montessori said, “Education is the best weapon for peace”.

All of this work is supported through our school’s mission statement:

At KMS, we provide children with an educational program, rooted in the philosophy of Maria Montessori, that nurtures a love of learning and fosters respect for self, others, and the environment.