



# OPEN MONTESSORI INITIATIVE

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## SCHOOL CRITERION POLICY

### Section 1. PURPOSE

In order to carry out our exempt purposes and open up access to quality programming for all people, Open Montessori Initiative (OMI) seeks to work with Montessori schools which aim to provide students with a Montessori education as outlined through the guidance of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). We are open to serving communities that promote the work of Dr. Montessori through credible programs which consistently meet the pedagogical standards, principles and practices set forth by Dr. Montessori.

We do not assess the program quality based on the affiliation of the school but the totality of the program and the implementation of the Montessori Approach.

### Section 2. CRITERIA

OMI will fund scholarships to individual applicants based on the recommendation of the Scholarship Committee and approved by the Executive Director which assess the school that is named on the OMI application submitted by the applicant. The Scholarship Committee, along with the Executive Director, assesses the credibility and quality of the Montessori program based on where the school fits within the following criterion:

1. The school holds a **Certificate of Recognition** through the **AMI School Recognition Program**.
  - a. A school in this category must employ a teaching staff that is a 100% AMI credentialed teaching staff that have completed training through a certified Montessori program under the auspices of AMI as dictated through the AMI/USA Recognized School Status guidelines.
2. The school is in the transitional category of '**Associated**' with AMI but actively in the process of seeking a **Certificate of Recognition** through the **AMI School Recognition**.
  - a. A school in this category must employ a minimum 50% AMI credentialed teaching staff who have completed training through a certified Montessori program under the auspices of AMI as dictated through the AMI/USA Associated School Status guidelines but must increase the teaching staff to 100% AMI credentialed teachers within three years of reaching their Certificate of Recognition.

3. The school is currently affiliated with AMI through the **AMI/USA Affiliated School Program**.
  - a. A school in this category must employ a minimum of 80% AMI credentialed teaching staff who have completed training through a certified Montessori program under the auspices of AMI as dictated through the AMI/USA Affiliated School Status guidelines.
  - b. The school may employ a maximum of 20% teaching staff who have received Montessori teaching credentials through the American Montessori Society (AMS) or St. Nicholas Montessori Society (SNMS).
4. The school is currently associated with AMI through the **AMI/USA Associated Status & Public School Program**.
  - a. A school in this category must employ a minimum 50% AMI credentialed teaching/administrative staff who completed training through a certified Montessori program under the auspices of AMI as dictated through the AMI/USA Associated Status & Public School guidelines.
  - b. The school may employ a maximum of 50% teaching staff who have received Montessori teaching credentials through the American Montessori Society (AMS) or St. Nicholas Montessori Society (SNMS).
5. The school is a member of a national or regional crediting agency such as, but not limited to, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) or Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).
6. Schools that are not regulated by AMI, AMS, or certified by either governing body will be taken under consideration on a case by case basis.

It is encouraged that each school is registered with the Department of Education in the state in which it operates

### **Section 3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

OMI exists to work with families who desire a Montessori education for their children and are looking for funding to attend Montessori schools.

It is the preference of OMI, though not a requirement, that the following occur:

1. Contribution Matching.
  - a. An applicant's school pledges to match OMI funds.
  - b. An applicant first seeks to obtain financial assistance through the school's financial aid program before submitting an application with OMI.

OMI does not seek out schools for the sole purpose of providing scholarship support but welcomes application submissions from applicants who are applying to a school that has exhausted its own financial aid funding or has requested OMI to manage its scholarship fund. In these instances, OMI can assume responsibility for processing

financial aid and scholarship applications from parents of a specific school community.

When working with a specific school that has referred a family to OMI for financial assistance, OMI will operate under the presupposition that an agreement exists between OMI and the school that the family meets the financial aid criterion of both OMI and the school to which the applicant is applying for financial aid.

Families must fill out and submit a complete OMI scholarship application packet in order to receive consideration for an OMI scholarship.