



Common Community Questions – Video Transcript

Your Pullman Community Montessori Members

Yes. My name is Laylah Sullivan and I am the fellow for the group who's in charge of spearheading the writing of the charter contract and I will be a co-leader of the school if we are approved.

My name is Henry Merrill and I am a member of the Founding Board of Pullman Community Montessori.

Hello, my name is Beverly Wolff and I'm currently the Head of School of the Montessori School of Pullman and I am one of the Founding Board members for Pullman Community Montessori.

Q1 – Why start a new public school when we already have good public schools in Pullman?

Choice

That's a good question, we really do have good schools in Pullman. However, we have three main reasons why we think Pullman Community Montessori would be a good addition and strengthen the Pullman School District. School choice strengthens every school when families have options every school in the school district has to bring their A-game. Our neighboring city, Moscow, has both traditional and charter public schools and they're about the same size as Pullman. We'd like to offer something similar in our city too.

Whole-Child Education

Our second reason has to do with whole-child education. To be poised for success, 21st century students must be strong leaders and have a strong sense of self; be able to lead with compassion and know the importance of respectfully engaging with their community; and be able to be self-initiating and regulating problem solvers that can use systems thinking to solve problems and be able to apply their education to a variety of different scenarios and situations. Pullman Community Montessori believes to do that you need a whole-child education and we need to strive to ensure kids not only develop the appropriate academic skills, but also

develop the habits of mind and action and love of learning to be successful, happy and healthy as they proceed through school and life.

Measuring Student Success

Finally our third reason speaks to measuring student success. While state standardized testing serves a purpose, research indicates by itself is falls short as a direct indicator of how students will perform in college, career, and life. Montessori education has always recognized the importance of academic and non-academic skills to prepare a child to meet the challenges of adulthood. We will use Montessori's 100+ years of research to offer a program that uses best practices to measure both academic and non-academic skills throughout the program from Kindergarten all the way to when they leave us in 9th grade.

Q2 - How will the school be held accountable?

Pullman Community Montessori will be held accountable to the same agency as the Pullman School District, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. In addition to being held accountable to the Washington State Charter School's Commission who uses their own framework that was co-designed with the Department of Education to assess us on three main categories: academics, financial and operational performance. So, these two main entities are our main oversight and we will provide them reports as well as the public, reports annually if not more frequently on our performance.

We will also partner with the [Teton Science School Place Network](#) and the [National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector](#) to ensure that one: we maintain high quality public Montessori program and that we maintain a rigorous place-based academic community program.

We have also made it part of our model to submit to an external audit that's performed by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, each year, which will assess us on how well we are performing and adhering to Montessori standards in comparison with other public Montessori across the nation. This evaluation looks at academics, adherence to Montessori classroom practices and how well we extend our community beyond our classrooms to the larger community around us.

Q3 – How did you come up with the growth enrollment plan that you have proposed?

We looked at best practices for maintaining the Montessori mixed-age environment, how fast our desired facility space would open-up, and a healthy growth rate for our small community realizing minimal impact on Pullman School District. For the latter we used our neighbor, [Palouse Prairie Charter School](#) as a reference point. Moscow School District is similar in size to Pullman and Palouse Prairie Charter used a similar growth pattern.

Q4 - Is it confusing to have two schools with similar names (the Montessori School of Pullman and the Pullman Community Montessori)?

Well, [The Montessori School of Pullman](#) is a well-established preschool and child-care center and [Pullman Community Montessori](#) is the name identified by our community for the proposed charter school. Both of them have Pullman within the name because that's where the schools are located and we're Pullman Proud. Both of them also have Montessori in the name because they both adhere to the Montessori model. However, with the different school colors, different logos, a focus on different aged children, with a different web presence and Facebook pages, our community will learn to distinguish between the two schools.

Q5 - Where will the school be located?

Well, currently, our proposed plan is to open the charter school within the [Gladish Community and Cultural Center](#). The Gladish building has always had a focus on education and it has many amenities that make it an attractive location – it has access to a gym, a playground, an auditorium, a small theatre, a commercial kitchen, and large classrooms. Its central location is also convenient for access to the local library, the WSU campus, the trail system, local parks, and many other community resources.

Q6 – How many classes will there be in year one?

Well in year one, that's 2021-2022, we're projecting two stand-alone Kindergartens for children ages 5-6; one Lower Elementary classroom, that's ages 6-9 or grades 1-3; and one Upper Elementary and we'll start with the grades 4 and 5 serving children ages 9-12. Class sizes for kindergarten will be capped at 15 as this group may include children who've never been in a Montessori environment before. These students will have and need time to acclimate and strengthen social-emotional skills before being transitioned to a fully aligned Montessori mixed-age classroom. And by the way, each classroom will have a dual certified Lead teacher, that means they will have both Montessori and Washington state teaching certificates and this teacher will be accompanied by a trained classroom assistant.

Q7 – What will be the age groupings and how many students per class?

Students within a Montessori classroom are grouped based on developmentally appropriate age groupings. Years of research tells us what ages of students benefit from each other most within a classroom community. To maintain a healthy community of learners ripe with opportunities for collaboration and social-emotional skill building, Pullman Community Montessori will strive to maintain the internationally accepted recommendations for elementary classroom numbers in a Montessori. So, our classrooms will range in size between 22 to 32 students with a Lead Teacher and a Trained Assistant.

Q8 – What are the main features of the adolescent program and their age groupings?

Our Adolescent Community Program will be for ages 12-15 and will have some common features, for example there will be mixed age grouping and still maintain the morning and afternoon uninterrupted blocks of work time, but it will begin looking a bit more like a traditional middle school schedule. Each community will realize a 13:1 student teacher ratio and the educational program will feature place-based education underpinned by the Montessori philosophy and what science already tells us about how adolescents learn best. If you want to know more about place-based education, we encourage you to look at [Teton Science Schools Place Based Network](#) as they will be our partners in developing a rigorous program tailored just for our community.

Q9 – Why might we need a lottery for the school and how will it work?

If applications for spaces in the school exceed expectations and capacity of the school, then any school runs a lottery. The lottery is random and is open to the public to all students and is over seen by a city official.

Q10 – What will the length of a school day be? Will there be any options for families who need before and after school care?

Well, data tells us that additional time is needed in the school year to ensure that all students are provided the opportunity to achieve appropriate growth. To that end, Pullman Community Montessori, will propose an extended school year and also an extended school day. The school day will start at 8:30 each morning and end at 4:30. This will allow us to provide students with a high-quality, whole-child education tending to both their academic needs and executive functioning and social-emotional needs. We are working with the [Y of the Palouse](#) to develop a before and after school care program to accommodate families who need this service. To that end the school will open its doors at 7:30 and close at 5:45 with the Y supporting services outside of our normal school day.

Q11 – What after school activities might be offered?

After school activities will be driven by student and family interest and available resources and expertise. They may include chess, environmental programs, gardening, drama, and sports like track and martial arts.

Q12 – What transportation will be available?

Pullman Community Montessori will provide transportation. Currently our plan is to have at least one of our own buses and that will depend on student population size and need, but we also hope to collaborate with the Pullman School District on students who are already part of their designated routes, and offer purchase of Pullman Transit bus passes for students.

Q13 – Will food services be offered?

Yes. Like other public schools Pullman Community Montessori will offer food services. We're currently working with the Pullman School District to determine if we can collaborate on this service or if we'll need to run our own service. We will supply lunches for families that are qualified for free and reduced lunch programs. Students that don't qualify for the program may purchase their own lunch for a small fee or bring their own lunches. Also, specific to Montessori, we will have the option of having snacks in the classroom that are prepared by students as part of their community building and practical life activities.

Q14 – Will foreign languages be offered and if so, what might they be?

The proposed curriculum includes foreign languages within the daily enrichment blocks. The specific languages being looked at are Spanish and French as these can be continued on as students transition to Pullman High School. Our goal is for students to matriculate to Pullman High School with a year of high school foreign language completed.

Q15 – Will music be offered?

The Montessori curriculum includes music within the daily enrichment blocks. The specific activities will depend on available teachers and interest.