

## Head of School

Ronald Knox Montessori  
Wilmette, IL

Start Date: Summer 2025



Ronald Knox Montessori School (RKMS) is seeking a qualified candidate for its Head of School position beginning in the summer of 2025.

Adjacent to a beautiful, peaceful, 14-acre public park in the heart of Wilmette, Illinois, RKMS serves 130 students in six classrooms: Parent-Infant through Kindergarten. The split-level building houses well-equipped Montessori environments, a multipurpose room and meeting and work spaces for adults. Natural light flows into all the classrooms.

A tenured, passionate, and highly trained staff of Montessori educators serve the children of RKMS with credentialed Montessori educators in each of the environments and a strong administrative team includes admissions, accounting, and IT provides support. The school is supported by an invested, caring, not-for-profit board, and an operating budget of \$1.5 million with healthy reserves. Tuition revenues support the operations of the school. The school owns the building, maintaining a low-interest loan for past building expansion and enhancements.

The school opened in 1963 when a group of parents saw the need for a Montessori program on the North Shore of Chicago. The Sisters of Christian Charity graciously donated space, and several of the Sisters have served as faculty and members of the Board in past years. The school is operated as a non-sectarian school and, from the very beginning, it has followed an authentic Montessori philosophy. With properly

trained educators and curriculum materials consistent with the Montessori principles, RKMS has a strong foundation for continued growth and appeal to the Wilmette community.

RKMS' commitment to quality education is evidenced in its excellent reputation and its adherence to school accreditation standards set by the American Montessori Society (AMS).

RKMS is also affiliated with the Illinois Coalition of Non-public Schools and a member of the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS). RKMS has remained true to its vision of providing a school culture where the development of the whole child matters, and where children cultivate independent thinking and a true love of learning.

### **Wilmette**

Wilmette, with a population of over 30,000, is surrounded by trees and Lake Michigan. Wilmette is located north of Chicago's downtown. In this affluent suburb, the community is served by many cultural and recreational activities. The Bahá'í House of Worship for North America makes its home in Wilmette, which is considered one of the Seven Wonders of Illinois. In the area, numerous homes were built by the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Wright's contemporaries in the field of Prairie School architecture.

### **Vision and Mission**

Vision: RKMS is committed to following the Montessori philosophy to create a nurturing, stimulating environment that promotes concentration, coordination, a sense of order, independence, grace and courtesy, and the life skills needed for each child to reach their full potential. Parents, faculty, and administrators form a community to foster a lifelong love of learning in our children and to promote respect for self, others, and the world around them.

Mission: *Inspiring our children to be leaders, innovators and stewards of our world.*



For more information about RKMS, visit the school's [website](#).

“RKMS is a flagship Montessori school [on the North Shore]...” (RKMS Board and parents)

## Head of School Profile

### *Montessori Leader \* Community Builder\* Communicator \* Strategic Thinker*

The next Head of School (HOS) will be joining an established, successful, 61-year-old Montessori school with an exciting outlook for the future. They must be skilled at building trust and relationships in order to cultivate a strong and respected voice in Montessori pedagogy, school leadership, and recognition in the greater Wilmette community. A commitment to high quality, early childhood, Montessori education, building on the legacy and accomplishments of the school to date and honoring the dedication of the board, faculty and parents is essential for the new HOS.

The ideal candidate is an experienced Montessori educator who is well-versed in the oversight and accountability of running a Montessori school. RKMS' new HOS must be a strategic thinker who can communicate a clear vision for the school in partnership with the Board, execute the steps to get there, and effectively obtain support and buy-in from the faculty and community to join in that vision. A HOS who is knowledgeable and implements best practices in Montessori supported by contemporary education is important.

Personality traits that will serve the new HOS well include: passionate, compassion, articulate, integrity, supportive, transparent, present, communicator, welcoming, trustworthy, a mentor, a guide, embody grace and courtesy, firm, a decision maker, and organized.

“Our school is a gem, true to the principles and authenticity of Montessori...”  
(RKMS Faculty)

The profile below indicates traits, skills, roles, and responsibilities that would align with success for the next HOS at RKMS.

#### **A Montessori Leader, dedicated to**

- Championing early childhood Montessori education
- Demonstrating leadership, experience, and expertise in Montessori principles and pedagogy.
- Overseeing the shaping of the school's academic program and the quality of life of the school community.
- Managing faculty and staff including attracting, recruiting, hiring, developing, and managing qualified faculty and staff, including training of new faculty.
- Ensuring the school's compliance with the AMS school accreditation standards.
- Supporting the integration of children exhibiting neuro diverse behaviors and learning challenges.
- Delivering high-quality professional development for teaching faculty and parent education.



- Ensuring that every element of school life reflects the principles of equity, justice, and dignity of every individual in the RKMS community.
- Ensuring the school's compliance with all regulatory requirements .
- Modeling Montessori philosophy and values through words, actions, and behavior; placing the child first.

“The faculty is the heart of the school...” (RKMS Board and Parents)

#### **A Community Builder, gifted at**

- Observing and honoring the history and “family” culture of RKMS, and moving respectfully into the future.
- Building rapport, cultivating and managing stakeholders’ relationships and expectations while staying true to the mission and vision of RKMS.
- Being a “people person” – approachable, a great listener, empathetic, validating individuals’ opinions.
- Representing and embracing all stakeholders, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusivity.
- Highly engaging, present and visible in the school community.
- Ensuring that the school is a good neighbor .
- Partnering with the external community; expanding the reach of the school to the greater Wilmette community; increasing resources for the school .
- Providing leadership for marketing RKMS’ value within the greater Wilmette community.

“Enjoy coming to work... we all get along and support one another...” (RKMS Teacher Assistants)



#### **An Engaging Communicator, skilled at**

- Excelling at expressive and receptive communication.
- Being the face of RKMS and Montessori tenets and principles.
- Communicating effectively and inspirationally the value of Montessori education to all stakeholders and potential parents and employees.

- Interacting with a high degree of emotional intelligence: compassionately, and diplomatically, while providing clear expectations and transparency, with oversight and accountability.
- Ensuring relevant communications with the Board, faculty and parents with effective feedback mechanisms.
- Providing leadership for accessible and engaging parent education .
- Helping parents make a conscious choice about RKMS and a Montessori education.
- Communicating clearly the roles and responsibilities of the teaching faculty.
- A receptiveness to stakeholders’ diverse ideas and opinions while firmly supporting Montessori philosophy and pedagogy; demonstrated ability in conflict resolution.

“We welcome new parents [into our school family].” (RKMS Parents and Board)

### **Strategic Thinker, skilled at**

- Developing, in partnership with the Board, strategic planning with a focus on student retention (targeting third year primary students), community building, faculty professional development, financial sustainability, succession planning, capital improvement, public relations, and marketing for the community.
- Clearly articulating the mission and vision of RKMS.
- Seeing the big picture of RKMS, and delivering program implementation of best practices in Montessori education and school operations.
- Embracing the scope of work of a not-for-profit school governed by a Board of Trustees.
- Establishing an effective manner of leadership and appropriately involving the Board, administration and faculty in decision making.
- Learning about education trends that impact or influence the implementation of Montessori.
- Possessing best practices in business management to lead, execute, and hold accountable all aspects of the school’s operations.



“We work for the whole school [not just our own classrooms]...” (RKMS Teacher Assistants)

The HOS is responsible, in partnership with the Board, for the execution of the mission and strategic goals of RKMS to produce the highest level of education consistent with the accreditation standards set forth by the AMS. The new HOS must possess expertise and experience in Montessori education, board governance, and the business acumen to lead, and execute all aspects of the school operation.

The HOS is under the direct supervision of the RKMS Board, which is responsible for the HOS hiring and annual evaluation.

RKMS is looking for an excellent new leader to be in place for the start of the 2025 school year.

### Position Requirements

- Montessori teaching credential strongly preferred; Montessori Administrator credential strongly preferred
- Administrative experience in an educational setting; at least five years' experience in administration in a Montessori school preferred
- Previous classroom experience in Montessori preferred
- A Bachelor's degree is required; advanced degrees in a related field preferably with a Montessori focus
- Experience with regulatory, personnel, budget, and fiscal management required
- Experience working with a governing Board strongly preferred
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, financial management and organizational development preferred
- Meeting all requirements of local, state and accrediting/regulatory bodies; including the [Head of School requirements](#) of an American Montessori Society (AMS) accredited school

**Benefits include:** health insurance (health, dental, vision, and life insurance, as well long- and short-term disability; paid professional development; tuition discounts; paid time off; and 403(b) retirement with matching contribution.

Interested candidates will submit the following documents, via email to [Carla Hofland](#), Consultant, [Metro Consulting Services](#).

1. Cover letter addressed to the Search Committee expressing interest in and detailing qualifications for the position
2. A current resume
3. A statement of educational leadership philosophy (1-pages)
4. Two examples of writing on a school or educational topic (can be school newsletter/communications)
5. Five references (including email addresses and telephone numbers) that can be contacted confidentially)
6. Other documents/media may be required later in the process



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Candidates' engagement with the search will be kept confidential until the final stage of the process. Candidates are free to communicate directly with Carla Hofland via [email](#) or phone (301) 230-0901 regarding the search process.

Note that the search will continue until a qualified candidate has been hired. Please submit a letter of interest or application by **September 16, 2024**.