

## Head of School

### Stepping Stones Montessori School Grand Rapids, Michigan

Start Date: Summer 2024



Stepping Stones Montessori School is seeking a qualified candidate for its Head of School (HOS) position beginning in the summer of 2024.

Stepping Stones Montessori School was founded in 1983 by a dedicated group of parents and Montessori educators who recognized the benefits that a sound, individualized, and continuous Montessori program can offer a child. Today, as the oldest secular, private Montessori school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Stepping Stones continues to provide an outstanding authentic, Montessori education.

Stepping Stones provides Montessori education on two campuses. Program offerings include Toddler through Middle School for approximately 200 children and youth. The early childhood and elementary programs are situated on a lovely, wooded, expansive property near downtown Grand Rapids. Playgrounds, wooded trails, and parking provide outdoor spaces for children and adults. The main campus houses 9 classrooms in two adjacent buildings: 1 Toddler, 5 Children's House, 2 Lower Elementary classrooms, and 1 Upper Elementary classroom. The Middle School is in nearby Ada, about 20 minutes away, on a scenic, rural property, overlooking the Grand River.

Stepping Stones is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, supported by a professional board, with an operating budget of over three million dollars. Tuition revenues support the operations of the school. Annual giving, a gala, and other fundraising events are used for additional enhancements. The Board is proud of its recent efforts to provide equitable salaries and benefits for faculty. Stepping Stones is a member of the American Montessori Society.

## Grand Rapids

The City of Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the state of Michigan. The city is located in west central Michigan, roughly 30 miles east of Lake Michigan. The Grand River, a major state waterway, runs through the city's center. With a population of approximately 200,000, and 1 million in the greater Grand Rapids area, the city is a vibrant, welcoming community that is home to a mix of arts and culture, restaurants, shopping and outdoor activities. An expansive medical center and numerous universities support the unique culture of the city. Four seasons of activities support hiking, biking and skiing within easy drive of Grand Rapids. For sports enthusiasts, minor league sports teams include hockey, baseball, basketball, and women's volleyball.

## Mission

Stepping Stones Montessori School exists to nurture global citizens and guide each child to reach their unique potential.

## Values

Our core values of the school are:

- Established in partnership
- Rooted in Montessori
- Focused on the child

For more information about Stepping Stones Montessori School, visit the school's [website](#).

*“Walk in and feel the magic...” (Parent)*



## Head of School Profile

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

Stepping Stones Montessori welcomes the next Head of School who will join an established, successful, 40-year-old Montessori school with an exciting vision for future growth and expansion. They must be skilled at building trust and cultivating relationships to establish themselves as a trusted leader and voice in the school community. A commitment to continuation of the school's values is key, built on the dedication and loyalty of the school community. The person chosen must learn about the strong foundation of Stepping Stones and then vision further sustainability and growth. All planning must be based on the four pillars of the strategic plan:

- diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- financial stability;
- marketing and parent education; and
- thoughtful professional development and meaningful careers.

The ideal candidate is an experienced Montessori school leader who is versed in the business aspects of running a school. The ability to balance the oversight of authentic Montessori education with school operations is essential and embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion. The art of delegation with an experienced administrative staff will be an asset for this new school leader.

Stepping Stones' new HOS must be a strategic visionary who can communicate and implement the strategic plan in partnership with a professional, invested, and supportive Board. The HOS will effectively develop engagement with the community to join in that vision.

Personality traits that will serve the new Head of School will include great listening skills, compassion, openness, passion and enthusiasm, curiosity, calm and intentional demeanor, receptiveness, integrity, flexibility, humility, innovator, perseverance, and honesty.

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

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

- Championing Montessori education:  
Demonstrating leadership and commitment to the delivery of authentic Montessori education
- Engaging, as a servant leader, to support curriculum implementation through Program Level Leads and faculty
- Naturally putting children first
- Showing appreciation for the committed and loyal faculty and staff
- Commitment to providing high-quality professional development



- Provide leadership for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) goals and implementation
- Supporting the integration of students with neuro-diverse learning
- Modeling a deep understanding of Montessori philosophy and values through words, actions, and behavior

*“We lead with Montessori and students first...” (Administrator)*

### **Strategic Visionary, skilled at**

- Developing, in partnership with the Board, the implementation of the strategic plan with a focus on authentic Montessori education, program growth, diversity, inclusion and equity, facility improvements, fund development, and community building
- Clearly articulating the mission and core beliefs of Stepping Stones
- Oversight of the big picture of Stepping Stones, and delivery of authentic Montessori education and school operations
- Embracing the scope of work of a not-for-profit school governed by a Board of Trustees
- Expertise in the complexities of running a school, change management and systems thinking
- Commitment to shared leadership and delegation with an experienced administrative staff and faculty
- Possessing the business acumen to lead and to provide oversight for all aspects of the school operation



*“People are empowered [at Stepping Stones]for innovation and collaboration [to occur] ... ”*  
(Lead Guide)

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

- Being a “people person”—accessible and open. Parents, faculty, and administrators expect active listening skills from the new HOS; fostering trust, transparency, and integrity
- Keen ability to embrace the uniqueness of the Stepping Stones culture—common values, caring and nurturing
- Empowering and supporting employees—Recognizing the talents of the administrative team, and faculty/staff, allowing them to work autonomously while maintaining the mission
- Cultivate community to bring families together
- Consensus builder
- Representing all constituents, enthusiastically fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusivity, strengthening a culture of acceptance
- Highly engaged and visible in the school community
- Advocating for Stepping Stones and Montessori education in the Grand Rapids community

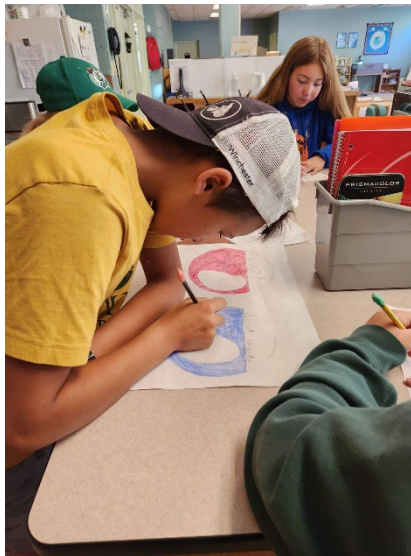
**An Engaging Communicator, skilled at**

- Interacting with a high degree of emotional intelligence: empathetically, compassionately, nurturing, while providing clear expectations and decision making
- Excellent expressive and receptive communication
- Honor voices from all constituents – Open communication, transparency, and consensus building
- A receptiveness to constituents’ divergent views while firmly supporting Montessori philosophy and pedagogy; demonstrated ability in mediation and conflict resolution

*“Everyone is heard and lifted up [at Stepping Stones].” (Parent)*

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

Stepping Stones is looking for an excellent new leader to be in place for the start of the 2024 school year.



**Position Requirements**

- Montessori credential preferred
- Administrative experience in an educational setting; five years’ experience in administration in a Montessori school preferred
- A Bachelor’s degree is required; advanced degrees in a related field preferred
- Experience with regulatory, personnel, budget, and fiscal management preferred
- Experience working with a governing board preferred

Benefits include health insurance; 401(k) retirement; tuition discounts; vacation, sick, personal, and professional days. Vision, dental, long- and short-term disability are also included.



*“This is a beautiful place, we care greatly for each other, we lean on each other...”  
(Assistant Guide)*

Interested candidates must 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 (1-2 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

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.

Application Date: August 15, 2023.

Note that the search will continue until a qualified candidate has been hired.