Southern Montessori School
~ 2017 School Improvement Plan ~

Contextual Information
Located at O’Sullivan Beach, South Australia, Southern Montessori Education Centre aims to provide challenging educational programs that have Montessori principles at their core and are based on sound educational theory and practice delivered through small, multi-aged classes.

Our policies, procedures and practices are underpinned by Montessori philosophy and based on a deep understanding of child development and how children learn. The Montessori approach recognises the potential and uniqueness of children and their immense capacity to learn when provided with a carefully prepared environment, specifically developed materials and curriculum, and highly skilled, caring and observant teachers. Our educators implement the Montessori National Curriculum and the Australian National Curriculum. The Montessori National Curriculum has been recognised by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as an alternative curriculum framework.

The Montessori approach is unique and is based on Dr Maria Montessori’s observations of child development and her discovery that the needs and characteristics of children at various stages of their development are the keys to establishing learning environments that promote children’s natural curiosity and love of learning.

Under the guidance of our professionally trained, dedicated teaching team, children explore, discover, and use their imagination and creativity to build their knowledge and understanding of the world.

In 2017 our student enrolment in Years R-9 is 188, while our Preschool, Toddlers and Baby Steps Programs cater for another 68 children.

Self- Assessment Process
The Strategic Improvement Goals listed below are largely derived from the school’s Statement of Strategic Direction 2014-2018.

Goal 1 relates to Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.
Goal 2 to connections with the school and wider community.
Goal 3 relates to ICT learning outcomes for students.
Goal 4 relates to becoming a Birth – Year 12 school.
Goal 5 relates to the establishment of a Master Plan for the school.

Reporting against this Plan to parents and the wider community is undertaken through a range of media including community publications as well as our annual performance report. As a dynamic plan, there may be times when the overarching strategies are adapted in response to emerging issues or new strategic directions.

Ongoing surveys of parents, students and staff will continue to inform this Plan and see it evolve.

Strategic Improvement Goals and foci (references to Strategic Plan goals in brackets)
Catering for each student and providing learning opportunities that allow them to thrive requires a differentiated curriculum and pedagogy. We will enhance our practice through ongoing commitment to Montessori learning and through rigorous dialogue leading to action. This includes focus on intentional teaching, high expectations, student engagement, use of observation and data. Filming, reviewing and analysing our own teaching and focussed collegial observation will form part of this process. (Goals 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

We value parents as partners and will continue to explore how we can better engage and involve parents in their child’s education and the school community. This will include opportunities for learning about Montessori practice (Montessori Moment, Induction of new families, targeted Information Evenings, various school communiques), improving communication through the use of the School Star app, and updating school documentation and increasing accessibility (Goal 1.3)

Evidence is strong around the power of student voice and the associated positive outcomes. This is already a strong feature of Montessori practice in our school, however we are eager to creatively
explore options. In addition to Children’s Representative Council (inc Middle School rep, Class Meetings, Better Buddies, Leadership Programs and Environmental Council, we will engage students in conversation about what else might be possible. This relates closely to student engagement and use of observation and data appearing in the first goal above. (Goal 1.4)

Communication within our community will be enhanced through our new website and through the use of School Star. Parents will experience higher levels of awareness in relation to all facets of school life. Through community engagement we will strive to create more opportunities for students, especially with respect to Middle School Occupations. We also seek to broaden and strengthen relationships with community groups and businesses. (Goals 3.3, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4)

We are committed to improving our practice in relation to sustainability; recycling, reducing pollution, nutrition/nude food to name a few. Modelling by staff and student leaders will be important as we walk the talk. There is a great deal of ‘cross-over’ into personal and collective responsibility, including the use and care of all environments, materials and equipment etc. More energy and communication with parents. (goal 1.4)

We will remain very active in realising the dream of a more permanent Middle School. At the time of producing this Improvement Plan we have several enquiries that are current and we are hopeful that at least one will bear fruits. (Goal 4.4)

Science, technology and maths are taught as part of the Montessori curriculum. STEM complements our integrated, hands-on, collaborative and inquiry based approach. Therefore, we will explore STEM initiatives and identify opportunities to enhance a STEM approach within our Montessori practice. (Goals 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3)

Staff will review our ICT vision early in 2017 and connect with the Australian Curriculum Digital Technologies. They will critically explore how students can use ICTs to develop skills to assess the credibility of sources and solve complex problems by utilising the appropriate research tools. (Goal 3.2)

**Review Process**

Our Improvement Plan will be scheduled in to Staff Meetings for frequent review. At the start of the year staff will collaboratively create some SMART goals for each of the stated Goals. Staff will be given responsibilities where appropriate in relation to the execution of the strategies and discuss options for obtaining performance data.