



Montessori Borealis Adolescent Program

A Juneau School District Optional Program

Referral Information for the Montessori Borealis Adolescent Program

The Juneau School District Adolescent Montessori program (AMP) includes grades 7 and 8 and is open to students throughout the Juneau School District. No tuition is charged. The program is located at Marie Drake, and school bus transportation is provided throughout the Juneau area.

In many ways, the Montessori adolescent program approaches teaching and learning in a way that differs from the traditional middle school model. This approach works well for students with diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs. We encourage you to bring the Montessori Adolescent program to the attention of parents who may not search it out on their own.

Enrollment is coordinated through the Assistant Superintendent's office, with spaces filled by lottery. Students who are low income, low achieving, special education, or English language learners receive preferences in the lottery to help assure that the AMP classrooms reflect the diversity in other District middle schools. Special Education, English Language, and other educational services are provided to qualifying students in a manner consistent with other Juneau District schools.

Note that, by school board policy, students referred to Montessori or another alternative program by a school principal are counted as if they attended their boundary area school in the year for which the referral is made (next fall, in most cases). This means that students can be referred to an optional program without concern that this referral could result in the loss of a teacher for their neighborhood school.

When thinking about which students could benefit from the Montessori program, you may want to keep the following in mind.

Who Might Benefit from Being in the Adolescent Montessori Program?	Why Would This Student Benefit?
A child who feels overwhelmed or insecure in a large middle school environment or who has difficulties in rotating among different classrooms during the day	The Montessori Adolescent Program is a small program (approx 33 students) where the students remain together (or in smaller groups) throughout the day. The program has two adjoining classrooms in which core classes are taught and where students eat lunch and share in classroom community-based activities.

Who Might Benefit from Being in the Adolescent Montessori Program?	Why Would This Student Benefit?
<p>A student who has difficulty adapting to new classrooms and teachers each year, or who could otherwise benefit from a stable classroom environment.</p>	<p>The Adolescent program is a two year program (grades 7-8) and students remain with the same teachers and many of the same students each year. This allows time for students and teachers to get to know one another well and build on individual student strengths over a 2-year period</p>
<p>A student who is uncertain about their writing skills, or uncomfortable expressing themselves in writing.</p>	<p>Writing is considered an important skill in the AMP program, and support is provided to students to improve their writing skills in all content areas. AMP students use writing in a number of ways - including writing essays, poems, skits, short stories, and reports.</p>
<p>A student who enjoys writing, and would like an opportunity to explore a variety of writing experiences.</p>	<p>Students are provided with essay guides to help them through the process of creating multiple drafts, and receive support to help them revise their work.</p>
<p>A student who tends to progress faster or more slowly than his or her peers when learning math</p>	<p>Students are ability-grouped for math, but within those groups are provided the opportunity to work at a pace which allows them to be successful. The teacher provides help and support for the student as they work their way through the materials. AMP uses the same textbooks for math as are used at Floyd Dryden and DZ.</p>
<p>A student who feels reticent about expressing his or her opinions in a group setting</p>	<p>Literature and other topics are discussed in a small group format, with all students provided with encouragement to share their thoughts and ideas. Students feel secure enough in this environment to risk being different and to consider unfamiliar points of view. Daily and weekly class meetings are held that stress each individual's contribution to the AMP community.</p>
<p>A student who likes to deeply focus on one topic at a time</p>	<p>Science and social studies in the adolescent program are taught in intensive multi-week blocks. Students have the opportunity to devote their attention to the in-depth learning of a particular subject before moving onto the next.</p>

Who Might Benefit from Being in the Adolescent Montessori Program?	Why Would This Student Benefit?
<p>A student who could benefit from an opportunity to spend time with and mentor younger children</p>	<p>Some students, who may be insecure among people their own age, really blossom when asked to help mentor younger children. AMP students periodically have an opportunity to develop leadership skills through reading with younger Montessori students, coaching Battle of the Books teams, or making presentations to elementary classes. This interaction can be equally beneficial to both the older and the younger students.</p>
<p>Students who want to be able to spend more time outdoors or connected to the place in which we live.</p>	<p>AMP students are outside several times a week. In addition to a twice-a-week recess and weekly walk in the neighborhood, students go outside as much as possible in conjunction with their science subjects and spend time in community service projects, such as gardening or beach cleaning.</p>
<p>A student who is interested in the arts or music</p>	<p>AMP students select a different "creative expressions" class each quarter. These classes vary over time, and have included introductory orchestra, Mariachi band, photography, pottery, mosaics, computer mapping, and salsa dance.</p>
<p>A student who needs extra help and support in completing their homework</p>	<p>An after-school "homework club" is available four days a week. This is supervised by a teacher, and provides an opportunity for a student to get some extra help or time on the school computers. The bus schedule allows students to attend homework club before riding the bus home.</p>
<p>A student who splits their time between two different households, and would benefit from district-provided transportation to school from each household</p>	<p>School bus transportation is available to the Montessori program from every neighborhood in Juneau.</p>