



MORE ROOM TO EXPLORE CASE FOR SUPPORT

Wheaton Montessori School's Capital Campaign 2026–2028



Discover. Grow. Thrive.

*Together.*SM

MORE ROOM TO EXPLORE CASE FOR SUPPORT

The case to raise \$550K to improve one acre of school-owned land for student use and exploration while also conserving the Wetlands

Executive Summary

Wheaton Montessori School is a private school in Chicago's western suburbs that provides authentic, accredited Montessori education to children in pre-school through 9th grade.

For more than 25 years, Wheaton Montessori School has served families well by fulfilling our mission. We are committed to our **mission** which is providing an authentic Montessori education that focuses on each student's needs, enabling them to discover, grow, and thrive in their unique potential. Our methods are grounded in authentic Montessori principles that continue to be proven and backed by scientific research on human development. We exceed the international standards of the Association Montessori International (AMI).

Our **vision** is to cultivate independent, confident, and empathetic children who are equipped to handle real-life challenges, while making a positive impact on the world.

Wheaton Montessori School is Illinois' only internationally accredited Montessori school for preschool through freshman year of high school - where we discover, grow, and thrive together.

Integral to authentic Montessori education is the principle of exploration. When students have time and space to explore, they make discoveries that spark further curiosity. Our teachers then support that curiosity as students dive deeper into their chosen topics of interest. This currently happens every day in Wheaton Montessori School classrooms.

This capital campaign seeks to give students even more room to explore by expanding their access to high-quality outdoor experiences. Wheaton Montessori School owns approximately one acre of land ("the Wetlands") behind our buildings, which is currently overgrown and largely inaccessible. Wheaton Montessori School is seeking donor assistance to open this land up for student use.

We hope you will join us as we create MORE ROOM TO EXPLORE CASE FOR SUPPORT.



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Capital Campaign Prospectus for Wheaton Montessori School

About Wheaton Montessori School

Wheaton Montessori School was founded in 2000 by sisters Elizabeth Berdick and Rebecca Lingo and their families. Since then, the Berdick and Lingo families and their expert teachers and staff have dedicated their careers to providing authentic Montessori education to families with children ages 2 ½ to 15 years old. Wheaton Montessori School has a proven track record of commitment to its core values:

- **Nurture** – nurture each student’s innate drive to learn by providing environments that cater to children’s developmental needs in a loving community.
- **Collaborate** – provide space where children of different ages can peacefully work together and partner with parents to extend this rapport at home.
- **Trust** – create an environment that cultivates students’ attitudes and behaviors, effectively preparing them for their future roles in society.
- **Personalize** – celebrate children’s individuality, guiding them to learn at their own challenging pace as they discover how they can positively impact our society and the world.
- **Respect & Include** – emphasize grace in all interactions. We honor unique differences and recognize commonalities of our shared human experiences in accordance with Dr. Montessori’s education for peace philosophy.



Campus Expansion

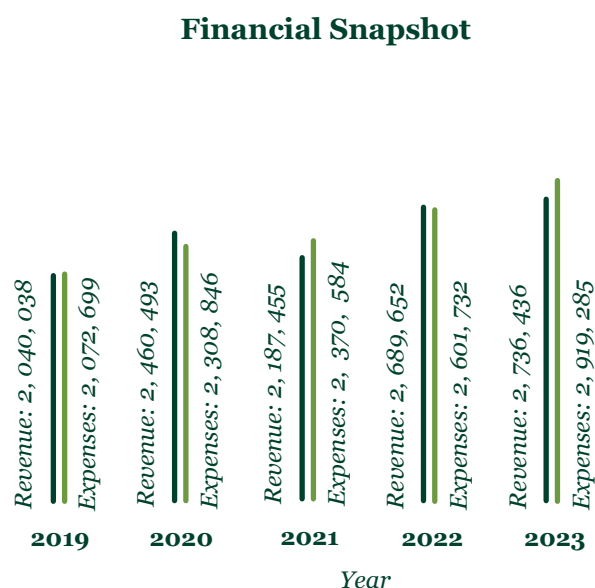
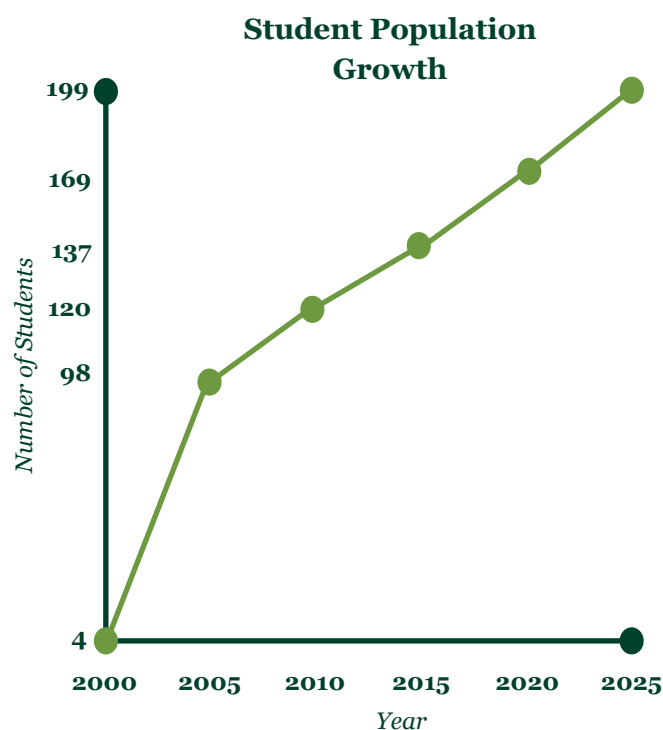


A History of Thoughtful Growth and Strong Financial Planning

Wheaton Montessori School has grown steadily over the past quarter-century. At our founding in 2000, Wheaton Montessori School had just one Primary classroom (for ages 2 ½ through kindergarten). As demand for authentic Montessori preschool grew, and our families wanted their children to remain at Wheaton Montessori School for higher and higher grade levels, we carefully planned for growth. Today, we have four Primary classrooms, two Lower Elementary classrooms (1st–3rd grade), an Upper Elementary classroom (4th–6th grade), and an Adolescent Community (7th–9th grade).

Wheaton Montessori School is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Student tuition makes up the vast majority of the school's operating budget, supplemented by generous donations typically given through our two main fundraising events: a silent auction in the spring, and an end-of-year appeal letter to families and stakeholders. Diligent financial management has enabled Wheaton Montessori School to provide authentic Montessori education to families while also prioritizing teacher retention with competitive compensation packages, and minimizing tuition increases whenever possible so that Wheaton Montessori School remains accessible to a diverse group of families.

In FY 2024, Wheaton Montessori School's annual operating budget was approximately \$2.9M.



Note: 2024 audit in progress, tax extension filed



In a Complex World, a Project to Increase Room for Inspiration

Increasing student access to outdoor space for exploration has its roots (pun intended) in late 2019, when Wheaton Montessori School acquired the parcel of land directly behind our school buildings from the Muehlfelt family, a neighboring landowner. A joyful vision of students exploring the Wetlands started to take shape. As you can imagine, world events intervened shortly thereafter. Starting in 2020, Wheaton Montessori School teachers and staff were fully engaged alongside families in the task of supporting students at school through the COVID-19 pandemic. As we all emerged from that difficult period, Wheaton Montessori School started to envision steps into the future.

These steps include opening up the Wetlands for better student use and engaging our community in a more robust conversation about fundraising.

Raising \$550K will enable Wheaton Montessori School to maintain and even expand the ecologically important wetland areas behind the school, and to give students of all ages opportunities for a wider range of outdoor activities. Imagine:

- **A Primary student** interacting with nature and engaging in hands-on, experiential learning, with an emphasis on ecology, biology, and history;
- **An Elementary student** connecting the “big trips” to learning rooted here at home, reinforcing that education, responsibility, and conservation are vital not only for distant and exotic biomes, but also for our own backyard;
- **An Adolescent student** experiencing land-based learning, emphasizing care of animals, stewardship, and place-based education.

For the entire Wheaton Montessori School student population, this project will promote meaningful daily experiences. We will also be providing beneficial conditions for animals, plants, and water on our campus and in the interconnected world beyond.

We hope you are excited about this campaign to create MORE ROOM TO EXPLORE CASE FOR SUPPORT.

On the following pages, you will find drawings that show what we have been planning with the assistance of a professional landscape design firm and a volunteer parent committee. Please consider how your donation can have an impact both on the daily experiences of current and future students, and on local conservation, which further affects our wider community. We have designated areas of the restored land that can receive named dedications, so your legacy at Wheaton Montessori School can live on for years to come.

- Existing fence to remain
- New privacy fence
- New split rail fence
- New chain link fence
- Existing railing to remain
- Access point - maintain
- Access point - new
- Existing wetland limits
- Proposed wetland limits

- (A) Cut: 5,800 SF (0.13 acre) of new wetland
- (B) Fill: 5,800 SF (0.13 acre) of existing wetland area adjacent to existing playground
- (C) Remove existing chain link fence, inactive overhead electric lines, & retaining wall up to north edge of new fence
- (D) Unstructured play elements: Large logs, stumps, boulders, curriculum objects
- (E) Tree drum council rings / outdoor classrooms (2)
- (F) Relocate existing play components: Monkey bars
- (G) Relocate existing play components: Gaga ball
- (H) Relocate existing picnic tables
- (I) New chicken coop & supply shed
- (J) Relocated raised gardens



Proposed Site Plan



Perspective Rendering

Springtime perspective rendering from
 southwest corner of the new parcels looking
 back towards the new playground expansion
 and restored wetland exploration zones.

March 30, 2026



A Few Final Words...

As we embark on this capital campaign, Wheaton Montessori School is taking the opportunity to deepen our conversation with families and stakeholders about philanthropic support. What challenges are you most passionate about addressing?

- Teacher training, professional development, and competitive compensation
- Need-based scholarships for families
- Montessori “Going Out” experiences and off-campus learning trips
- Strengthening programs that enrich hands-on, authentic Montessori education

As costs of living and doing business—even the joyful business of providing authentic Montessori education—have gone up post-pandemic, Wheaton Montessori School appreciates your thoughtfulness about how you can help. We look forward to partnering with you.

For additional information please contact:

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