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January 23, 2013

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in full support of the endeavors of the Fairbanks Montessori School (FMS) in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Our son PJ attended FMS for a year and a half, as well as one summer session. Our daughter Estelle is attending FMS now, after having enrolled this past summer.

FMS has offered PJ and Estelle a rich learning environment and encouraged them to be independent, capable learners. I happily recall many a dinner-time conversation where we found out what each child did at school that day and many a time when a song or a rhyme from school "slipped out," becoming a piece of the family. (I now know a great song that helps one to remember all the planets in the solar system in the correct order!)

I have also had the opportunity to be a substitute teacher at FMS. It is remarkable to watch the children choose their own work and engage with it and each other in meaningful ways throughout the day. Further, having traveled to 28 countries, I am delighted that FMS teaches children not only about "their world," but about the rest of the world. Geography is a significant component of the curriculum.

The renovations FMS seeks to complete will benefit the children and staff as well as the families of those enrolled. A sprinkler system in case of fire; a redesigned entry allowing closer monitoring of those entering and exiting the school; an upgraded, safer parking lot; and a design providing more natural light are all worthy endeavors for such an important school to the community of Fairbanks.

Sincerely yours,


Carrie Wolf Bragonier

January 28. 2013

Dear Interior Delegation Representatives,

I am writing to ask for consideration of your support for legislative appropriation funds for Fairbanks Montessori School building improvements.

I am writing as both an alumna and current parent of a child attending Fairbanks Montessori School. As a life long Alaskan I believe we as a community have an obligation to our children to continue to support and work towards positive educational experiences. This begins with early childhood education. Fairbanks Montessori School is a non-profit childhood preschool and kindergarten in Fairbanks.

The funding being requested from the State of Alaska is for health and safety upgrades as a part of a building remodel. Funding for Fairbanks Montessori operation is 98% tuition funded. Fairbanks Montessori School has taught preschool, and kindergarten children since 1966 and has been in the current building since 1985, approximately 27 years. The funding currently requested as part of the grant project would be used for addition of a sprinkler system to the building, and a remodel of the entryway to improve security and parking.

There are three major areas of concern with our 27 year old school at this time: In this sad day and age of increased security needs, there is no clear line of sight for staff to visualize egress and ingress of persons. Second, the school requires overhead fire suppressive sprinklers to comply with current fire safety guidelines. Finally, the parking lot is an open space just off a major thoroughfare, without any traffic flow or planned routing. As a result, children are walking through a multidirectional traffic flow, which we have found to be extremely unsafe.

I ask for your consideration and support of the current funding proposal to improve school safety, and security for my child, and for the thousands of others over the coming decades that will benefit from early childhood education.

Sincerely,

Laura Brunner MD

Letter of Support for State Funding for Building Renovations to Fairbanks Montessori School | 2013

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I am writing today in support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money.

Fairbanks Montessori School (FMS) has been providing quality preschool education and family support in Fairbanks since it was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1966. The school has continued to operate uninterrupted for the past 45 years as a result of the dedication of many families over the decades and a testimony to the need for such a service in the Tanana Valley.


Currently, FMS, a State of Alaska licensed child care center, has a capacity of 80 students between the ages of three and six. Because some of these children attend half-days, the school serves about 100 families at any given time. Enrollment is non-selective and on a first-come, first-served basis. FMS is dedicated to providing children with a joyful environment that allows them to flourish academically, emotionally and socially.

FMS has held classes in many locations over the years and eventually purchased a piece of land on 30th Avenue and built their current home. The current project includes several important improvements with safety ramifications, such as the addition of a sprinkler system, upgrading the parking lot and an entry/office area which will make monitoring people entering and exiting the building possible for the office personnel.

As I searched for a school to enroll my children in we were relieved to find the wonderful structure offered at FMS. **We have enrolled both our children at FMS and they have flourished, doing exceptional in schools they move on to attend.** FMS has a remarkable standard of education and care giving and with these improvements they will provide an adequate learning environment for years to come.

I hope you will consider supporting this worthy institution with the requested grant.

Sincerely,



Johanna Herron
(Parent of FMS students)

1/23/13

December 14, 2012

Dear STATE LEGISLATOR:

I'm writing to ask for your support for state funding to help Fairbanks Montessori undertake some badly needed renovation. I have been teaching English at the University of Alaska Fairbanks since 1986, and my wife, Alexandra Fitts, has been a Spanish professor there since 1995. My daughter, currently in 6th grade at Pearl Creek Elementary, attended Fairbanks Montessori from ages three to six, and we are extremely grateful for the caring and supportive education she received in those crucial years.

Quality preschool in Fairbanks is at a premium. (Our daughter started out at Play-and-Learn West, which subsequently shut down and remains closed, as you may know.) Fairbanks Montessori provides a vital service to our community by nurturing about 150 children a year, in the process employing more than twenty people, and paying for 98% of it directly through tuition.

The current building has been in use since 1985, and not surprisingly now badly needs renovation and modernization. These changes will improve security for the children, as well as saving energy, enhancing the classroom experience, reducing operating costs, and extending the life of the structure.

I believe that legislative support of Fairbanks Montessori is an excellent use of state money, and urge you to consider this opportunity along with the many other worthy requests in the Fairbanks community. Fairbanks Montessori has become a venerable institution—we know families who have attended for two generations—and this badly needed renovation is a perfect time for the state of Alaska to leverage public resources on behalf of the quality of life in Fairbanks.

Sincerely,



Eric Heyne
1324 Summit Dr.
Fairbanks, AK 99712
907-457-3742

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing today in support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money.

Fairbanks Montessori School has been providing quality preschool education and family support in Fairbanks since it was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1966. The fact that it has continued to operate uninterrupted for the past 45 years is a result of the dedication of many families over the decades and a testimony to the need for such a service in the Tanana Valley.

Currently, FMS, a State of Alaska licensed child care center, has a capacity of 80 students between the ages of three and six. Because some of these children attend half-days, the school serves about 100 families at any given time. Enrollment is non-selective and on a first-come, first-served basis. FMS does not have any religious or political affiliation and is dedicated to providing children with a joyful environment that allows them to flourish academically, emotionally and socially.

FMS has held classes in many locations over the years; the basement of a Methodist Church, at Pioneer Park (then Alaskaland), a small building at the corner of Geist and University which was torn down when the Johansen Expressway was constructed. In anticipation of this event, FMS purchased a piece of land on 30th Avenue and built their current home. Minor enhancements to this building, including the addition of a small gym, have been made off and on since it opened in 1985. The current project includes several important improvements with safety ramifications, such as the addition of a sprinkler system, upgrading the parking lot and an entry/office area which will make monitoring people entering and exiting the building possible for the office personnel.

Fairbanks Montessori has been a stable institution in Fairbanks for many decades. With the improvements currently planned, it will be able to offer its services at an even higher level for many years to come. I hope you will consider supporting this worthy institution with the requested grant.

Sincerely,


Xiaodian Hulbert

Caixiaodian@hotmail.com

Lee Anne and Travis LaPointe
1048 Sirlin Drive
North Pole, AK 99705

January 23, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing today in support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money.

Our son is enrolled in the Fairbanks Montessori school year 2012-2013. Fairbanks Montessori is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that opened in 1966. It is 98% tuition supported with the other 2% coming from fundraising efforts and pull-tab revenues. The school also employs 22 Fairbanks residents, not including janitorial and accounting services.

We believe early childhood is important in the developing child and Fairbanks Montessori provides this important base. As parents we are extremely happy with the guidance and support, both academically and behaviorally that the school offers our child. He has made important peer connections that were guided by his well-trained teachers and has been given access to more academic "work" than he would at any other local preschools offered in our area. Our son, following Maria Montessori's principles has excelled this year.

The current building was built in 1985 and has been continuously occupied by FMS since that time. With over 150 students served over the last year the school runs efficiently. Yet, there is still work to be completed. There are safety concerns which include: adding a sprinkler system, upgrading the parking lot to minimize the risk of children becoming hit by vehicles, and of course rearranging the entry area to monitor the traffic of people coming and going. Also, future projects include improving the mental health of students and staff by adding more natural light and increasing student recruitment through curb appeal.

The Montessori Method is widely regarded as the best method for the development of young children. Because the 98% of income is tuition-based, FMS would like to lessen the burden on families to provide the necessary and very prevalent safety concerns listed above. FMS has rarely asked for money in the past and we hope you will consider supporting this worthy institution with the requested grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee LaPointe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Lee Anne and Travis LaPointe

January 24, 2013

I am writing this letter in support of the request of Fairbanks Montessori to secure State Funding for Phase III of their building renovations.

My son is currently in kindergarten at Fairbanks Montessori and has been in preschool there since becoming potty trained at the age of three and a half. I have continually been impressed by the quality of the teachers and their assistants, and my son has had a wonderful experience. He looks forward to going to school every day and at the end of the day tells me he had a lot of fun, although, as a child will do, he often complains that he had to do "challenging work" all day long.

As Judy Kleinfeld wrote in her January 25 Op-Ed in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner, "Attending a preschool increases a young child's IQ, especially if the preschool program emphasizes the development of language. . . . by more than 7 points." As she emphasized several times in her piece, interactivity is one of the prime considerations in development of IQ. This is the prime philosophy of the Montessori method. Similarly, as expressed by Meagan Holman, Milwaukee Board of School Directors, "Our evidence that the Montessori method if effective is clear, ranging from controlled studies of performance among MPS Montessori graduates to the current superior testing results of the students in our public Montessori schools as compared with the district as a whole." (Cite available upon request.) Innumerable such statements of the Montessori method can be found.

Fairbanks Montessori has recently undergone several renovations. Efficiency has been increased, and classrooms have been upgraded. Each has improved the ability of the school and instructors to help children learn.

I believe it is important to point out, in regard to your deliberations in considering State funding, that parents have volunteered their own time to accomplish the previous renovations. This is an organization supported by parents not merely through payment of tuition but also by volunteering their time and expertise.

I ask you please to provide funding for this excellent and very worthwhile school

Thank you



Consulting Economist

2068 Bridgewater Dr.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

January 7, 2013

Dear Senator Kelly:

I am writing today in support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money.

Fairbanks Montessori School has been serving the cognitive developmental and emotional needs of children three to six years of age since 1966. I have witnessed my grandchildren's growth positively influenced through their warm, caring and nurturing environment.

Fairbanks Montessori is committed to individualized education, allowing a child the freedom to develop at his or her own pace. Their environment provides a varying degree of challenge from which a child may, with guidance, choose work according to their level of development. They strive to provide a stimulating and safe environment in which children develop a love of learning, a high sense of self-esteem, and to acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning. At Fairbanks Montessori School education of children is a responsibility the school and parents share.

My responsibility as a grandmother is why I am writing this letter in support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money. Safety of the children is my primary concern. Currently the parking lot during pick-up and drop-off times can be quite dangerous as there are no curbs, parking spaces or directional traffic. The renovation plans address this issue and would greatly reduce the chances of a child getting accidentally hit by a car.

Another safety concern is monitoring who enters and leaves the facility. In 1966 this didn't seem to be a problem. In this day and age the unpredictable can happen. No monitoring area is provided at the entrance at this time. A new entry/office area would make monitoring people entering and exiting the building possible for the office personnel.

Fairbanks Montessori School strives to nurture a healthy child: independent, self-confident, social and motivated. They also have to offer parents the security of knowing that their children are receiving the best care, developmental guidance available and paramount, a safe environment. Your support of Fairbanks Montessori Association's request for legislative appropriations money will help makes this possible.

Respectfully,

Marion Woods