

# Personal Growth in an Inclusive Community



# Letter from Chair of the Board

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We are now in Montcrest School's 60th year of operation (1961-2021). A time for celebration of all that we have accomplished, as well as consideration of all that we want to become.

Since its founding, Montcrest has celebrated the unique gifts of every child. The way in which we have done this over the decades has continuously evolved. The terminologies and best practices may have changed, but the core hypothesis has stayed the same: Including a diverse set of learners in our school community makes the whole school stronger. It is good for our kids; it is good for our families – the whole family; and it is good for our teaching. This approach worked for my older brother who struggled with dyslexia in the 70's; it worked for me – a neurotypical learner in the '80s, and it is working well for my boys who are still figuring out who they are going to be as learners, still finding their unique voices. When we enroll our kids in JK, we don't know what learning challenges they will face. At Montcrest, we have created a school that will meet them where they are, empower them to meet any challenges and prepare them for what lies ahead.

This 2021-2024 strategy was forged in the uncertain times of a global pandemic, a global reckoning of structural racial inequities, and the transition of our head of school. That uncertainty forced us to question and reflect on our hypothesis more critically than ever before. The resulting strategy reflects a renewed certainty that our hypothesis is a winning one, one in which we are going to invest deeply and push ourselves further. By focusing on personal growth in an inclusive community, we are setting ourselves on a path that fully embraces our vision to be recognized as the leading elementary school community in Canada in realizing the unique potential of each child.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I want to thank all the members of our community that have made Montcrest what it is today and call on you to help us shape its future.

Cynthia Eldridge  
Board Chair, Montcrest School



# Our Vision

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To be recognized as the leading elementary school community in Canada in realizing the unique potential of each child.

# Our Mission

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Montcrest School is a co-educational community, small enough to honour the individual and big enough to provide an exceptional academic experience with balanced opportunities in leadership, the arts, and athletics. Our school challenges children to discover and acknowledge their own voices, so they can understand and make meaningful connections with the world.



# Guiding Principles

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- » We are a co-educational, JK – 8, independent school.
- » We work at the forefront of global-educational best practices by combining research and experience with leading-edge innovation and tried-and-true practices.
- » We embrace a diversity of learners and prepare them for academic and social success in high school and beyond.
- » We cultivate a caring and nurturing community, including our faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and neighbours, in which students can discover, develop, and thrive.
- » We develop our five “Standing for Character” values of respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion, and courage in our students.

# Personal Growth in an Inclusive Community

Our new strategic plan builds upon the work previously undertaken to develop exceptional learning experiences and nurture social-emotional development.

As we continue to build the future together; our focus is on deepening personalization, recognizing the diverse needs of our students and building inclusive communities.

We remain dedicated to building a caring and nurturing learning environment and focusing on student-centred teaching and learning. We are committed to inspiring, challenging and supporting both our students and our staff to consciously and ambitiously pursue ongoing personal growth. We are dedicated to providing a safe, welcoming environment for all students, families and staff that authentically celebrates diversity and seeks equity.

As an organization, we are addressing our ever-evolving role in the community and continuing to enhance our specialization while investigating new models of delivery. We are celebrating neurodiverse learners and further investing in our resources to support the varied needs of all our learners.



# Our commitment to empower personalized learning

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We will strive to meet the diverse needs of all Montcrest learners and deeply engage students in conscious personal development through experiential inquiry curriculum.





## Goals:

- 1 Inspire, challenge and support each student to consciously and ambitiously pursue ongoing personal growth.
- 2 Develop future ready competencies and attributes in a deliberate, developmental continuum with ongoing self reflection and feedback.
- 3 Ensure student's conscious transferability of skills and competencies across disciplines.
- 4 Provide personal pathway development for each student that recognizes their unique interests and strengths.
- 5 Support educators in differentiating instruction and enhance specialization around Neurodiversity.
- 6 Ensure that all learning experiences are informed by learning strategies and are research backed.
- 7 Build a focused and shared pedagogical approach that drives deep inquiry and real world problem solving holistically across the school.
- 8 Enhance opportunities for student leadership, autonomy and agency.

## To achieve this we will:

- Build a comprehensive model of the Montcrest Graduate that is supported by a continuum of future ready skills and attributes K-8.
- Provide personalized learning plans for all students.
- Build a model of Montcrest Teacher that outlines key attributes and skills.
- Develop methodologies and protocols for supporting Neurodiversity.
- Build attribute assessment model and provide training on implementation.
- Formalize professional growth plans for all teachers and staff.
- Further develop transitional support for students entering high school.
- Engage parent community in understanding pedagogical approaches and support.

# Our commitment to foster an inclusive community

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We will create a safe, welcoming environment for all students, families and staff that authentically celebrates diversity, conveys inclusive values and seeks equity.



## Goals:

- 1 Strengthen inclusive practices and drive greater justice, equity and diversity.
- 2 Extend partnerships to purposefully increase diverse representation in staff and leadership.
- 3 Build confidence in educators around facilitating difficult conversations and navigating complex subject matter exploration with students.
- 4 Provide transparency in ongoing measurement of goal achievement and sentiment of families.
- 5 Participate in team building to build trusted relationships between teachers and leadership.
- 6 Continue to prize all staff in being relationship driven with each other, students, parents and leadership.

## To achieve this we will:

- Formalize a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee with representation from students, teachers, staff, parents and community.
- Purposefully develop guiding values for inclusivity and formally ask all stakeholders including administrators, staff, teachers, parents and students to personally commit to pursuing growth and improvement.
- Work to increase diversity and representation in our leadership and staff.
- Continue to report on diversity and equity metrics; engage staff in ongoing development and conversation.
- Provide a mechanism for ongoing, anonymous feedback from parents, students, staff and teachers.
- Provide opportunities for co-creation of solutions with all school stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, staff and community partners.
- Develop a fulsome onboarding & orientation process for newly hired teachers and staff that authentically celebrates diversity and outlines inclusive values.



# What Personalized Learning Looks Like at Montcrest

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At Montcrest, we celebrate the unique gifts of every child. We meet students where they are at, and provide individualized and specialized support to neurotypical students as well as those with learning and thinking differences, including but not limited to Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and Giftedness. Montcrest teachers are dedicated to ensuring the success of each student, and have the expertise to work with neurodiverse students.



# Making good on our commitments.

Our strategic plan is underpinned by a robust operational plan with measurable goals and assigned responsibilities internally. Our Board of Governors will continue to receive updates from senior leadership on the progress being made, and our team will remain focused on making good on our commitments. We are holding ourselves accountable for ongoing growth and continuing to demonstrate our leadership as a top elementary school in Canada.

