

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

WEST SIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

New York, New York

wsmnyc.org

Start Date: July 2025



WSMS

West Side Montessori School

Founded in 1963



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

We prepare children to be resilient, creative, and independent problem solvers. We are leaders in teaching Montessori principles and incorporate the best practices of modern early childhood education in our classrooms.

West Side Montessori School is a vibrant, collaborative community of passionate teachers, joyful children, and engaged parents. Our diverse community is a reflection of the city in which we live.

At a Glance



Established
1963



Enrollment
210



Total faculty
46



Student-faculty ratio
5:1



Students of color
54%



Financial aid awarded
\$1.45M



Montessori certified faculty
75%

Faculty of color: 60%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 35%

Students receiving aid: 20%

Endowment: \$11.2M

Annual operating budget: \$10.7M

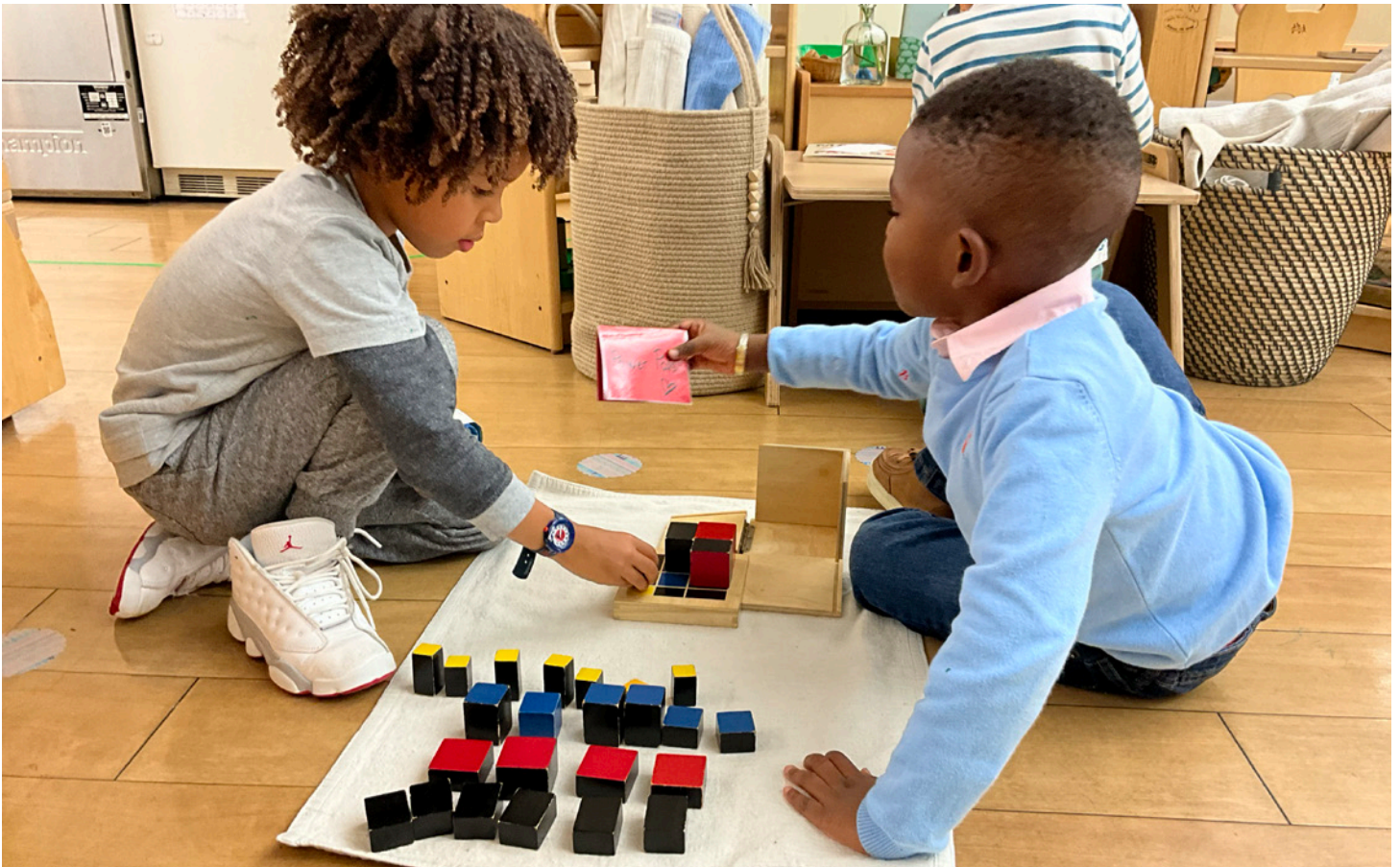


Overview

West Side Montessori School (WSMS) is a warm, diverse, and enthusiastic community of learners, where everyone is united in the important task of giving children the best beginning education possible. Child development research shows that the environment of a child's earliest years can have effects that last a lifetime. West Side Montessori knows that their students are developing exponentially – physically, mentally, and socially, which is why their top priority is to ensure that every day at WSMS matters for every child. The school offers an innovative and dynamic program that combines key aspects of Montessori education with the best practices of current child development and research. At WSMS there is no such thing as “one size fits all.” The school promises to help each child develop and learn individually at their own pace and in their own style.

When WSMS began in 1963, the founders envisioned an early childhood school on the Upper West Side that would provide an exceptional, innovative Montessori education for a diverse mix of families. The School opened with one morning class of fifteen children and one teacher in a room in the Frederick Douglass Houses on Columbus Avenue at 104th Street. As enrollment grew, the School moved from one rented space to another while searching for a permanent location. In 1974, the School bought the double brownstone at 309 West 92nd Street that it occupies today. Over the years, every space in the building has been renovated. In 2025, WSMS will open a brand new, state of the art Infant, Toddler, and Twos Center at 212 West 95th Street where the school will occupy three floors of community space.

The next leader at WSMS will build on the outstanding work done by the current head of school, Mimi Basso. Mimi has been the head since 2007 and in that time has led the school through successful NYS AIS accreditations, multiple cycles of strategic planning, and has positioned WSMS to be a premier early childhood school in New York City. The next head of school will join a vibrant community that values close connections between home and school. This is a dynamic and complex position with many professional and personal rewards. The appointed individual will get to work with a dedicated and committed faculty and will coordinate training efforts with the WSMS-Teacher Education Program. We have rarely had the opportunity to witness such a joyful and focused learning environment combined with a strong administrative team.



Opportunities and Challenges

West Side Montessori School is one of the leading pre-schools in New York City and is a model for early childhood education. The school is known for its strong community and how it forges deep bonds with its families. WSMS is a forward-looking and dynamic learning environment and is now seeking a Head of School who will advance the School's mission and serve as a collaborative and uplifting leader for the entire School community.

In addition to being actively engaged in the daily life and operations of running this distinguished and complex school, the new Head of School will be expected to:

- Establish deep connections with a highly expert and dedicated faculty and act as a resource as the entire faculty continues to grow and deepen its knowledge and experience with Montessori education;
- Exhibit excellent management skills accompanied with a strategic vision in a complex organization with two locations and a significant teacher training program;
- Be an active presence in the halls, classrooms, and in this notably close and inclusive community, valuing relationships and eager to engage in discussion with parents and colleagues;
- Continue to oversee the exciting opening of the new Infant, Toddler and Twos Center, as a presence and a resource to the teachers working in this new facility; and
- Reinforce a strong sense of belonging in all school community members by making belonging a high priority and addressing the financing and staffing considerations needed to continue to meet this vital goal.



Qualifications and Personal Attributes

West Side Montessori School is seeking in its next Head of School an innovative and inspiring educational leader who is eager to make a long-term commitment to the community and the work. The next Head of School will offer the following qualifications and qualities:

- Attention to current educational research and ability to combine that understanding with an appreciation for WSMS's Montessori mission, values, and history;
- Deep experience with Montessori theory and practice; certified by the American Montessori Society;
- A dynamic and engaging presence, visible, and active in all areas of school life;
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate with inspiration, clarity, and decisiveness, both in writing and in person;
- A collaborative leadership style built on approachability, responsiveness, humility, and transparency;
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy and the tactical skills necessary to deftly manage the systems and processes necessary to implement strategy;
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, and belonging work and the requisite skills to support critical conversations in the design of ever more inclusive culture, curriculum, and programs;
- Experience recruiting, hiring, supporting, retaining, and leading talented, diverse, and mission-aligned faculty;
- Experience with what effective fundraising/development/advancement functions look like in a school and the ability to put in place an optimal structure that works with WSMS's community culture;
- A love for children and appreciation of their developmental differences and delights; and
- Ability to work effectively with the school's Board of Trustees.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about West Side Montessori School.

[School Website](#)

[School Facilities](#)

[School History](#)

[About New York, New York](#)



To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé; and
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

Robert D. Vitalo

Vice President, Search and Consulting Services
robert.vitalo@carneysandoe.com

Allison Stiles

Consultant
allison.stiles@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$250,000 to \$300,000. West Side Montessori offers a comprehensive benefits package. (Salary based upon, but not limited to, relevant experience and expertise).