



**STERLING**  
**MONTESSORI**

EST. 1997

## THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

### Challenges of a Public Montessori School

The Montessori Method, developed by Italian physician and child development clinician Maria Montessori is a child-centered approach founded upon the concept that developing the whole child, socially, emotionally and intellectually, is the primary factor for academic success. Thus, a child's achievements at Sterling are not solely dependent on teaching to state standards or preparing for end-of-grade tests. Although Sterling consistently exceeds those measures and is highly ranked in state-wide assessments, the true realization of success at Sterling originates from its strong commitment to Montessori principles.

Sterling offers a unique educational structure. The tuition-based Pre-K program operates as a private academy and is a separate entity from the public charter school for grades K-8. The K-8 charter school meets all requirements of the NC Department of Public Instruction's Office of Charter Schools while offering the Montessori-based curriculum. Even though Sterling receives a per-pupil allotment from the state, all capital expenditures and Montessori instructional materials must be paid for with other funds.

At Sterling we are deeply committed to maintaining the Montessori-learning environment. Each mixed-age classroom is equipped with specialized educational materials developed by Montessori and her collaborators. These materials are often made from natural, aesthetic materials such as wood rather than plastic and are thoughtfully organized by subject area within easy reach of the child. Equipping a Montessori classroom is not inexpensive and costs upwards of \$30,000 more than equipping a traditional classroom.

Sterling serves approximately 750 students on our 15-acre campus. We are small in comparison with most elementary and middle schools in Wake County and thus do not benefit from the economies of scale. At Sterling, teachers follow students' individual needs to achieve personal academic excellence and to become life-long learners who respect themselves, others and their environment.



## The Funding Gap

The funding gap between charter schools and public schools remains significant. According to the Center for Education Reform, charter schools are funded at approximately 64% of their district counterparts, averaging \$7,131 per pupil compared to the average per-pupil expenditure of \$11,184 in traditional public schools (Figures per 2020: Center for Educational Reform [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com))

The largest reason for this shortfall is that charter schools do not receive capital funding from the state. We, at Sterling, are fortunate to own and operate the buildings that make up the campus.

However, the costs of upkeep and maintenance of these 20-year-old buildings is ever increasing.

***"The role of education is to interest the child profoundly in an external activity to which he will give all his potential."***

***- Dr. Maria Montessori***

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

### How are we different?

✦ We are governed by a Board of Directors, we pay for and maintain our own facilities, and families must provide their own transportation. ✦

We represent a specialized curriculum choice to parents, students, teachers and administrators.

We do not receive funds for free/reduced lunch, so that's supplemented from our yearly budget

We face a challenge of operating on 36% less funding than traditional schools

We foster an innovative approach to education that is usually reserved for private institutions

***Donations are critical for bridging the gap between reduced government funding and the ability to provide excellent Montessori curriculum***

We operate on a license basis and must meet rigorous academic, operational and financial standards to receive renewal

✦ We adhere to a business plan that includes a mission statement, a strategic plan, a financial plan and an academic program that outlines our goals. This is the contract with which we have the state's educational board.

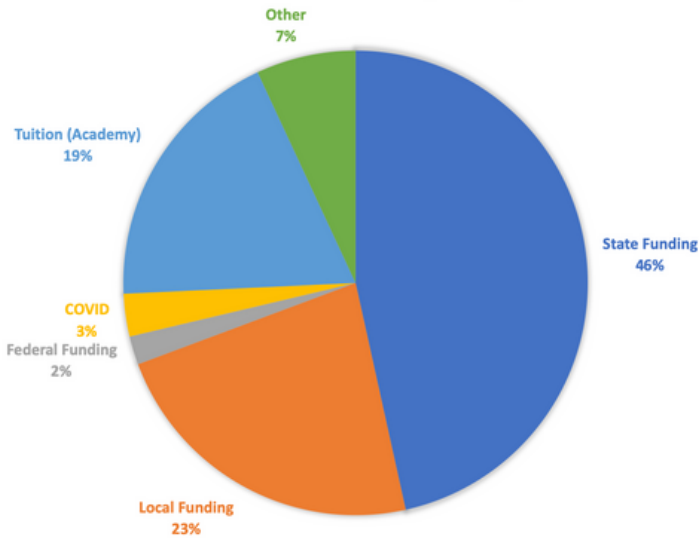
We rely and trust in our parent volunteers, minimizing the dependence on outside services

✦ We operate autonomously from public school boards allowing us to follow an alternate and proven method of teaching, enabling us to adapt to the character and type of students we serve.

✦ Our teachers are Montessori trained, using innovative teaching practices for every level of student, which sparks creativity and allows for flexibility and teaching to the child ✦

# STERLING MONTESSORI OPERATING BUDGET

2021/22 REVENUE (\$8.8M)



*"Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future."*

Dr. Maria Montessori

2021/22 EXPENSES (\$8.6M)

