



# STATE OF THE SCHOOL

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January 2019

**Franciscan Montessori Earth School  
and St. Francis Academy**

14750 SE Clinton St.  
Portland Oregon 97236  
503-760-8220

[www.fmes.org](http://www.fmes.org)



# Welcome

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“Learning never exhausts  
the mind”  
- Leonardo Da Vinci

Let me begin by saluting each of you who have entrusted your most precious gift to us, your children. I salute you for your choice of a Montessori education for your child and in particular the Franciscan Montessori Earth School. We treasure this commission and have dedicated our energies to see that each of your children receives the individual help, the nurturing, and the encouragement to become the best they can become. In the words of Dr. Montessori: *“...education today, in this particular social period, is assuming truly unlimited importance. And the increased emphasis on its practical value can be summed up in one sentence: Education is the best weapon for peace...”*

With the help of God, each of you parents, and our celebrated staff, we confront the challenging and rewarding task, filled with the tremendous success we see in the children.

As a nation, we face many challenges. The Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist are committed to educate the students currently enrolled and future students, to provide excellence, nurturance and in the words of our mission:

*The Franciscan Montessori Earth School provides students from early childhood through young adulthood the tools to acquire individual fulfillment, academic excellence, moral and spiritual learning. Through the academic and experiential learning process developed by Maria Montessori, and influenced by the spirituality of St. Francis, students are guided to respect themselves and others, and to be stewards of the earth.*

As I share this “State of the School,” I say unequivocally, this school is a strong educational institution with a boundless capacity to continue to “follow the child.”

*Sister Therese Gutting, FSE, Head of School*

**“Through the academic and experiential learning process developed by Maria Montessori and influenced by the spirituality of St. Francis, students learn to care for and respect themselves, others, and the earth.”**

*- Mission Statement of the Franciscan Montessori Earth School*



“I am not a teacher,  
but an awakener.”  
- Robert Frost

# Community Update

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Our staff and their enduring dedication to the school are essential to our mission as educators.

They represent the essence of what has made our school successful for so many families. The long-lasting bonds that are formed between students, staff, and parents within our community are the cornerstone of our legacy, and they are instrumental in making an education at FMES “remarkable”.

Every year there are changes- changes to the facilities, changes in staff, changes in programs, all of which are carefully considered to ensure that our community serves the needs of all of our families. Sometimes these changes are expected, and sometimes they are not. With the departure of Laurie Langevin, the staff of SFA has adapted admirably, responding to this change in staffing in a creative and efficient manner. Our staff has created a leadership team within SFA consisting of Issac Brocker, Jennifer Waters, and the entire staff of St. Francis Academy. These staff members bring together a variety of disciplines and experience, allowing them to create a new structure within SFA that meets the needs of the students and curriculum successfully. We look forward to the continuing growth and development of this new style of leadership and educational management in SFA.



We also have hired the Epic Catering group to handle our hot lunch program. You may remember them from their outstanding work during our auctions. They bring a professionalism and attention to detail to our lunch program that is much appreciated by families, students, and staff alike.

Children’s House staffing remains the same. The Children’s House represents the base of the Montessori learning experience at the Earth School, and as such this long tenure on the part of this staff is truly appreciated and valued. Former Lower Elementary Assistant Jennifer Tilson has moved into the support position in Children’s House, rounding out our Montessori Aspect staff.

Lower Elementary staffing has changed with the addition of new Lower Elementary Assistant Sarah Muscutt, who works with Sister Jacinta. Anne Ratchiff now works with Carmel Norman, and Jessica Lewis works with Kimberly Lewis.

The staffing in Upper Elementary remains the same, as does our support staff.

We value our staff, and we know that they represent the very best for your child’s education. Every day, they bring their very best to FMES.





# Staff Profile

“Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way.”  
- Booker T. Washington

This year, the Earth School recognizes **Helena Reid**. Helena Reid was born in Miami, Florida. She has lived in England, Venezuela, Spain and within the US in Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Oregon. Helena graduated from Dickinson College in Pennsylvania (Summa Cum Laude) with a Bachelor’s degree in History & International Studies. Helena met her husband, Brian Reid, at the University of Chicago and they moved to Oregon where she completed her Montessori training. She is trained in both the Primary (3-6) and Elementary levels (6-12) through the Association Montessori International (AMI). Helena loves children, taking walks, going on hikes, exploring the coast, traveling, history, architecture, baking, reading, planning things and making lists to get things done. She has worked as a consultant, accountant, event planner and librarian. This is Helena’s sixth year as Upper Elementary guide at FMES. Helena is a proud step-mom, to two adult children, a mom and a foster-mom. An ardent believer in Montessori Education and a devout Roman Catholic, Helena is happy to have found her home at the Franciscan Montessori Earth School.





“Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.”  
- Maria Montessori

# Statement of Diversity



We celebrate cultural differences and embrace diverse perspectives. The Earth School welcome those of all faiths and backgrounds. The Earth School strives to make our program financially accessible to any family that wants to be part of our community. As we plan for the future, making our program available to an even broader group of families has become a key element of our outreach and fundraising goals. This has been true from the day that the Earth School first opened in 1977. Our Long-Range Strategic plan and our Endowment strategies highlight the need to provide a secure source of funding to assist our outreach to families of all backgrounds. In our Annual Fundraising, as with our Endowment fundraising, we allocate significant funds for our families. Combined with the targeted efforts of our Admissions and Advancement offices, we continue the task of creating an increasingly diverse environment within the school community. Our accreditors, and our peers within the educational communities, have noted that the Earth School community has been very successful in our efforts to create diversity through opportunity. The Earth School is a community shaped by a diverse and active philosophy based on the principles of inclusion and acceptance.

## The Sisters

“The Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, a pontifical religious community, offers a 21<sup>st</sup> Century response to St. Francis’ call to service and peace. Bonded through a profession of the religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the life of each sister is dedicated to serving the needs of others through the Franciscan Life Center Network, which provides counseling, health care, aging programs, education and other services throughout the world. The Sisters are pioneers, just as were St. Francis and Maria Montessori, and the pioneering work of the Franciscan Community are emblematic of that spirit.”



Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist Board · A Pontifical Community Founded in 1973.  
405 Allen Avenue Meriden, Connecticut USA

# Finances

“The highest result of education is tolerance”  
- Helen Keller



The Franciscan Montessori Earth School is a part of the Franciscan Life Center Network. Our finances are audited internally on a regular basis, and the entire Franciscan Life Center Network is audited annually. This audited report provides us with the information that we use in annual reports, strategic planning, and fundraising solicitations and proposals.

We consider our financial outlook in a variety of ways, both locally and as part of the Franciscan Life Center Network. Our Finance Committee is part of the Advisory Council, and working in concert with Administration, our Business Manager and Finance Committee members help craft our approach to tuition, budgeting, and allocations of funds for salaries, facilities, and programs. Within the Advisory Council, ongoing discussion and updating of the Strategic Plan helps to determine how both our income and expenditures are allocated. These plans are further discussed, refined, and approved by the Board of the Franciscan Life Center Network.

We value not only the gift of trust you provide when you enroll your student, we also understand the expectations that you have for us to use your tuition dollars wisely. We understand that our goal must always be the best value for your tuition, reflected in the quality of your student’s education. This year, with enrollment matching the conservative numbers that we had budgeted for,

we find ourselves with a sound financial picture. This consistent enrollment, and the subsequent planning to best serve these students, will continue to be part of the financial planning scheduled for the near future.

Furthermore, we continue to maintain a modest cash reserve, even after the costs of ongoing renovations during the summer of 2018. We have had a steady flow of gifts in our fundraising endeavors, and we still have our annual Auction (April 13 2019) to add to our fundraising efforts. As a school with revenues in excess of \$3,000,000, and as an institution that is home to more than 300 students and over 60 staff, it is a testament to the efforts of all concerned with our finances that not only has our school survived, it continues to flourish and grow. **Thank you!**

Audited Revenue for Fiscal Year -  
July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018: \$3,622,172

■ Total Non-Fundraising Income from Normal Operations - Tuition & Fees, Noon Nutrition, Summer Programs, Childcare, Interest & Misc. Income: \$3,431,015

■ School Fundraising Income - Individuals & Corp. - Donations, Events, Grants: \$191,157

■ Extraordinary Non-Operating Items (Investment Fund Dollars Used For Tuition Assistance): \$0

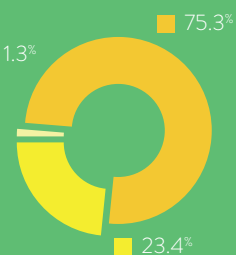


Audited Expenditures for Fiscal Year -  
July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018: (\$3,245,807)

■ Wages, Payroll Costs & Health Insurance / Prof. Development-Training Benefits: (\$2,442,314)

■ General Educational & Overhead Expenses - Educ./Program Costs, Building Maint., Mortgage, Insurance, Professional Services, Noon nutrition, and Misc.: (\$760,259)

■ Fundraising Expenses - Auction/Benefit/Events Exp., Annual Appeals Exp., Banking/Supplies/Misc. Exp.: (\$43,234)



“The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.”  
- Ralph W. Sockman

# Challenges

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Our tuition strives to maximize the value of your tuition dollars, while at the same time recognizing our need to constantly grow and improve to stay competitive and relevant. As an institution, and as a school, our success has always been in offering unique opportunities to a diverse and growing community. The Earth school business model is firmly based on a commitment to the needs of our students and our community. These goals have remained consistent since the beginning of the school in 1977.

Our primary challenges consist of addressing both how we fund our operations, and how we ensure that all families that wish to have an education at the Earth School can be supported in their quest. As we address planning for the future of FMES, these concepts will remain paramount in our planning.

Each year, we assess and address the state of our facilities, our staff, and our support infrastructure to ensure that they remain within the guidelines of our strategic planning. These plans seek to address, and continually reflect, a sound understanding of the overall needs of the entire community. In the last year we have made significant upgrades to our facilities, such as adding classroom HVAC and new flooring and cabinetry to provide more comfortable and useable classrooms. We continue to seek the funds to grow and expand, while ensuring that we adequately plan for the use of operational monies to provide for a safe, secure, and meaningful educational community.

We also seek to better place the school within the awareness of the area community, allowing prospective families to have the maximum opportunity to consider FMES as a school of choice. These Marketing and Admissions strategies are a key component of those challenges that the Earth School must confront. In addition to the ever-growing number of schools that represent our competition, the nature of marketing and media outreach evolves constantly, creating an increasingly complex marketing situation for schools. We are not alone in seeking to confront this challenge as we seek to heighten the profile of the school within the private school community in and around Portland. We will continue promoting the message that the Earth School is a dynamic alternative, worthy of the consideration of all interested families. This competitive market provides alternatives for families in ever-increasing numbers, and sharing the message that the Earth School is the best possible educational option remains one of our most persistent challenges.

Drawing on the combined talents and expertise of our staff, the Franciscan Community, and the Advisory Council and consultants, we continually change and upgrade school programs to help guide this process. As we constantly seek to enhance programs, provide for staff training, and add other necessary upgrades to our programs, the challenges presented in the oversight of such a large program and facility are ongoing.

The Earth School confronts these challenges with an able staff, a devoted and capable Advisory Council, the constant support of the Franciscan Community, and the constant support of our parent community. With their support, we will address our challenges, confident that the changes we enact will create a school that best reflects the needs of the entire community. The Earth School will confront these issues as always - with a firm conviction and faith in the entire community that supports us.





# Testing

“The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.”  
- Ralph W. Sockman



In the spring of each year, our students participate in standardized testing. We consider our student's test scores to be only a portion of our overall assessment process, and this is why you will find that your conferences and anecdotal statements by your guide are a critical part of how we share your child's successes or challenges. The entire scope of your own student's scores are shared during parent conferences, but our overall standardized test scores are as shown. (Spring of 2018).

## 2018 Test Scores

### Grade 4:

National Percentile Rank of FMES students:	63.0
Mean National Percentile Rank:	57.2
Grade Equivalent:	5.4

### Grade 5:

National Percentile Rank of FMES students:	69.0
Mean National Percentile Rank:	60.3
Grade Equivalent:	7.3

### Grade 6:

National Percentile Rank of FMES students:	67.0
Mean National Percentile Rank:	59.3
Grade Equivalent:	9.0

### Grade 7:

National Percentile Rank of FMES students:	70.0
Mean National Percentile Rank:	60.8
Grade Equivalent:	10.9

### Grade 8:

National Percentile Rank of FMES students:	72.0
Mean National Percentile Rank:	62.3
Grade Equivalent:	12.4





# Chess

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Chess sets at the Earth School are impossible to miss. Since 1977, Chess sets have been all around the school. Pictures from today, and pictures from yesterday, clearly illustrate that connection. Since 2002 that connection has been made a dynamic part of the school by virtue of the efforts of Montessori Guide Gladys Munoz. Working with the Oregon Scholastic Chess Federation and Chess for Success, our students have not only learned the intricacies of Chess strategy. They have competed at many levels successfully Here's a look at just a few of the many examples of Chess at FMES.





# Strategic Planning

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Each year at the Earth School, Strategic Planning is a key element of planning. Several years ago we created the basic long and short term planning templates for the Strategic Plan, emphasizing the goal of sustainability and measured growth as being key to the future of the Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy. Even with constantly changing situations driving revisions, these baseline documents ensure that our plans reflect solid parameters for strategic decisions.

Each year our strategic plan is updated with the Administration, Advisory Board and its Committees, and the Governing Board of the Franciscan Life Center Network. (This group represents the entire Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist's Professional network). Based on our previous strategic plans, each year the current plan is a dynamic document, which allows for deliberate planning steps, but also allows for changes necessitated by circumstance. Every year we initiate a very comprehensive rewrite of our near-term strategic plans, drawing in members participating in committees from throughout our extended community. This year our successful accreditation process with the Western Catholic Educational Association will be part of our planning. This form of accreditation will allow the school to best represent our position not only as a Montessori Independent School, but as a "Catholic Montessori School". How this new perception of the Earth School will emerge in our revised strategic plans will be an ongoing conversation with all concerned stakeholders. Other proposed changes, such as the potential to pursue AMI accreditation for our Children's House program, will also be part of our short and long-term plans.

This is a very comprehensive process, and represents our initial steps in providing an overall Montessori Accreditation for the Earth School.





“I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious”  
- Albert Einstein

# Our Alumni

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Colin Timothy O’Brady was born on March 16, 1985 in Olympia, Washington, but was raised in Portland, Oregon. He attended the Franciscan Montessori Earth School, Mt. Tabor Middle School, and graduated from Lincoln High School in 2002.

Colin is an American professional endurance athlete, motivational speaker and adventurer. O’Brady is a three-time world record holder. In 2016 he set the Explorers Grand Slam (Last Degree) and Seven Summits speed records. He became the fastest person to complete the adventurers challenges in 139 days and 131 days respectively. In the summer of 2018, O’Brady set the speed record for the 50 US High Points in 21 days.

O’Brady is a former professional triathlete. He represented the United States on the ITU Triathlon World Cup circuit, racing in 25 countries on six continents from 2009–2015.

In December 2018 O’Brady completed a crossing of parts of Antarctica (excluding the ice shelves of Filchner–Ronne and Ross), the first unaided and unsupported solo crossing of the land mass of Antarctica.

## **World records**

Fastest person (man) to complete the Explorers Grand Slam.

Fastest person (man) to complete the Seven Summits.

Fastest person (man) to complete the Three Poles Challenge.

World’s first person to Snapchat from the summit of Mount Everest.







Proudly, in conclusion, we note FMES is accredited with the Western Catholic Education Association, the Northwest Association of Independent Schools, a member of the National Association of Independent Schools and the National Catholic Education Association. Our Guides are highly qualified AMI Montessori teachers with additional staff educated to meet the needs of our children.

We move forward with a deep faith, a strong budget and a belief in the genius of the Montessori pedagogy complemented by the sacredness of the Franciscan Mission to bring all creation into the harmonious relationship with God.

Let us rejoice with our past accomplishments and step into the future with certainty.

May the Lord Bless you, May He shine His grace upon you and may He grant you His peace.

*Sister Therese Gutting, F.S.E*

Sister Therese Gutting, F.S.E.  
Head of School

