City Garden Montessori School

City Garden Montessori School (City Garden) is the only Montessori charter school in Missouri, and we have strong academic outcomes. Our team possesses passion and determination to implement the Montessori approach to educating children in a diverse, public school environment. City Garden is committed to being an anti-biased, anti-racist community and seeks others who are passionate about these values. We are committed to continuous learning and growth for adults in the community, to foster excellence for all City Garden children.

Located in St. Louis, City Garden is in its 12th year as a charter school, having received a second 10 Year Charter with the state of Missouri in 2017. We began in 2008 with 53 students; now, we have 268 children in preschool through eighth grade. As we grow, we continue to seek individuals to join us who share our vision for academic excellence for all children and holistic Montessori education, rooted in equity and social justice.

City Garden has attracted support from the Opportunity Trust, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative recently released a case study about City Garden’s innovative model.

Principal

As City Garden embarks on this ambitious strategic plan, we’re seeking to hire a Principal for our flagship campus at the start of our 2020-21 school year (July 1, 2020).

The Principal will have the responsibility for planning, advocating for, supporting, implementing, and evaluating all educational activities. The Principal will create a positive, trustworthy, and respectful climate that has consistent expectations for all. The Principal will build relationships, communicate proactively, and promote continual growth while maintaining a student-centered focus.

The Principal will report directly to City Garden’s Chief Academic Officer (CAO), and will collaborate with City Garden Montessori’s leadership team, faculty and staff, parents, and students to implement the school’s mission and vision.

The priorities for the CAO over the next two years will be:

- Building strong relationships among students, guides, staff, parents and community members
- Providing deep support to City Garden’s instructional staff
- Working in collaboration with guides, leadership, staff, parents, students and the board of directors to “codify” City Garden’s anti-biased, antiracist, neighborhood school model—developing structures and systems to support a strong school culture and instructional program that reflects City Garden’s values and philosophy
Preparing City Garden’s current campus for growth, which will begin in 2021
Participate in and support the launch of City Garden’s Elementary Teacher Education Program

The ideal Principal candidate will...

• Be an experienced building-level principal
• Be Montessori certified and have experience in public Montessori school settings (Montessori certification is strongly preferred, but we will also consider individuals who are deeply aligned with the Montessori philosophy and are willing to go through Montessori training)
• Have a strong grounding in anti-bias education and antiracist values and principles, and is excited to lead a school that is reimagining education through these lenses
• Have an uncanny ability to meet people where they are, build and nurture a strong team, collaborate across stakeholders, build community, and lead with both empathy and conviction
• Be deeply committed to both whole-child education and academic rigor, having proven success and outcomes in meeting children’s needs holistically and achieving high academic outcomes for children of all backgrounds
• Have a track record of success around closing racial achievement/ opportunity gaps
• Be excited to engage deeply with students, teachers, staff and families as partners
• Love to learn, have a sense of egoless-ness, be open to constant feedback, have an extreme growth mindset, and will always place children at the center of decisions and action

Responsibilities

The Principal’s Key Responsibilities:

• Promote positive community, parent, and staff relations that promote active engagement and are reflective of City Garden’s Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism (ABAR) commitment.
• Establish and clearly articulate a shared mission and vision for learning and instruction at City Garden Montessori School, grounded in the Montessori Theory of Development.
• Direct and monitor the school’s educational structure and program.
• Design and implement programs based on individual student’s needs, focusing on student achievement, and closing the “Opportunity Gap”.
• Support City Garden’s guides (teachers) through robust professional development,
• Create and maintain a school climate that recognizes and supports the unique value of all members (students, teachers, staff, parents, community).
• Display knowledge about curriculum and research-based programs that help children achieve at high levels.
• Supervise operations and personnel at school level.
• Supervise guides (teachers) and staff in school.
• Observe, support, and conduct informal and formal observations and evaluations of teaching to promote continuous learning and improvement of professional practice by teaming with teachers to enhance their instructional expertise.
• Implement the school-wide testing program and evaluate and interpret the results.
• Maintain adequate records for the school, including staff and student records.
• Abide by Missouri School laws and regulations, Federal and state laws and regulations governing educational and civil rights of students and others, Child Protective Services Act, the policies of the MO Department of Education, and the policies of City Garden Montessori School.
• Assist in the development, implementation, and communication of policies related to school culture, behavior support and attendance.
Qualifications

Candidates must meet the following requirements:

- Deeply grounded in racial equity and have strong alignment with anti-bias, anti-racism values, and be able to lead from this place;
- Montessori training and experience. Previous experience teaching and/or leading in a Montessori school is preferred;
- Experience working in Pre-K-8 public education. School principal experience is strongly preferred;
- Extensive understanding of Common Core State Standards;
- Significant experience in instructional practices and curriculum development/alignment;
- Deep and comprehensive understanding of K-12 education and its political and policy landscape.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the ideal Principal candidate will also possess:

- Demonstrated success as a visionary educational leader with strong instructional insight, and demonstrable evidence of closing racial achievement gaps;
- A strategic mindset, with the ability to craft and align a team around a compelling vision for excellence;
- Effective management and leadership experience with a track record of effectively coaching, developing, and evaluating teachers and staff;
- Ability to manage organizational change effectively;
- Knowledge of pedagogical models and strategies to improve instructional delivery with an ability to design, deliver, and support high-quality professional learning for teachers and staff;
- Ability to understand and analyze data to draw out big themes;
- Versatility and dynamism, able to engage a variety of individuals in dialogue and speak and write in a clear, compelling, and authentic manner;
- Being child-centered, flexible, and willing to do whatever it takes for our students;
- Have a growth mindset and commit to proactive, self-directed continuous learning;
- Express humility, vulnerability, and willingness to speak and hear candid feedback.

Compensation and Benefits

- This position offers a competitive salary range of $85,000-95,000, and robust benefits including medical, dental, retirement, generous personal time off, and an admissions preference to City Garden Montessori School. More details can be provided upon request.

What It’s Like to Work at City Garden

Our work is a calling. We are implementing a very unique, specialized approach to education. City Garden is also much more than a school—we have a deep commitment to doing "whatever it takes" for our kids and families, and we educate our children in the context of an active, vibrant, diverse community. All of this requires a special kind of commitment. We are balancing the state and federal requirements of being a public school with the commitments of fully implementing Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. Leaders, guides (teachers) and staff must also have a high level of cultural competence and be committed to constant growth in this area.
Our work requires being coachable, an ongoing desire to learn and a sense of egoless-ness. Everyone comes to City Garden with strengths, and with deficits. We are striving to create a learning community where feedback and growth are a regular part of our work, and to support each other as we constantly develop into better educators and better people.

Our work is not easy. Our guides (teachers) individualize curriculum for every student, and have mixed age groupings. We are constantly aligning Montessori with the Missouri Learning Standards, and we strive to implement the Montessori approach with fidelity while meeting the requirements of teaching in a public school. All of our team members must be able to think “outside the box” and have a relentless commitment to creating new ways of doing things, that lead to equity.

Our work requires flexibility, independence and initiative. We are a young and constantly evolving school. Things change fast, and we are still developing programs, systems and structures. Staff have a lot of opportunity to innovate and create, while also being required to be flexible as each of us plays an active role in the continued development of our school and community. We are looking for people who are excited to create, innovate, and constantly learn new things!

Our work is profoundly rewarding!!! Our children love to come to school. They are joyful, funny, smart and engaged, and they love all of the adults at City Garden. Our parents and guardians are fiercely committed to our community and to what is best for their children (and all children); our families are an integral part of our school. We have an incredible community of support beyond our walls, which includes neighborhood residents, other organizations, businesses, foundations, corporations and lots of individuals who believe in us and our mission. We have a lot of fun and laugh regularly. We believe that we are building a better world, by nurturing and guiding our children and building community.

To Apply

Please apply by submitting your resume and detailed cover letter, which highlights why you are interested in this position, your relevant experience, and how you meet the qualifications and qualities sought for the position, at jobs@citygardenschool.org. For additional questions about this position or to speak with someone about your interest, please contact Dr. Amira Mogaji at amira.mogaji@citygardenschool.org.

City Garden Montessori School is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that values diversity, equity and inclusion. Recruiting staff to create an inclusive organization is a priority, and we encourage applicants from all cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, sexes, national or regional origins, ages, disability status, sexual orientations, gender identities, military or veteran status, or other statuses protected by law. All candidates are evaluated solely on their qualifications to perform the work required.