

Okemos Montessori Program Review

John J. Hood- Superintendent
Spring 2025



Review Purpose

Purpose: To review the Montessori program offerings preK-8th grade and determine future scope of program and implications for district planning.

Rationale for study committee: Okemos Montessori program in place for over twenty years, evaluation of the program to define future direction and district impacts is needed.

- A fixed enrollment/controlled growth model that restricts adding sections to the program
- Trends indicate waiting lists at the earlier ages and declining interest at the older ages
- Elementary facility does not have ample space to grow, if expanded
- Aging facility at Central, opportunity to realize programmatic vision with long-term facilities planning and future bond opportunities

Review Purpose

Committee Membership:

Superintendent- John Hood

Assistant Superintendent- Stacy Bailey

Administration- Kelly Sundeen, Steve Stierley, Jody Noble

Teacher Representatives- Matt Prinz, Jeff Vacha, Jocelyn Mankowski, Erin Gould,
Beth Lieber, Lori Mazzullo

Parent/Caregivers- Stephanie Winslow, Lauren Schefke

Alumni- Natalie Warren

Montessori Program Purpose

Okemos Public Montessori's purpose has evolved since inception;

- *revenue/enrollment enhancement during downward enrollment and budget reductions,*
- *provided an alternate educational methodology for students beyond traditional K-12 schooling.*

Today, the program is sought by Okemos resident students, with fewer and fewer schools of choice enrollments each year, alleviating size/space concerns at our three traditional elementary schools.

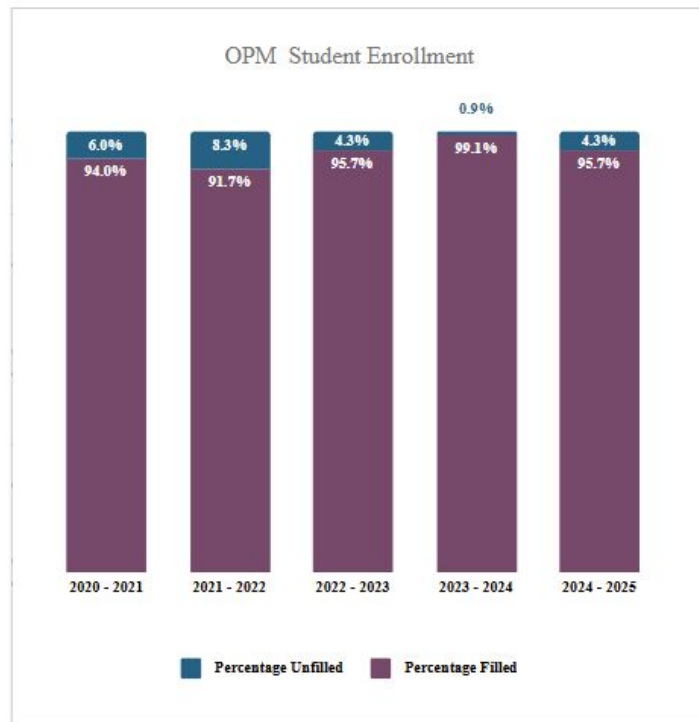
Montessori Enrollment - FAQs

- Montessori has its own enrollment process
 - Lottery: Siblings, Okemos residents, SOC
 - No Montessori experience required PreK-4
 - Prior Montessori experience required, 5-8 (currently)
- Reminder: No district transportation provided

Montessori Enrollment: PreK-4

	Enrollment Full Seats	Empty Seats
2020 - 2021	327	21
2021 - 2022	319	29
2022 - 2023	333	15
2023 - 2024	345	3
2024 - 2025	333	15

	OPM	
	Percentage Filled	Percentage Unfilled
2020 - 2021	94.0%	6.0%
2021 - 2022	91.7%	8.3%
2022 - 2023	95.7%	4.3%
2023 - 2024	99.1%	0.9%
2024 - 2025	95.7%	4.3%

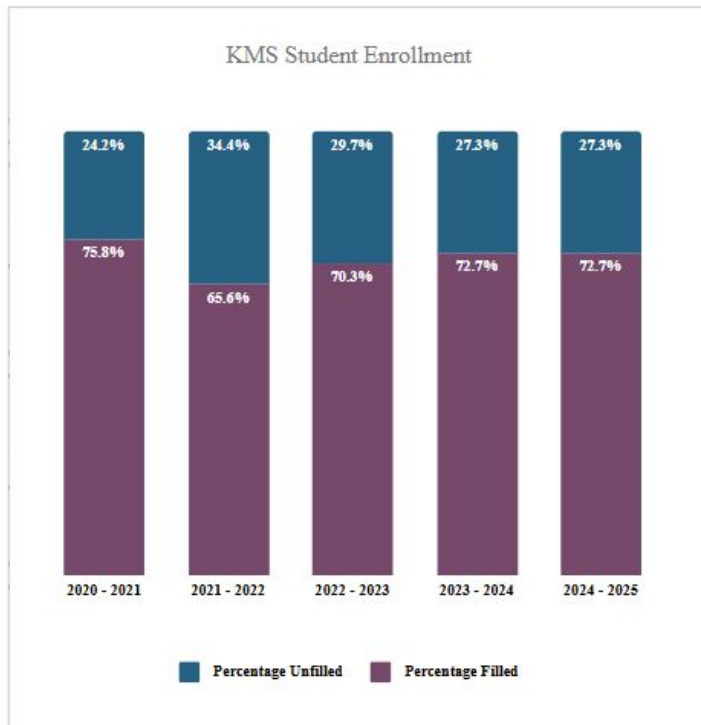


Preschool spots account for almost all spots unfilled.

Montessori Enrollment: 5-6

	Enrollment Full Seats	Empty Seats
2020 - 2021	97	31
2021 - 2022	84	44
2022 - 2023	90	38
2023 - 2024	93	35
2024 - 2025	93	35

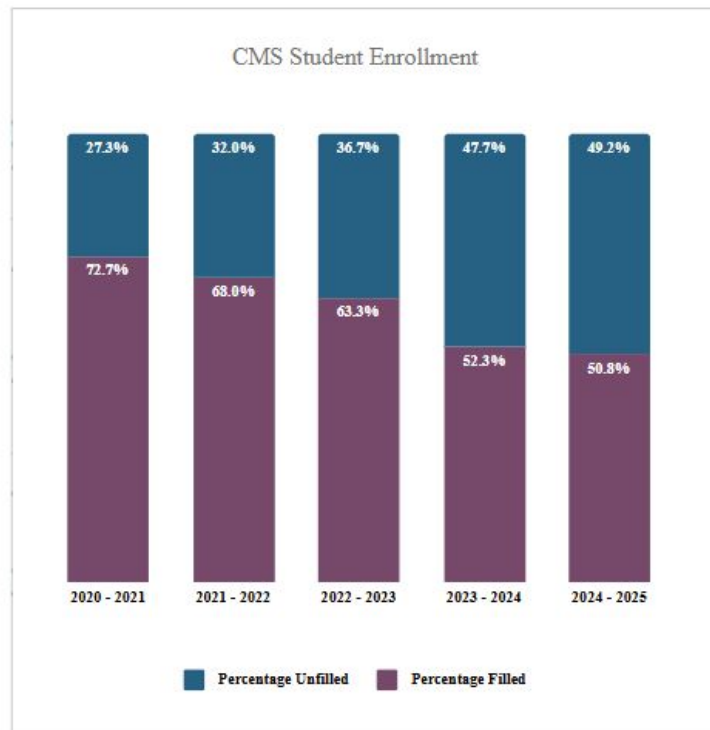
	KMS	
	Percentage Filled	Percentage Unfilled
2020 - 2021	75.8%	24.2%
2021 - 2022	65.6%	34.4%
2022 - 2023	70.3%	29.7%
2023 - 2024	72.7%	27.3%
2024 - 2025	72.7%	27.3%



Montessori Enrollment: 7-8

	Enrollment Full Seats	Empty Seats
2020 - 2021	93	35
2021 - 2022	87	41
2022 - 2023	81	47
2023 - 2024	67	61
2024 - 2025	65	63

	CMS	
	Percentage Filled	Percentage Unfilled
2020 - 2021	72.7%	27.3%
2021 - 2022	68.0%	32.0%
2022 - 2023	63.3%	36.7%
2023 - 2024	52.3%	47.7%
2024 - 2025	50.8%	49.2%



Montessori Enrollments: SOC

	2020 - 2021			2021 - 2022			2022 - 2023			2023 - 2024			2024 - 2025		
	OPM	KMS	CMS	OPM	KMS	CMS	OPM	KMS	CMS	OPM	KMS	CMS	OPM	KMS	CMS
Maximum # of Seats	348	128	128	348	128	128	348	128	128	348	128	128	348	128	128
Resident	257	59	52	260	51	50	288	59	47	308	63	44	297	69	43
Non Resident	70	38	41	59	33	37	45	31	34	37	30	23	36	24	22
Total Students	327	97	93	319	84	87	333	90	81	345	93	67	333	93	65
SOC - Non Residents	21.4%	39.2%	44.1%	18.5%	39.3%	42.5%	13.5%	34.4%	42.0%	10.7%	32.3%	34.3%	10.8%	25.8%	33.8%
Percentage of Seats Filled	94.0%	75.8%	72.7%	91.7%	65.6%	68.0%	95.7%	70.3%	63.3%	99.1%	72.7%	52.3%	95.7%	72.7%	50.8%

Montessori Enrollments - Summary

- OPM consistently near capacity, mid 90% range
- Kinawa consistently in low 70% capacity range
- Chippewa declining annually, average 62% capacity (51% currently)
- More Okemos families have chosen to enroll in program over time, fewer SOC, space limitations at Central
- Enrollments in program consistently decrease as students progress Prek-8
 - Transition to traditional prior to OHS
 - Want to be with friends outside of program

Program Strengths

“The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life.” - Dr. Maria Montessori

- Reputation, outcomes
- Montessori trained teachers
- Parapro supports in classrooms
- Montessori philosophy, values, curricula
- Community building
- Critical thinking, independence, responsibility, empathy
- Service learning, themed approach
- Capstone experience in DC
- Only choice option within Okemos for residents

Program Opportunities

- Access
 - More elementary Okemos students want to attend than spots allow for
 - Transportation not provided prek-4; access
- Awareness and Education of program, “demystify”
 - “Montessori” kids and staff
- Staff
 - Finding and retaining trained Montessori teachers
 - OPM specialists turnover, less than full time
- Enrollment
 - Declining secondary enrollments
 - Limited space for elementary demand
- Facility
 - OPM facility age and condition (oldest in district), size (no room to grow)
- Program
 - Building 1 strong OPM preK-8 program, not 3 programs (Central, Kinawa, OPM)
 - Transition to traditional impacting upper grades

Recommendation

- **Continue Montessori Programming**
 - Consideration of flexibility to grow preK-4 in future
 - Survey Okemos Families
 - Identify barriers to attend
 - Gauge interest in future enrollments
 - Strategies to increase 5-8 enrollments
 - Include opportunities for traditional students to
 - Monitor 5-6, 7-8 enrollment (25-26, 26-27)
 - Annual report out to BOE, families (sustainability)
- **Prioritize new prek-4 building in future bond planning**
 - Identify potential locations
 - Pro and con
 - Recommendation

Next Steps

**Long Range
Planning**



Questions
