

Gerena PreK – 5 Magnet School

200 Birnie Avenue, Springfield, MA 01107

Análida Múnera, Principal

Montessori and the Arts

Gerena School will offer the specialized Montessori program and curriculum that integrates the study of mathematics, science, history, geography, English, foreign languages, art, and music. The Montessori program will be phased in over four years, beginning with 12 multi-age classes for students in PreK and K in the 2007-08 school year and expanding through grade 5 by the 2010-2011 school year.

Montessori Program Elements:

The Montessori curriculum builds on the continuing self-construction of the child—daily, weekly, yearly—for the duration of the program. Montessori schools are divided into **multi-age classrooms**—“Children’s House” for children ages 3 to 6, “E1” for students in 1st-3rd grade, and “E2” for students in 4th and 5th grade.

The *prepared environments* introduce an uninterrupted series of learning passages, a continuum in which the role of the teacher is that of a guide or coach, a practice that distinguishes Montessori from other educational approaches.

Independent activity constitutes approximately eighty percent of the work in a Montessori classroom, with teacher-directed activity comprising the remaining twenty percent of the work at all levels. Every aspect of the curriculum involves creative invention and careful, thoughtful analysis. In viewing learning outcomes at each Montessori level, emphasis on *why* and *how* students arrive at what they know is just as important as *what* they know.

The Arts at Gerena:

Gerena is the only elementary school in Springfield to offer an instrumental music program --instruction in keyboards, strings, percussion and wind instruments. Gerena features a piano lab, a vocal music program and boasts two visual arts teachers who work with students in every grade level, introducing them to the joys of creative artistic expression.

Teacher Training Lab:

Gerena will become the hub for Montessori teacher training in Springfield and Western Massachusetts. University and in-house teacher trainers will develop a program to provide in-service opportunities for aspiring Montessori teachers, thereby developing long-term capacity in the district to sustain delivery of high quality Montessori instruction.

Montessori Expansion Plans:

The Montessori program at Gerena opened in the fall of 2007 serving students in PreK and Kindergarten. Over the next three years the program will be expanding through grade 5.

