



### **A Reflective Visit**

Dear Parents,

As you may be aware, from November 8, to November 11, Westmont hosted the reaccrediting team from the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA CESS.)

What a great culminating experience for our school after 18 plus months of a collaborative effort on the part of our entire community. An enormous thank you is due to parents, board members, teaching staff, administration, support staff, alumni, and our reaccreditation planning team for all the preparation and planning in support of this endeavor. The purpose of the visit, as you know, was for the team to examine our self-study documents, our school, our classrooms, and reaffirm and validate that we do what we say we do and that we abide by the standards and criteria set by the accrediting organizations. The results of our planning were two self-study documents under the titles Standards for Montessori Schools and Excellence by Design. We were most proud to share our story, our documents, our goals, and our school with our visitors. We were just as eager to get their feedback and validation of our work.

The three member volunteer team had vast and varied educational experience and combined, teachers, former teachers, and a former head of school, teacher educator and consultants. During their visit they immersed themselves in an examination of all that is Westmont: each member observed every class once or more and also observed the children at play, at Spanish, at movement, and music. They also observed our Extended Day program. Over the course of their stay, they met with, conversed, and questioned a representative group of current parents, board members, teaching staff, administrative staff, and our in-house reaccreditation planning team. I had the opportunity to meet with the team numerous times to answer questions and receive informal feedback during the process.



At the end of the visit, the team presented a brief oral exiting report to the planning committee and some of the teaching and administrative staff. First and foremost, the chair of the team commended our school and its entire community for the wonderful work, culture, and climate that permeates the school. She spoke on behalf of the team and let us know what a “gem of a school “we have and that we should tell the world about it. She spoke highly of our experienced teaching staff, our flexible extended day program, our beautiful warm and inviting facility, and, most of all, our supportive parent body. The team was impressed by the level of work that the children were doing, the peaceful and calm learning environment, the dedication and commitment of our staff to every student, and to Westmont itself. They recognized the important emphasis on student learning in surroundings where grace and courtesy is a high priority and modeled consistently.

In the coming weeks, Westmont will receive two detailed reports from the team outlining its findings with commendations and recommendations for further student support, student outcomes, and school growth. We look forward to sharing the results with you. In the interim, the team is recommending that Westmont receive full accreditation from both accrediting organizations. I know you will join us in our pride at this positive outcome knowing that it is your children who benefit the most from this entire process. Thank you for your continued support of Westmont.

Colette