

Educational Philosophy

As a product of public school education, I was disengaged by the whole-class instructional pedagogy and lack of differentiation. I entered the profession in an attempt to foster a system that contrasted the experience that I had as a child. Many of my professional beliefs are deeply rooted in the work of Maria Montessori. I strongly believe that every child needs the independence and flexibility to craft their own learning pathway. I mentioned this philosophy in a recent keynote presentation at the American Reading Company (<http://tinyurl.com/purnellspeech>). Recent trends and “best practices” in education praise the constructivist approach, student choice, and differentiation. The rest of the educational world is finally recognizing the underpinnings that have guided the Montessori way for centuries.

As Superintendent of Schools, the Montessori philosophy has guided my leadership approach. I believe that all children can learn and that the individualities of every child need to be addressed, respected, and valued. I believe in a collaborative approach to education that involves all stakeholders in the learning process. I believe that children need to be exposed to creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, real-life experiential learning, and 21st century skills in order to compete in a global society. I also believe that learning should involve student choice so that areas of interest can be explored. I look forward to sharing how I have embodied this philosophy in my current position.