



# CORNERSTONE

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Board of Directors Election  
Voting Guide  
2019

## I. Purpose of the Voting Guide

The purpose of this Voting Guide is to provide detailed information on election procedures and introduce you to the Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Board of Directors candidates. This guide will include a profile of each candidate as submitted by the candidate.

## II. Eligibility to Vote

Eligible voters are faculty and staff members employed at the school and all parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the school.

### Parents or Legal Guardians

- Parent is defined as the legal guardian of a student whose address has been given to CMES as the address of record to send school communications.
- Two-parent families with both parents living at the same address will receive two ballots, one per parent.
- Single-parent families will receive one ballot, one per parent.
- Parents living at separate addresses will each receive one ballot, one per parent. This assumes that each parent's address is on file at CMES as receiving school communications.
- Parents who have not registered their address with CMES as an address to send school communications will not receive a ballot. In order to vote, these parents should come to the school and identify themselves to the school director, who will give them a ballot; the director will also add the names and addresses of these parents to the master list of eligible voters as of the date they are identified.

### Faculty and Staff

- Each CMES faculty and staff member receives one vote. Faculty and staff of the school who are also parents may only vote once.

### Current Board Member

- Board members who are also staff, faculty, or parents may only vote once.
- Board members who are not a parent or an employee are also eligible to vote.

## III. Election Procedures

The election will be held on May 21, 2019 at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. Voting will take place from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Voters will sign in and receive their ballot at the front desk. They will then fill out their ballot and place it in the ballot box.

Results of the election will be presented at the Annual Meeting, which will be held at Cornerstone on May 21 at 5:30 pm. All parents, faculty, and staff are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting.

If you are unable to vote on May 21, please contact Chris Bewell at 651-774-5000 or [chrisbewell@cornerstone-elementary.org](mailto:chrisbewell@cornerstone-elementary.org) for information on absentee voting.

## IV. Notes for this election

Elected board members generally serve 3-year terms. Following is the slate of candidates standing for this election:

<u>Board Seat Category</u>	<u>Eligible Candidate(s)</u>
Parent Member (3-year term):	<b>Amy Dvergsdal</b>
Parent Member (2-year term):	<b>Marcus Almon</b>
Teacher Member (3-year term):	<b>Jessica Goff</b>
Community Member (3-year term):	OPEN - No Candidate

# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

## Board Candidate Profiles

### Marcus Almon – Parent Member

#### 1. Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

I represented juveniles in the criminal justice system for the past three years. I believe that minority students who face home and environmental pressures can greatly benefit from the Montessori programs teaching on positive decision making, self-discipline, and responsibility to their community.

#### 2. What role might you play in advancing the mission of the school?

I would want to be involved in community outreach.

#### 3. What areas of expertise would you bring to the Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Board?

I do have a law degree which provides me with some analytical skills. My time as a judicial candidate helped me develop the skill of listening to people in the community about the issues that impact them rather than telling them what the issues are that they should be caring about.

#### 4. What aspects of Cornerstone do you value the most? What role does Cornerstone's foundation as a Montessori school play?

Cornerstone has a feeling of everyone collaborating for the sake of the children. Cornerstone is not just about promoting the children to the next grade or passing some standardize test. Rather, Cornerstone is focused more on developing skills that will aid the student's long-term success in life as well as academics. Cornerstone is located in a community that needs students who will not follow the crowd, think for themselves, and rise above their environment.

#### 5. What is your vision for Cornerstone's future?

I want to see Cornerstone as THE example of an institution that helps transform the student and people in its neighborhood. I want to make sure that it and its staff are funded to a level equal to others in their profession.

# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

## Board Candidate Profiles

### Amy Dvergsdal – Parent Member

#### 1. Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

I've been a parent of children at Cornerstone for over 10 years, and currently have children in the Children's House, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary. I've loved being a part of the Cornerstone community and would welcome a chance to participate in the decisions that will shape the school's future. My hope is that the school can continue the excellent job it does serving a diverse group of children for many years to come, and I would like to work on building ties within the community that can help accomplish that.

#### 2. What role might you play in advancing the mission of the school?

I would like to focus on building stronger relationships with businesses, organizations and families in east St. Paul. As a resident of East St. Paul, I value the culturally and economically diverse neighborhood in which Cornerstone is located. I think that schools are an integral part of neighborhoods, and I would like to work on outreach to other organizations with whom we could build partnerships and increase the ways that Cornerstone students can engage with the community.

#### 3. What areas of expertise would you bring to the Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Board?

I've worked at several non-profits providing social services as a case manager, and a large part of my responsibilities included building ties and strengthening relationships between organizations to provide a stronger network of services. I believe those skills would be an asset to the board and the Cornerstone Community.

#### 4. What aspects of Cornerstone do you value the most? What role does Cornerstone's foundation as a Montessori school play?

I value the strong commitment Cornerstone has to the children it serves. I think the value placed on children's individualism can clearly be seen in the interactions of the adults who work with the children there – every time I shadow, pick up my children, or attend an educational event or conference. Children are allowed to develop skills at a natural pace while learning about subjects that excite them, and their independence is supported by their teachers. I value the importance Cornerstone places on the environment - both the environment within the classroom, and encouraging the children to value the environment around them. I believe the Montessori foundation of the school, in addition to the hard work of the staff that supports it, provides the building blocks for the strong community that has emerged. Montessori principles support the sense of independence and responsibility that I see in my children and their classmates, and provide a solid academic foundation that allows the children to truly understand the reason behind an answer, not just what the correct answer is.

#### 5. What is your vision for Cornerstone's future?

I would like to see Cornerstone continue the work it does - providing a strong Montessori education to a diverse group of children, providing educational programming to the families of the students, while also strengthening ties to the neighborhood. I would also like to work with the board to explore the feasibility of starting an adolescent program.

## **Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Board Candidate Profiles**

### **Jessica Goff – Teacher Member**

**1. Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

I love working at Cornerstone and enjoy being involved in big picture planning and accountability.

**2. What role might you play in advancing the mission of the school?**

I am interested in long term sustainability of the school.

**3. What areas of expertise would you bring to the Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Board?**

I have been a parent at Cornerstone since 2009 and a teacher here since 2013. I think I offer a unique perspective and history to the board.

**4. What aspects of Cornerstone do you value the most? What role does Cornerstone's foundation as a Montessori school play?**

I love our community and the vision of Montessori for all.

**5. What is your vision for Cornerstone's future?**

I want Cornerstone to be a vibrant part of the East Side for years to come. I want to have a community of children and families that continue to value our school.