

MONTESSORI

NOOSA



EDUCATION FOR *generations*

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Message from the Board Chair

The 2024 calendar year marked a period of profound development and achievement for Montessori Noosa, with critical milestones reflecting both strategic governance and operational stability. From a governance perspective, the Board and leadership team worked in close alignment to support the school's vision, ensured compliance with regulatory and financial standards, and nurtured a culture of integrity, and inclusion. Under the expert guidance of Lisa Stirling, we were able to recover financially from the loss that was inherited from late 2022 and 2023.

A defining moment in 2024 was the successful establishment of a Cycle 1 classroom. This initiative was the result of the educational team planning and implementation. Staffing transitions were a challenge for Montessori Noosa and are indicative of all Montessori schools now. The shortage of Montessori trained preschool and primary teachers throughout Australia is a risk. We are indeed fortunate to have educational leaders who are Montessori trained.

Ongoing professional development remained a strategic investment, with staff undertaking advanced Montessori and inclusive education training. We were fortunate to receive grant funding for a Wellbeing Officer, enhancing student welfare and a government facilities grant for the installation of a new shade sails. These improvements not only increased functionality but also aligned with our governance priorities around sustainability, health, and safety.

The comprehensive school review conducted by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB) in July was a major governance milestone. The process was rigorous and transparent, with commendations in the final report affirming the school's robust policies, educational outcomes, and compliance with statutory obligations. The Board extends sincere thanks to the entire staff and leadership team, Joel Rioux, Amy Doyle and Lisa Stirling, for their exemplary contributions.

Montessori Noosa's community engagement remained vibrant, with events and parent education programs fostering strong family-school partnerships. We thank the parents for their attendance at celebrations, volunteer work and contributions.

Looking ahead, the Board is encouraged by the steady enrolment growth projected for 2025. This trend reflects community confidence in our educational offering and affirms the strategic direction of the school. As we prepare for the coming year, we remain deeply committed to our Montessori ethos, responsible stewardship, and the continued development of a thriving school community.

Sincerely

Elizabeth Goor, Board Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors



Message from the Principal

The year 2024 represented a pivotal and transformative period in the ongoing evolution of Montessori Noosa. It commenced with a landmark achievement—the establishment of our inaugural Cycle 1 classroom. In January, we proudly welcomed 14 children, aged 4.5 to 6 years, into a meticulously prepared environment under the guidance of Caroline Fernandes, a dedicated Montessori educator from Brazil. With a professional background in Positive Discipline, Fernandes brought a quiet strength and unwavering consistency, setting an exemplary standard for our Cycle 1 program.

At the conclusion of Term 1, we farewelled Elena de Vega as she returned to Europe. Her warmth, grace, and professionalism left an indelible impression on the Montessori Noosa community. In Cycle 2, educators Chanelle and Leah demonstrated outstanding commitment, resilience, and grace under pressure. Chanelle introduced a needed literacy program (Flying Start). Their steadfast dedication to excellence underscored the essential role of character, particularly in times of adversity and change.

Among the year's significant achievements was the successful procurement of a facilities grant, enabling key improvements to the outdoor environment, including the installation of a new shade sail—enhancing both the functionality and comfort of our playground spaces.



In Term 2, Lina Alarcon was formally appointed as the school's Wellbeing Officer. Alarcon embraced the role with empathy, professionalism, and a clear sense of purpose. Through the facilitation of small group sessions across all three cycles, she

made a meaningful contribution to the emotional wellbeing of both students and staff, quickly becoming a valued and essential presence within our school community.

Throughout the year, I continued to deliver termly parent education sessions, with a focus on foundational Montessori concepts as well as arithmetic, geometry, cosmic education, and ethnomathematics. These sessions were complemented by two in-depth workshops from staff for the families, exploring classroom routines, Montessori principles, and the Montessori approach to grammar. Collectively, these engagements served to deepen community understanding and strengthen family partnerships.

Community events remained a cherished element of the school calendar, fostering connection and celebration. Highlights included Mother's Day croissants, Grandparents Day, Father's Day danishes, and festive end-of-term gatherings such as Culture Fest and the Christmas Markets. The 2024 mid-year parent survey reflected strong satisfaction and support for the school's vision, programs, and community engagement.

Montessori Noosa was privileged to mentor three Certificate III trainees—Phoebe Harpham, Georgiana Pearce, and Nadja Payne—whose humility, diligence, and team spirit enriched the school environment. The vet students (TAFE) provided the school with an impressive and combined 300 volunteering hours. We also welcomed Juan, a Colombian semi-professional footballer and husband of Lina, who volunteered to facilitate soccer sessions throughout the year. His enthusiasm and generosity were greatly appreciated by the children. In addition, Carmen, a vibrant and joyful assistant from Mexico, joined our staff team, contributing a warm and uplifting presence to daily school life for staff, parents and children.

Children in Cycle 3 participated in essential health education workshops facilitated by a visiting nurse specialising in puberty education. Weekly music instruction with Peter Wood continued to inspire creativity across the school. Our annual excursion program included a visit to Wildlife HQ and the much-anticipated outdoor education camp, held this year at the Mapleton QCCC rainforest campus—an experience that offered deep learning and connection with nature.

Professional development was an area of continued focus. Caroline undertook further Montessori study in human development from birth to adulthood through Montessori Australia. Staff also participated in inclusive education training delivered by Anne-Maree Fewtrell (MN Board director) and students with additional needs. We were honoured to host Associate Professor Dr Bronwyn Ewing (Queensland University of Technology), who delivered a STEM-focused professional development session and



generously donated a 3D printer to the school. Furthermore, we welcomed a visit from ISQ's Rose-Marie Koppe, who shared expertise in supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) learners.

In Term 3, Shanaya Castelino transitioned to a flexible working arrangement due to maternity leave. We were pleased to welcome Mark Powell to the teaching team for two days per week. Mark brought renewed energy, deep Montessori insight, and a spirit of collegiality that enriched our community in the latter part of the year.

A significant milestone occurred in July with the comprehensive school review conducted by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB). This rigorous process concluded with the issuance of a positive final report in November. We are deeply grateful to Elizabeth Goor (Board Chair), Lisa Stirling (Business Manager), and Donna George (NSSAB Vericator) for their leadership and diligence throughout the evidence collation and reporting process.

As the academic year drew to a close, enrolment projections for 2025 reflected steady and encouraging growth—a testament to the trust and confidence of our parent community and the dedication of our staff. We look to the year ahead with gratitude, optimism, and a renewed commitment to the principles and practice of Montessori education.

Sincerely
Dr Joël Rioux, Principal





2024 School Information

Independent Co-Educational Primary – Prep to Year 6

School ICSEA value 1076

Total Enrolments 45 – Girls 32 and Boys 13

Indigenous Students 8.5%

English as an Additional Language Students 2%

Established in 2017 Montessori Noosa is ideally positioned within the education and sporting heart of Noosa. Within easy walking distance to access sporting fields, gymnasium, Noosa Aquatic Centre, tennis courts, not to mention the Noosa National park and beaches, the school is well positioned to support a healthy indulgence of physical activity and immersion in the natural environment.

At Montessori Noosa we help our students acquire the essential knowledge, thinking skills, and depth of character required to flourish as joyous children today, and as successful adults tomorrow, who strive to leave the world and the people on it in a state that is better than what we received from our forebears. Our core means to this end is the educational philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori.

“Let us inspire and develop the talents of individual students; to encourage a futures-orientated generation who will innovate and lead in social and environmental justice, influencing society for the generations to come.

We believe that education is more than curriculum content, more than grades: education is part of the process that enables a person to be great. Often this happens despite schooling experiences; however, we think that a school should empower the unique dreams and talents of the individual.

Montessori is an approach to supporting the full development of the human being. The Montessori approach offers a broad vision of education as an ‘aid to life’. As an educational system, it is used in over 22,000 schools worldwide, and has a longer track record of success than any other educational approach in the world.

The Montessori approach to education, inspires children towards a lifelong love of learning, by following their natural developmental trajectory. Children become confident, responsible, independent learners, who trust in their own abilities. The inclusivity and positive social development facilitated by the Montessori programme forms the basis for a persistent attachment to learning and knowledge.

Montessori classrooms provide a specially crafted learning environment where children are able to respond to their natural tendency to work. Children have an innate passion for learning, and the Montessori classroom encourages this by giving them



opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.



Staff Composition and Qualifications

School Staff

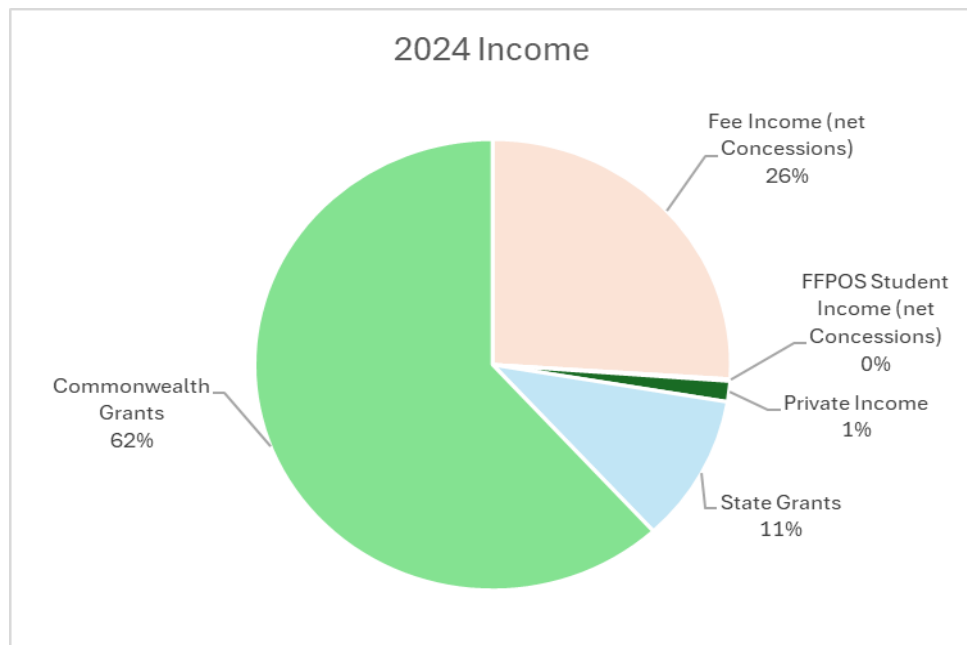
Primary	Count	Full Time Equivalent
Principal	1	1.0
Teachers/Leaders	3	2.4
Non-Teaching	3	1.6

Qualifications of all Teachers and School Leaders

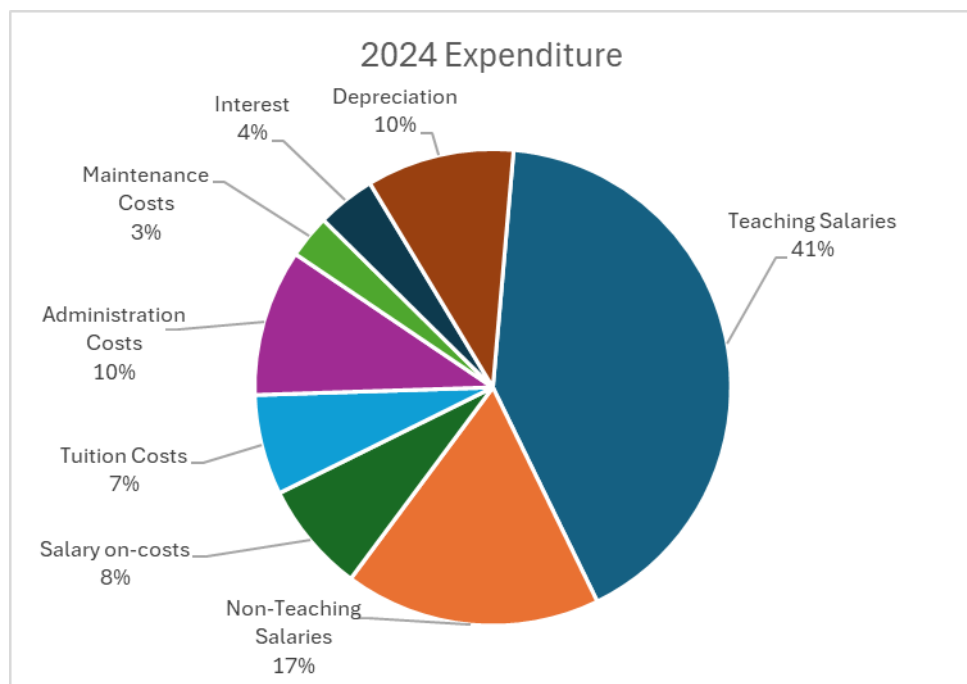
Qualification	Number of Teachers and School Leaders: Highest Qualification
Doctorate	1
Masters	1
Graduate Diploma	1
Bachelor	4
Diploma	
Total	7



Finance Information



Total income received for 2024 was \$1,210,766 and increased by 20.6% from 2023 due to increased student enrolments, please see the chart for the Income breakdown. The school continues to be reliant on Government grant income (73%) as only 26% of income is from tuition fees charged. There were 47.8 Commonwealth funded students in August 2024.





Total expenditure for 2024 was \$1,192,052 and increased by 18.9%% from 2023, please see the chart for the expenditure breakdown. The major expenditure item is total salaries and on-costs at 66%.

The school spent \$21,065 on Capital Expenditure in 2024.



Social Climate

Pastoral Care and Inclusive Wellbeing Strategies

Our Wellbeing Officer, Lina Alarcon, worked one day per week to deliver and plan wellbeing activities across all classes. The *Smiling Mind* curriculum has been adopted as our core program for promoting emotional resilience and mindfulness. The school is committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity through its pastoral care approach and wellbeing initiatives.

Teacher Professional Development

All staff participated in First Aid training through First Aid Noosa and Queen of Hearts CPR. As a member school of Montessori Australia, our staff benefit from a wide range of professional resources and support.

The Principal completed the *New Principals Program* facilitated by Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), of which MN is a member. All staff participated in professional development sessions focused on disability inclusion, led by an expert from the MN Board, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) training facilitated by a specialist from Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ).



In Term 2, 2024, the MN Board conducted a Parent Survey, which received a positive response from the community, with over 30% participation. Most families are happy, and others offered helpful feedback.

Highlights of positive feedback include:

Questions	2024
Overall Satisfaction: How satisfied are you with your child's experience at Montessori Noosa?	100
Montessori Approach: How well do you feel the Montessori approach aligns with your child's learning style and needs?	92
Child's Progress and Development: How would you rate your child's progress since attending our school?	59
Child-Teacher relationship: How would you describe the relationship between your child and their teacher?	91
Classroom Environment: Do you think that your child's classroom is organised, has a wide range of Montessori materials and encourages choice?	100
Communication: How satisfied are you with the communication between teachers/staff and parents regarding your child's progress and school activities?	100
Parent Involvement: To what extent do you feel welcomed and involved in your child's Montessori education?	100
Likelihood of Recommendation: How likely are you to recommend Montessori Noosa school to other parents?	92



What could we actively do together to augment our services

- Enhancing our outdoor learning environment
- Increasing the variety and frequency of incursions and excursions
- Developing wellbeing-focused projects for students
- Strengthening communication and collaboration between teachers and classroom parents
- Offering structured lunchtime activities on the oval
- Retaining high-quality, Montessori-trained educators
- Providing parents with insights into how our students' progress aligns with Australian curriculum standards
- Communicating regularly about classroom content and learning goals

We thank the families who took the time to respond to the survey. This helps us to be more informed, understand where there is a need for more clarity, and really collaborate with our families.



Student Outcomes (enrolment and attendance)

Snapshot of Enrolment in January - 2024

C1	12
C2	20
C3	14
total	46



Snapshot of Enrolment in December - 2024

C1	14
C2	17
C3	15
total	45

We notice a slight decrease in enrolment over the year, with the largest change seen in Cycle 2 (6-9y class). Cycle 1 (4.5-6y class) data show slightly higher absences than expected due to the transition period in Term 1, 2024.

Student Attendance

The Average Student Attendance Rate for the Whole School in 2024 was 85%.

To calculate the average attendance rate:

$$\frac{\text{Total attendance days}}{\text{Number of possible attendance days}} \times 100 = \text{Average attendance rate}$$

Attendance (December, 2024)

Level	Total Number of Students per Year level	Number of Possible Attendance Days	Total Number of Days Absent	Total Attendance Days	% Attendance Per Year level
Prep	14	2590	506	2084	80%
Year 1	3	555	75	480	86%
Year 2	6	1110	215	895	81%
Year 3	7	1295	172	1123	87%
Year 4	4	740	71	669	90%
Year 5	10	1850	215	1635	88%
Year 6	1	185	21	164	89%
TOTAL	45	8325	1275	7050	85%

Note: The number of possible attendance days may differ from the 180 school days of 2023 per student, depending on start date (i.e., a student could start in Term 2 or Term 3) and/or if they did not finish the school year. Therefore, the number of Possible Attendance days is not 54 students x 180 school days in the above table.



How non-attendance is managed by the school

Montessori Noosa School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, with attendance being integral to successful educational outcomes.

Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered explained absences, and the student's enrolment is viewed as continuous. An absence for which a satisfactory reason has NOT been provided is considered an unexplained absence. The School contacts parents/carers on any day of unexplained absence to determine the reason for absence.

If students are absent for any reason for 3 consecutive days, the School Principal makes contact with the parents/carers and offers support and/or work from home options. Administration also requests a medical certificate for absences greater than three (>3) days or more and requests parents/carers to complete an exemption form for absences greater than ten (>10) days. Attendance checks are conducted at Week 4 & 8 of each term, and students with an attendance % below 85% are contacted by the Administration to offer support.

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2024

Please refer to My School website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/> to review Naplan Results.





At Montessori Noosa, we acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of this country and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders, past and present, of the land on which we meet, work and learn, the Gubbi Gubbi People.

For further information, please contact

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