

# Michigan Montessori Society Newsletter

December 14, 2025

## Helpful Links:

- [Michigan Montessori Society \(MMS\)](#)
- [American Montessori Society \(AMS\)](#)
- [Association Montessori Internationale \(AMI\)](#)
- [MMS Facebook](#)

Welcome to *Michigan Montessori Monthly*, the monthly newsletter from the Michigan Montessori Society.

Stay up to date on all the important news and updates for Montessori in Michigan, the nation, and the world.

Have an article or topic you'd like to share? Please email it to us at [info@mmsoc.org](mailto:info@mmsoc.org).

## Calendar Events

<p><b>AMS Labposium</b> January 14 – 16, 2026 Hilton Head, <a href="#">SC</a></p>	<p>Click here for more information: <a href="https://events.amshq.org/event/725a3490-228d-4393-bab1-e979150e4e27/home">https://events.amshq.org/event/725a3490-228d-4393-bab1-e979150e4e27/home</a></p>
<p><b>Montessori Research: Impact of Public Montessori Preschool at the End of Kindergarten</b></p> <p>AMI January 6, 2026 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. (EST) <u>Virtual</u> with Angeline Lillard, David Loeb, and Karen Manship.</p>	<p>Click here for more or read the article below: <a href="https://www.amiusa.org/event/22s71d6vgv3ewlqf6oypx4wgc680zm">https://www.amiusa.org/event/22s71d6vgv3ewlqf6oypx4wgc680zm</a></p>
<p><b>AMI Refresher Course</b> February 13 – 15, 2026 San Diego</p>	<p>Click here for more information: <a href="https://www.amiusa.org/event/the-2026-montessori-experience-refresher-courses-more-in-san-diego-ca">https://www.amiusa.org/event/the-2026-montessori-experience-refresher-courses-more-in-san-diego-ca</a></p>

# The Season of Celebrating



December is a month filled with celebrations in cultures around the world. Many schools already recognize these special days, and some may have passed—but here are a few to keep in mind for the rest of this season or as you plan for next year.

## ***Saint Nicholas Day***

Observed on December 6 in Western Christian countries and December 19 in Eastern Christian countries that follow the Old Church Calendar. Over the centuries, St. Nicholas's story evolved into the figure we now know as Santa Claus!

## ***Bodhi Day – December 8***

This day honors the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama beneath the Bodhi Tree. May we each find a moment of clarity and peace on this day.

## ***Santa Lucia Day – December 13***

Celebrated in Scandinavian countries and parts of northern Italy, Santa Lucia brings light during the darkest time of year. Traditionally, the eldest daughter brings breakfast to the family, and children wake to small gifts left by St. Lucy.

## ***Hanukkah – December 14–22 (this year)***

The eight-day Jewish festival celebrates the triumph of religious freedom. Many classrooms display a menorah, lighting one candle each evening until all eight shine brightly.

## ***Winter Solstice – December 21***

The shortest day of the year—and the turning point toward the return of longer, brighter days.

## ***Christmas – December 25***

Christmas is an annual Christian festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed primarily on December 25 as a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people around the world.

## ***Kwanzaa – December 26***

Celebrations continue as families honor tradition, community, and cultural heritage.

## ***Epiphany – January 6***

In several South American countries, children receive gifts on Epiphany, the day the Three Wise Men are said to have arrived in Bethlehem. Tradition says you can place a box of grass under your bed for the camels—and perhaps wake to a surprise!

**The Board of the Michigan Montessori Society wishes you a joyous holiday season!**



If you've contacted MMS in any way—whether to register for a workshop, ask a question, join as a member, or respond to a communication—you've likely connected with **Kathy Smoko**.

For the past seven years, Kathy has served as the **MMS Administrator**, becoming an essential and irreplaceable part of our organization. She ensures that workshop registration and coordination run smoothly, sends certificates and membership benefits to accredited and member schools, and is always ready to assist with questions of any kind.

- ▶ Kathy attends board and committee meetings to stay fully informed, helping her keep our website accurate and up to date.

She has deeply enjoyed working with our Montessori community and takes pride in guiding members—whether by providing answers, offering resources, or pointing them in the right direction.

A Montessori parent herself, Kathy has been involved in the Montessori community for more than 25 years. Outside of MMS, she generously volunteers with Special Olympics and at the Farmington Farmer's Market.

We are grateful for Kathy's dedication, knowledge, and the warmth she brings to MMS every day.

## Montessori in the Public Sector

It is an exciting time for public Montessori schools in Michigan. Across the state, programs are stepping forward to advocate for Montessori pedagogy and clearly articulate its benefits, challenges, and needs. Yet many superintendents, curriculum directors, and district leaders have not had formal Montessori training, and misconceptions about the philosophy persist. One leader asked, "Is that where they play with blocks all day?" Another confidently asserted, "Everyone knows Montessori can be done with straight grades."

Many school leaders support the *idea* of Montessori without fully understanding the powerful, research-supported outcomes that authentic implementation can provide. Public Montessori educators therefore find themselves in a unique dual role: guiding the youngest learners while simultaneously educating district leadership. They work daily to balance necessary public-school requirements—state-mandated testing, intervention programs, and occasional pull-outs—with a commitment to the Essential Elements of high-fidelity Montessori practice (National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector).

Nationwide, education is shifting rapidly as families seek learning environments that honor the whole child—the "little human," as Dr. Montessori described. Public Montessori programs strive to offer exactly that, continuing the work that began in San Lorenzo so many years ago: child-centered, developmentally responsive education for every family who chooses it.

**NATIONAL CENTER** for  
**MONTESSORI** in the  
**PUBLIC SECTOR**

[Read More - Essential Elements for Public Montessori](#)

A recently published article (November 27, 2025), by Jane Kelly from the University of Virginia, supports Montessori in the public center with the publication of extensive research conducted by Angeline Lillard, David Loeb, and Karen Manship.

This national study found that children attending public Montessori preschools outperformed their peers in reading, memory, and executive function by the end of kindergarten, all while costing schools substantially less.

None of this is news to those of us who work in Montessori schools, but it is reassuring to have reputable research that supports our experience. The complete article (click below) has specific details.

[Read More - 100 Year Old Teaching Method](#)

You can also find a brief report on YouTube. But if you want to hear from the researchers themselves, AMI is hosting a virtual session with the three researchers on **January 6, 2026 from 7:00 – 8:30pm.**

[Register Here for the virtual AMI Session](#)

---

## Focus on Legislation

Many schools may not be aware of [Michigan House Bill 5549](#) which requires all Michigan schools, public and nonpublic to establish a **Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management tea (Mi-BTAM)** by October 1 2026. Mi-BTAM is a process designed to identify, assess, and work collaboratively with families and students to mitigate thoughts of violence and aggression. This new state law is a direct outcome of the Oxford shooting.

For additional information, please refer to any of the following:

[BTAM Best Practices](#)

A 13-page overview, great place to start in understanding the concept.

[Michigan State Police BTAM Training](#)

The “Train the Trainer” session in September could be particularly valuable for small schools.

[Partner Alliance for Safer Schools](#)

Non-profit professional organization that supports school safety efforts. Lots of free resources, reviews, articles.

---

## Spring Gathering – Mark Your Calendar

On the heels of a very successful Fall Conference, MMS is excited to announce our next event — the **Spring Gathering**, taking place on **Saturday, May 2, 2026.**

We’re delighted to welcome **Carol Williams**, professor in Early Childhood Education at both **Eastern Michigan University** and **Schoolcraft Community College**, as our **keynote**

speaker.

This event will take place at [Ann Arbor Children's House](#) (2309 Packard Street, Ann Arbor).



ann arbor  
children's house  
a traditional montessori school

---

Michigan Montessori Society | 15575 Northline Road | Southgate, MI 48195 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!