



Brittany A. Stone

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Still tinkering

Oct 6 · 5 min read

## Sneak Peek!

### Background

For the past several years, parents in the Montessori community have lobbied hard for the expansion of the secondary program to include grades 9 through 12. Last year, we achieved a hard-fought victory when the school board voted to add ninth grade to our program at Sedgefield for the 2016–17 school year.

But the school board made it very clear that there was no guarantee and no timetable for continuing the program's expansion.

And the biggest question still remained: As our secondary program continues to grow, where will it reside? With overcrowding plaguing many of our district's schools, deferred maintenance needs escalating after several years of budget cuts, and the county commissioners' refusal to put school bonds on the ballot this year, adequate facility space in the district is in short supply.

But we remained both hopeful and persistent.

To help guide the search, Montessori educators worked alongside parents to provide district leaders with a list of must-have criteria for identifying a location for the secondary Montessori program.

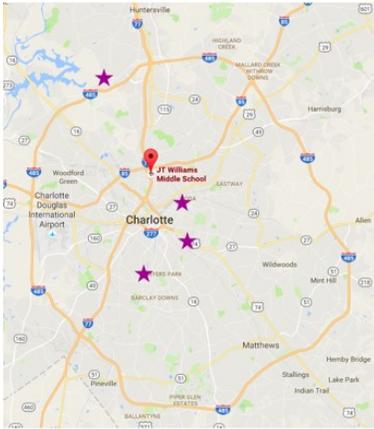
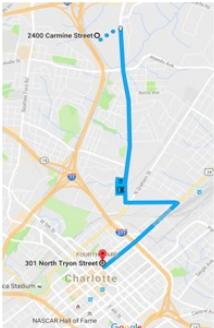
## **OUR 4 MUST-HAVES** for a Secondary Montessori Location

- A space of our own with room to grow
- Centrally located within the district
- Easy access to public transit
- Plenty of green space

And we are very pleased to announce that ***a location for our secondary program will be recommended to the school board on October 11*** to allow for the continued expansion of our high school grade levels, beginning with the addition of 10th grade in the 2017–18 school year!

*This means that we'd have a complete PreK — 12 Montessori pipeline and our first graduating class in 2020!*

Here's how the proposal for our new home, J.T. Williams, stacks up with our location must-haves:

The 4 Must-Haves	J.T. Williams	Conclusion	Verdict
<p>A Space of Our Own with Room to Grow</p>	<p>Six buildings, over 98,000 sq ft, not shared with any other school or program</p> <p>\$15 million renovation planned, guided by Montessori professionals</p>	<p>Plenty of elbow room!</p>	<p></p>
<p>Centrally Located Within the District</p>		<p>Close to uptown, and a good midpoint between our furthest feeder schools</p>	<p></p>
<p>Easy Access to Public Transit</p>	 <p>12:11 PM - 12:34 PM (23 min)</p> <p>12:17 PM from Statesville Ave &amp; Carmine St 6 min</p>	<p>Less than 30 minutes to uptown and no transfers</p>	<p></p>

Plenty of Green Space	Over 27 acres	Yeah, that's probably enough!	
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## A Space of Our Own with Room to Grow

### Our Need

We no longer wanted to be part of a partial magnet structure, nor did we want to share a building with an entirely different magnet program, simply because our numbers are starting out small.

Additionally, a Montessori classroom has different structural needs than a traditional classroom, so it was also critical that we have a physical space designed to foster a Montessori learning environment.

### Why J.T. Williams

With over 98,000 square feet spread through 6 buildings, this location certainly meets our need for elbow-room.

Bldg	Story	Units	Total SqFt	Heated SqFt
1	1 STORY	1	23444	23289
2	2.0 STORY	1	28727	26832
3	2.0 STORY	1	21708	19256
4	1 STORY	1	13776	13776
5	1 STORY	1	12800	12800
6	1 STORY	1	2420	2420

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Assessor via Real Estate Lookup

What's even better is that the district is also proposing a \$15 million renovation of the space, guided by Montessori professionals. Though the building isn't vacant, the current program doesn't use the whole space, so renovations would begin immediately!

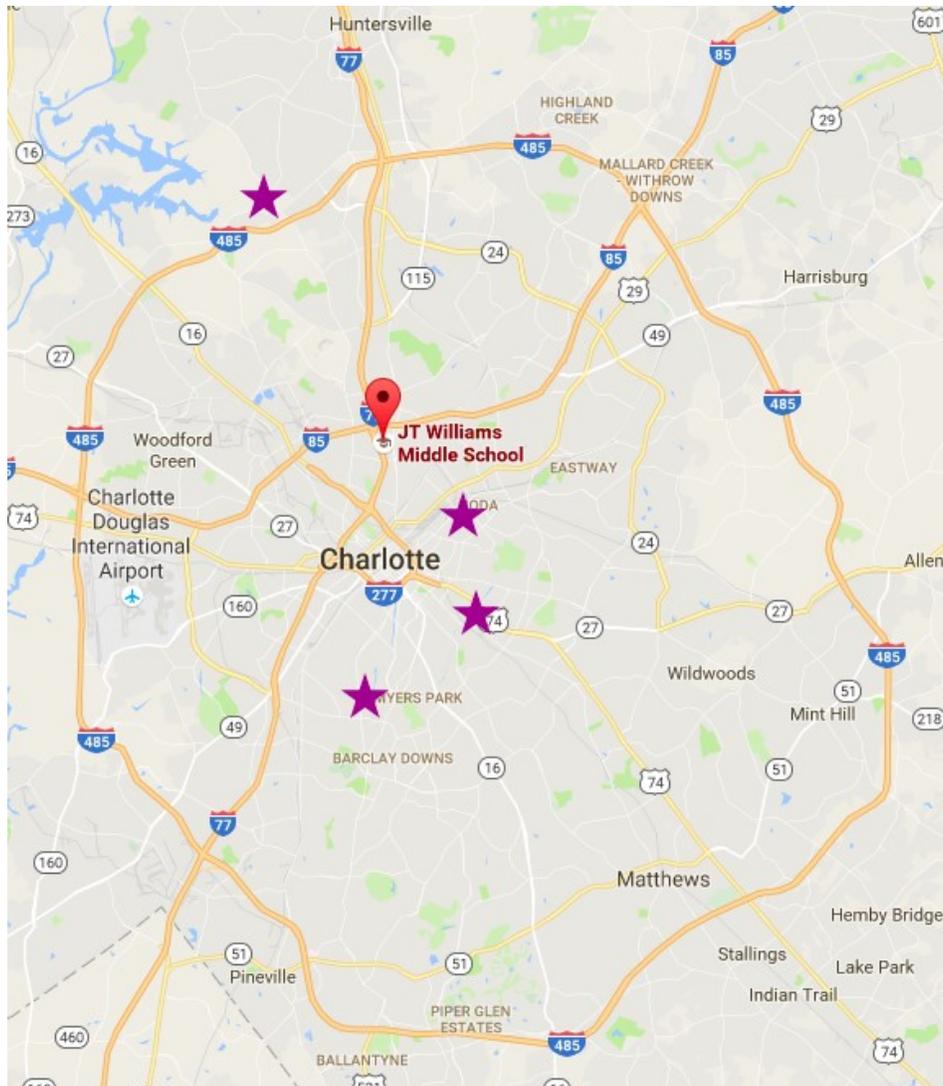
## Centrally Located Within the District

### Our Need

With four elementary feeder schools, it's important that the location of our secondary program be accessible for each of them.

## Why J.T. Williams

While we would have preferred an uptown location (our cool factor would have really climbed!), we got pretty close. The stars are our four elementary schools:



Source: Google Maps

And as a bonus, our program would be close to both major highways through the city.

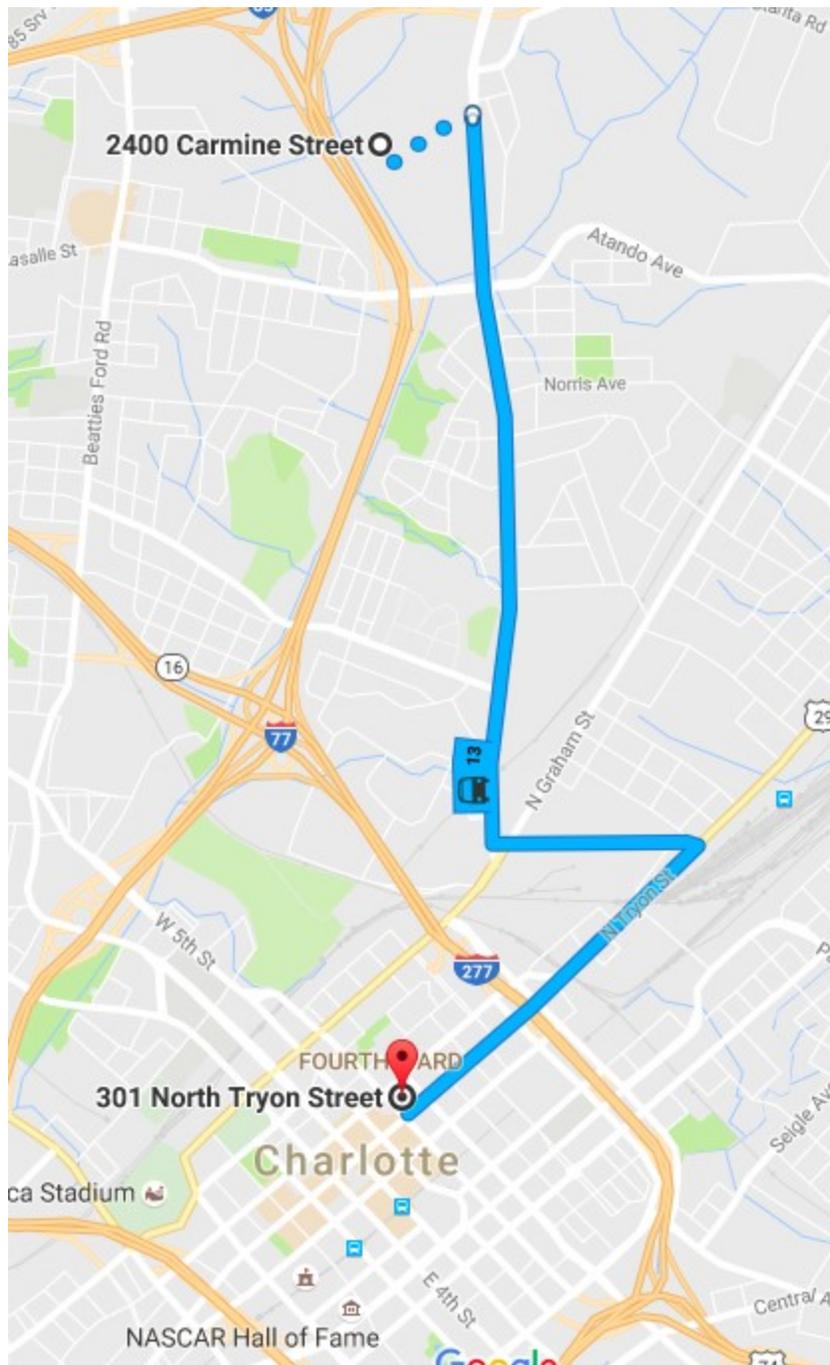
# Easy Access to Public Transit

## Our Need

At the secondary level, students are continuing to develop their independence and practical life skills, but they also need access to service learning and internship opportunities. So from a curriculum perspective, public transit meets each of these needs.

## Why J.T. Williams

The school is located within walking distance of public transportation that can get students uptown in less than 30 minutes, opening up a wealth of opportunities. So let's say a group of secondary Montessori students planned a trip to see an exhibit at Discovery Place, then wanted to pop over to the Main Library across the street to use the Idea Box Makerspace to work on a project. On any given afternoon, here's their 23-minute route:



Source: Charlotte Area Transit System, Trip Planner

## Plenty of Green Space

### Our Need

While we wanted easy access to the convenience and opportunities of our urban center, learning in and through nature is a cornerstone of the Montessori philosophy and curriculum. All of the vital aspects of learning and

development that take place outside, from play to science, could not be ignored.

## Why J.T. Williams

Surprisingly, despite being at the intersection of two major highways and a stone's throw from uptown, the school sits on over 27 acres!

Parcel Information					
Parcel ID	Account	Parent	Previous		
07704801	EXEMPT				
Owner(s)					
Owner Name	Mailing Address	City/State			
CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION	701 E 2ND ST	CHARLOTTE NC 28202			
Legal Information					
Legal	Municipality	Date Annexed	Special District	Fire District	Acreage
M3-162	CHARLOTTE			CITY OF CHARLOTTE	27.64

Source: Mecklenburg County Tax Assessor via Real Estate Lookup

## What's Next?

We are just three school board meetings away from seeing a huge victory after years of parent advocacy!

- **Tues, October 11:** District leaders present recommendations
- **Tues, October 25:** Community feedback is heard
- **Wed, November 9:** School board members vote

Many of you have spoken at school board meetings, written letters to school board members and CMS executive staff, made phone calls and poster board signs, completed surveys, and shown up to meetings—all urging the district and the school board to finally finish the full Montessori program.

*And because of all of those efforts, we are now so close to approving the first public Montessori high school in the state!*

If you want to get involved in our final push for a Yes vote, stay tuned; we will send out templates in the next few days to make your emails and phone calls easy.