

Executive Director

Mount Sopris Montessori School | Carbondale, Colorado

In-person | Full-time | Salaried, exempt

Salary range: \$90,000–\$130,000 annually

About Us

Located on a quiet residential street in the beautiful mountain town of Carbondale, Colorado, Mount Sopris Montessori School is a nonprofit preschool serving about 60 children ages 18 months through 6 years. Founded in 1981 by Kathryn and Mark Ross, the not-for-profit school is recognized as an exceptional preschool environment, based on the Montessori Method of child-led learning. The school offers dedicated preschool and toddler classrooms led by experienced educators, with teachers certified through organizations such as the American Montessori Society (AMS), American Montessori International (AMI), or the North American Montessori Center (NAMC).

Position Summary

We seek a director who recognizes the critical importance of an inspired preschool education. Preschool is a critical educational period because roughly 90% of a child's brain development happens before age five, laying the foundational cognitive, social, and emotional habits for life.

The Executive Director provides strategic, financial, and organizational leadership for Mount Sopris Montessori School. The Executive Director sets direction in partnership with the Board of Directors, holds ultimate accountability for the school's financial health and regulatory standing, and leads the Assistant Director and staff in delivering a high-quality Montessori program. Montessori training is provided as part of onboarding.

This role reports to the Board of Directors (via the Board President) and directly supervises the Assistant Director, who manages day-to-day school operations. This is a Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) "Director of Record" position — the Executive Director carries ultimate licensing accountability for the center.

Key Responsibilities

Governance & Strategy

- Partner with the Board to set and execute annual and multi-year strategic plan and priorities.
- Translate Board-approved strategy into operational goals for the Assistant Director and staff.
- Attend Board meetings, report on enrollment, finances, program quality, and compliance.
- Identify risks and opportunities affecting the school's long-term sustainability.

Family & Enrollment Relations

- Manage the admissions pipeline: tours, applications, and family onboarding.
- Monitor enrollment and retention by classroom; flag enrollment risks early.

Financial Management & Fundraising

- Develop and manage the annual budget in partnership with the Board and bookkeeper.
- Monitor tuition revenue, staffing costs, and cash flow against budget.
- Oversee participation in and compliance with public funding and support programs, including CCCAP, UPK, Colorado Shines, and other local, state, and federal programs to maximize funding.
- Proactively identify and pursue funding opportunities for which the school is eligible.
- Lead fundraising and development: annual giving, donor relationships, grants, and events.

Organizational & Staff Leadership

- Hire, onboard, and evaluate the Assistant Director and lead teaching staff.
- Coach and mentor teachers on curriculum implementation and classroom practices.
- Set compensation, handle disciplinary matters, and maintain employee handbook policies.
- Build and maintain a healthy, mission-aligned staff culture.

Facilities Oversight & Management

- Identify and plan for capital improvements and major facility expenditures in partnership with the Board.

- Develop a long-term strategic plan for the school's grounds and physical campus as a core asset.

Licensing, Compliance & Community

- Maintain staff qualifications, background checks, and training records for CDEC compliance.
- Represent the school within the Carbondale and Roaring Fork Valley community.
- Set enrollment strategy and monitor overall enrollment against budget.
- Champion the school's Montessori philosophy and educational quality standards.

Required Qualifications

- College Degree (Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or similar)
- Qualifies as Director under current CDEC requirements for a Large Child Care Center (or can obtain CDEC Director qualification verification before start).
- Senior leadership or Board-level experience in a school, nonprofit, or comparable organization.
- Budget development and financial management experience.
- Fundraising, development, or donor relations experience.
- Demonstrated ability to lead through organizational change.
- Sound judgment handling confidential and sensitive matters.

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in early childhood education, educational leadership, or administration
- Experience in a Montessori school or familiarity with Montessori philosophy.
- Experience directing a licensed Colorado child-care center.
- Nonprofit governance experience.

Schedule

Full-time, in-person, Monday–Friday during school operating hours, with occasional evenings or weekends for Board meetings and school events.

Benefits

- Simple IRA with a match of up to 3% of salary
- Modest Health Insurance Stipend

How to Apply

Submit a resume, a brief letter of interest, and your current CDEC Director qualification status to hiring@mtsoprismontessori.com. Employment is contingent on verification of qualifications, background checks, and references.

Mount Sopris Montessori School is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome qualified applicants and do not discriminate based on any status protected by applicable law.