

# Montessori kids move to new digs

After April vacation, students will start classes in fresh building

By Jenn Smith  
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LENOX — After April school vacation week, the students at Montessori School of the Berkshires will head back to class at a new building.

Head of School Todd Covert said the school system is scheduled to move into its new Lenox Dale property Monday morning. Construction of the new building began in November 2008.

During construction, the school operated out of a shop space in Aspinwell plaza on Routes 7 and 20 in Lenox.

Meagan Ledendecker, director of education and an elementary school teacher, said the school has 67 students. The new building is designed to accommodate children from 18 months through Grade 8.

Before breaking for vacation Friday, Montessori students and their parents toured the classrooms at the new school. Each student carried in a container of books and school supplies.

The new school received positive reviews from stu-

dents during their visit.

"It's a bigger space and it's exciting," said 9-year-old Max Palatino.

"There's couches and chairs in the library. And there are more classroom spaces where we can work with the little kids," said Zoe Nadig, 10.

"And there's more room for recess," said 8-year-old Aidan Lossado.

The new school has an outdoor play space of approximately 9,000 square feet.

Set within a 40-acre woodland area, the new school was designed as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified campus, through the efforts of local architect Dana Bixby, Henry's Electric, designer Chris Vreeland, Climate Heating and Cooling, and B&B Landscaping and Excavating, and others.

The new school's green features include nontoxic and natural materials like low- or no-VOC (volatile organic



Kayla Galway/Special to The Eagle

Todd Covert, the head of Montessori School, center, guides students and parents on a tour of the school's new facilities in Lenox Dale.

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Kayla Galway/Special to The Eagle

A worker helps get the Montessori School into shape as students get their first look at the new space.

## Space 'emphasizes Montessori philosophy'

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compounds) paint; solar walls; a hybrid natural and mechanical ventilation system; and natural and radiant heat flooring. There will also be a grassy field, an open meadow, orchards, fruit and vegetable gardens and a rain garden.

During the tour, parents commented on the amount of natural

light and open space in the building.

"It's so great to have a space that emphasizes the Montessori philosophy of teaching and learning," Ledendecker said.

Named after founder Maria Montessori, the educational method caters to a child's natural instincts and sensitivity to conditions in a learning environment.

This week, carpenters and contractors are working to put the finishing touches and final polish on the building. Landscaping will continue throughout the spring. A summer camp program also will be offered at the new site.

To learn more about the Montessori School building, visit [www.berkshireremontessori.org](http://www.berkshireremontessori.org).