

## VOTE YES FOR MONTESSORI!!

This week we were excited to hear from Clark Montessori High School in Ohio that they have been selected as one of six finalists in President Obama's Race to the Top school competition. Videos from the winning schools will be aired soon on MTV for a public vote. We'll let you know as we learn more so you can vote to support Montessori education.

Clark High School is the first public Montessori high school in the United States and is affiliated with the adolescent Montessori training program that Khalsa Middle School teacher, Jennifer Skiffington has attended. We are proud that our teacher has been mentored by these award winning Montessorians and it's wonderful to know that this model for adolescent education is getting recognition all the way to the top!

I recently had the privilege of attending a lecture by Dr. Tony Wagner, author of The Global Achievement Gap. Dr. Wagner is the co-director of the Change Leadership Group at Harvard Graduate School of Education. In his book Dr. Wagner addresses the growing concerns of business, education, finance and government leaders that even our best schools are not teaching the new survival skills our children need for success in the 21st century world that they will inherit. He makes suggestions about what we can do about it.

Dr. Wagner criticizes the policy-driven emphasis on testing, not only the standardized testing implemented now in every state, but also the current AP trend in high schools. It's not testing and accountability that he takes issue with, but the fact that the tests are still measuring skills that were important in a previous generation, but do not measure the skills that are vital to success in today's world and into the future. He has interviewed top AP students at really successful schools and has found them lacking in critical thinking skills, problem solving, academic agility, imagination, and other skills that are necessary for our rapidly changing world.

The seven skills Dr. Wagner identifies as critical survival skills for our children for success in their future careers, college and citizenship are these (these skills, he is careful to point out, are in addition to *matters of the heart*, which have always been important-- and that, he says, remains unchanged):

1. Critical thinking, problem solving, ability to ask good questions
2. Collaboration, leadership by influence across networks
3. Agility, adaptability, interdisciplinary flexibility
4. Initiative, entrepreneurialism (courage to fail early and often)
5. Effective oral and written communication--persuasive, passionate
6. Ability to access and analyze new information
7. Curiosity and imagination

Although these seven skills are often referred to as 21st Century Skills, they are identical to goals Maria Montessori identified nearly a century ago in her book From Childhood to Adolescence. From the 20th century and into the 21st century, these Montessori essays have inspired Montessori adolescent programs such as Clark Montessori and our own Khalsa Montessori School. It is encouraging to know that academic leaders like Dr. Tony Wagner and government programs such as Race to the Top support the educational priorities that are such important pieces of the Montessori vision.

**Come and Play! See You at the Khalsa Spring Carnival on Sunday!**

*Notes from Nirvaír 4/16/10*

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