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**Brady Education Foundation funds major study into public Montessori's  
potential for closing the achievement gap.**

Chapel Hill, NC, March 19, 2018: The Brady Education Foundation announces the research teams that will conduct a new study to further explore how public Montessori early education can advance academic and social-emotional development of all children, regardless of background, and whether public Montessori education reduces the effects of lower family income and whether it is equally effective across cultural groups. Research teams at Child Trends and The Riley Institute at Furman University will collect the data for the multi-site study, and a team based at the University of [Kansas Center for Montessori Research](#) will handle data management. This work will build on a small but promising body of research showing students in these programs achieve greater academic growth than their non-Montessori peers. As one of the largest randomized controlled trials of its kind, the Brady study will have samples large enough to determine whether the results of recent work hold up and ultimately whether Montessori can reduce the opportunity gap (often referred to as the achievement gap) among children.

Although Montessori is often misperceived as private education that is only available to affluent families, it is slowly expanding in public education with positive results. Montessori takes a whole child approach, developing the intellectual, moral, emotional and behavioral skills of children. The program's rich interdisciplinary curriculum supports students' work towards becoming competent, productive and fulfilled adults who contribute to the world. Recent research on public Montessori early education programs has shown increases in student academic achievement, school enjoyment and creativity. These findings extended across students' socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds, indicating that the program may help shrink the student achievement gap that closely parallels the family income gap. These results are promising and warrant a study that addresses the limitations of earlier work in size and rigor.

“A great amount of research documents the effects of the opportunity/achievement gap, both for low income kids and kids of color,” says Liz Pungello Bruno, president of Brady Education Foundation. “While high-fidelity Montessori education has been shown to promote positive outcomes for children, we need more research using rigorous designs with larger sample sizes to do the critical subgroup analyses.” For example, Dr. Angeline Lillard’s [recent study](#) of public Montessori in Hartford, Connecticut was rigorous but small, with only 2 school sites and not enough ethnic variability to conduct subgroup analyses concerning cultural background. The recent Furman University [study](#) on public Montessori programs in South Carolina was large enough to compare ethnic/racial subgroups but was not a randomized controlled trial.

This study capitalizes on school lotteries that will randomize the initial study sample of children at the age of 3 and follow them over 3 years through kindergarten. Participants will be drawn from sites across the US. Study results are expected to be made public by the end of 2022.

## **ABOUT THE BRADY EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

*The mission of the Brady Education Foundation is to help close the opportunity and resulting achievement gap between children living in under-represented and/or under-resourced communities and other children. The Foundation pursues its mission by promoting collaboration between researchers and educators via the funding of research and program evaluations in education that has the potential to inform public policy and private funding decisions. The Foundation is particularly focused on the development and evaluation of programs that are consistent with a strength-based approach and show promise of being feasible, accessible and sustainable.*