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## **FURMAN'S RILEY INSTITUTE RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY MONTESSORI IMPACT IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREENVILLE, S.C.—The Riley Institute at Furman University has been awarded a \$370,000 grant from the Self Family Foundation of Greenwood to study the impact of Montessori education on public schools in South Carolina.

The grant will be used by the Riley Institute's Center for Education Policy and Leadership to conduct a five-year, comprehensive research study aimed at developing a full understanding of how public school Montessori programs impact a range of education stakeholders in the state.

Researchers will examine the impacts of the Montessori program on student achievement, discipline issues, progression, and affective learning outcomes. The study will also look at how Montessori impacts learning and teaching, and the level of parental satisfaction with Montessori programming.

The research team is a collaboration among the Riley Institute and Furman's departments of political science and education. Principal investigator Brooke Culclasure is research director for the Riley Institute's Center for Education Policy and Leadership, and co-investigators are professors David Fleming (political science) and Lorraine Dejong (education).

For decades, Montessori education has earned accolades within the private school community for its approach to teaching and student learning. Montessori's foray into South Carolina public schools has made great strides in the last 10 years through the considerable

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investment by Self Family Foundation in public Montessori classrooms and in Lander University's Montessori education program. Montessori now serves more than 20 South Carolina school districts representing about 4,500 students.

Said Barbara Ervin, Montessori program director at Lander University, "Supporters of Montessori education believe the study can provide answers to many of our most pressing educational problems. To date, only a handful of research studies on Montessori have been completed. It's heartening to see the Riley Institute take on a major statewide examination of Montessori education. It will make a major contribution to our understanding of evidence-based Montessori practice."

Said Self Family Foundation president Frank J. Wideman, III, "We believe the Montessori Method is a valuable option in our public schools that enables our students to be more successful learners. We are particularly interested in measuring its impact on students from more disadvantaged backgrounds in rural South Carolina. While there is much anecdotal evidence that Montessori education makes a real difference in student achievement, we are interested in this comprehensive study providing reliable data as to the program's value. We are excited to partner with the Riley Institute in this important effort. "

For more information about the study, contact Brooke Culclasure, research director, Center for Education Policy and Leadership at the Riley Institute, 864-294-3236, or [brooke.culclasure@furman.edu](mailto:brooke.culclasure@furman.edu).

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