

Testimony by MTA Executive Committee member Matthew Bach
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education hearing
on the Wildflower Montessori Charter School proposal
Haverhill, MA
December 3, 2018

The *Wildflower* charter venture is not so much a Montessori experiment as it is an incubator for educational technology products.

Wildflower CEO Matt Kramer states in a December 2016 [blog post](#), "As usual, there's a lot to write about, but this time I'm going to focus on our technology. First, a quick refresher. Technology plays two critical roles in our vision for Wildflower: a suite of software tools will make it possible for a teacher-leader to administer a one-room school in just hours a week, without any dedicated administrative staff; and, we will use sensors to automatically capture information from the Montessori environment about what work children are taking on and what progress they are making in completing it, extending a Montessori teacher's ability to observe and thereby increasing their capacity for data-driven decision making, without the use of tests, quizzes or screen time."

The data will be accumulated by *Transparent Classroom*, an independent contractor that pledges it will "share the data appropriately," whatever that means.

The founder of the chain, Sep Kamvar, was the department head of "personalized" online learning at Google before moving to the *Wildflower* network.

The national backers of this *Wildflower* "fast-food franchise" charter idea include the *Omidyar Network*, the *Walton Family Foundation*, and the *Chan Zuckerberg Initiative* — venture capitalists and one-percenters intent on destroying public education while creating new markets for their ed-tech products.

All of this shows that the *Wildflower* charter franchise proposal, at its heart, is an attempt to collect and commodify student data, create new publicly funded markets for ed-tech product overstock, and relentlessly expose students to potentially hazardous sensory technology that we see ed-tech billionaires avoid repeatedly when it comes to their own children.