

Annual Report of a Public Charter School

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

montessori made public



2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950

Andrew Willemsen, Director

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Assistant Director

phone: 978-465-0065

fax: 978-465-0119

email: rvcv@rivervalleycharter.org

website: www.rivervalleycharter.org

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Introduction to River Valley Charter School

River Valley Charter School			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location of School	Newburyport MA
Regional or Non-Regional?	Regional	Districts in Region	Amesbury Newbury Newburyport Salisbury West Newbury
Year Opened	1999	Year(s) Renewed	2004 2009 2014
Maximum Enrollment	288	Current Enrollment	288
Chartered Grade Span	K-8	Current Grade Span	K-8
# of Instructional Days during the school year	180	Students on Waitlist	545
School Hours	8:30am - 3:10pm	Age of School	Eighteen years
Mission Statement			
The mission of the River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers and civic life.			

Letter from the Board of Trustees Chairperson

To the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

It is our pleasure to submit the River Valley Charter School Annual Report for the 2016-2017 academic year. After three years as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I continue to be amazed by the school's ability to grow and improve year after year. River Valley Charter School continues to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

River Valley Charter School (RVCS) provides a high quality Montessori program within the public sphere. The Montessori philosophy is centered upon a whole child approach to education. Our primary goal is to help children reach their full potential both academically and personally, while instilling in them a sense of their place in the world and their responsibilities as productive members of society.

Strategic planning efforts undertaken two years ago resulted in Board support for an academically oriented strategic plan around bringing fresh new ideas and approaches to adapt the Montessori education to the 21st century and modern academic needs and challenges. The Director, staff, and faculty have taken those concepts and developed exciting new frameworks for their educational conversations that have impacted learnings from Kinderhaus through the 8th grade. Andy Willemsen and Laura Hunt have been invited to present at the National Montessori Conference in 2018 on a number of these exciting ideas.

Teacher motivation and shared vision is high and we believe the school continues to build a sense of team and purpose among the staff and faculty that results in improved classroom performance. When there have been staffing changes, incoming teachers enjoy excellent support and guidance and have seamlessly become part of the RVCS family. Feedback from the parents and students indicates that the social culture of the school is supportive, welcoming, and remarkably cohesive.

As with previous years, the River Valley Charter School continues to maintain a sound fiscal position and reliably smooth school operations. School policies and student performance continue to meet state standards. The Board of Trustees continues to enjoy strong recruitment of talented new members to replace outgoing Trustees, including our first ever student alumni board member! Exciting upgrades to the physical spaces are happening this summer as the Middle School undergoes a transformative renovation project.

Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed report, and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Regards,



Nat Coughlin
Chair, Board of Directors
River Valley Charter School

School Performance and Program Implementation

Faithfulness to the Charter

Mission and Key Design Elements

The mission of the River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life.

Key design elements of the River Valley Charter School program include:

- An educational philosophy based on Montessori principles
- A curriculum rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley
- A focus on the development of students' critical thinking and problem solving capabilities.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, River Valley has remained faithful to its charter and there were no significant changes in the core academic philosophy, curriculum or programming.

Montessori Principles

River Valley Charter School (RVCS) provides a high-quality Montessori program within the public school arena. The school maintains its commitment to the Montessori pedagogy by hiring Montessori-trained and/or certified teachers in every classroom whenever possible and by providing full tuition support for professional training to help faculty meet the school's expectation that all lead teachers be Montessori trained. RVCS also supports authentic Montessori programming by staying abreast of best practices in the ever-expanding arena of public Montessori programs. Every classroom in grades K through six has a full-time lead teacher and a full time assistant teacher, which is a core component of the Montessori approach. During 2016-2017, all nine of our Assistant Teachers were either Montessori-certified or had received some level of Montessori training. Our classrooms are outfitted with genuine Montessori learning materials and furniture, which are essential to creating a prepared Montessori learning environment. We offer multi-age classrooms, hands-on learning, a project-based curriculum, frequent student collaboration and student-directed learning; all hallmarks of the Montessori philosophy.

Montessori education is centered upon a whole-child approach to learning. Our primary goal is to help children reach their full potential both academically and personally, while instilling in them a sense of their place in the world and their responsibilities as productive members of society. The curriculum is designed to develop the social, emotional, physical and cognitive elements of each student, and is based on a belief that children are naturally eager to learn when appropriate conditions exist. Our learning environments operate on the principle of freedom within limits in order to foster the independence and decision making skills of our students. Lessons are given in small group settings, and are customized to meet the learning needs of each student. With two teachers in every classroom, instruction is individualized to the greatest extent possible. The multi-age classrooms enrich the curriculum options by offering students the opportunity to learn from and teach each other. Teachers provide lessons based on both their Montessori training and the guidelines of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

The success of this approach is evident through the skills and characteristics that our students develop. They are remarkably adaptable, they have learned to work independently, they bring great creativity to their learning, and their curiosity inspires them to seek answers to their own questions. River Valley students demonstrate excellent collaboration and communication skills, and are adept at exchanging ideas both in writing and through discussion. They have extensive experience at public speaking and possess strong presentation skills. Our students have been encouraged to make decisions from the earliest grades, and have learned to make good choices and manage their time well. They have also learned that mistakes are part of the learning process and provide important opportunities for self-reflection and growth. The independence and variety of challenging and authentic learning opportunities children experience at River Valley foster excellent critical thinking and problem solving skills, not just with paper and pencil exercises, but also in real world applications.

River Valley staff demonstrate a consistent commitment to the Montessori principles of whole-child education; developing a strong sense of community, emphasizing and providing a climate of genuine collaboration, seeking to develop deep understanding of academic concepts, providing active learning opportunities, and developing a sense of social justice in children. Examples of each of these core principles are provided below.

Whole-Child Education: Our staff demonstrates deep concern for and awareness of every student. To begin each day, staff greet every child as they exit their car or the school bus, prior to the student even entering the school building. Our School Counselor greets every student at the front door of the school to get a quick glimpse of each student's emotional state as they begin their day. Our individualized approach to instruction

"Education is not something which the teacher does, but is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child."

Dr. Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential

during the school day allows teachers to carefully assess each student's readiness to learn, and to respond to personal, social or emotional concerns directly. Classrooms for our younger students contain "peace corners," where students can go for a quiet moment to help them feel centered and ready-to-learn, or where two students can speak together to resolve differences. At all levels, lessons are given on "grace and courtesy," a

Montessori expression used to help students reflect on and learn how to be respectful and at peace with themselves and with others. Students are physically active during classroom learning periods, allowing kinesthetic learners to access their strengths, and all students to develop independence and remain engaged in their learning.

Developing a Strong Sense of Community: Each classroom at River Valley functions as its own small community. Students are expected to maintain the order and cleanliness of the learning environment, and our multi-age structure provides natural opportunities for students of different ages to assume various roles in this work. Every class, including our middle school, holds regular community meetings. At these meetings students discuss the successes or challenges that their community faces and develop strategies and responses accordingly. Students in grades four through eight participate in overnight field trips during which community-building activities are emphasized. These trips allow students to demonstrate their skills and abilities outside of the academic

"It is up to the teacher to arrange that the moral teachings of life emerge from social experiences. Morals have at the same time a practical side, which governs social relations, and a spiritual side, which presides over the awakening of conscience in the individual."

Dr. Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence

environment, further strengthening each student's standing within the community. Students at all levels eat lunch in their classrooms (with teachers), allowing for informal social time that provides additional community connections. In order to develop school-wide community, River Valley holds regular whole-school assemblies where both students and staff provide insight into the projects and activities happening throughout the building and beyond. To the fullest extent possible, students run the school-wide assemblies.

Genuine Collaboration: Much of the learning that happens at River Valley happens between students. Though direct instruction is provided to every student every day, students spend a large portion of the

"...It seems that the capacity of really understanding is connected with discussion, with criticism, or with assent of others. The satisfaction of knowing must be immediately communicated to others, and in this communication enthusiasm increases."

Dr. Maria Montessori, The Erdkinder and the Functions of the University

learning time working with each other. Classrooms are furnished with group tables and provide open floor space for group work, and all students are encouraged to work together on many assignments. This approach not

only fosters collaboration, but also provides students the opportunity to articulate their thinking to others, which helps to deepen their comprehension. Additionally, our commitment to tie our curriculum to the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley naturally lends itself to project-based learning. River Valley students regularly work in groups (often multi-aged) to explore concepts in science, history and humanities. Project work expectations typically include both reporting and presentation (often multi-media), and our students are responsible for collaborating to assure successful execution of these expectations.

Deep Understanding: The River Valley curricular approach is one of mastery learning rather than of simply covering concepts. Our curriculum map identifies all learning goals for each level, yet our teachers have the flexibility to present concepts in various manners to suit the learning styles of each student. Rather than structuring the day to assign a limited amount of time to each subject area, our Montessori approach provides both students and teachers complete flexibility in the time they choose to devote to any given pursuit. When a student, or group of students, demonstrates a particular interest in exploring a concept, question, or issue more deeply, the Montessori philosophy calls for teachers to facilitate such interests.

Much of the student work is project-based, and students frequently have a voice in the topics they research. For example, every October our E1 students (grades 1-3) engage in the Mystery History project where each child selects a notable historical figure, researches his/her life, creates a biography, and formally presents their results to students

"Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence."

Dr. Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education

and parents while dressed in the costume of their historical figure. Our E2 students (grades 4-6) regularly engage in project-based work, exploring topics from the Industrial Revolution to our local ecosystems. Through frequent field trips, students gain opportunities to engage in meaningful and hands-on activities that bring relevance and deeper comprehension to their studies. Nearly all projects culminate in some form of presentation, providing students the opportunity to teach others about their learning, and providing teachers opportunities for authentic assessment. At the middle school level, students continue to benefit from our hands-on approach to learning. Among other projects, Language Arts classes created Shakespearean costumes to act out scenes from Romeo and Juliet. Humanities students studied the endangered Merrimack River and presented their findings to area residents through a self-designed educational forum at the local performing arts theater. Math students designed rain gardens to help filter water draining into the river, calculating volume and flow rates. Science students designed and built wind turbines, comparing the effectiveness of various blade designs and layouts.

Active Learning Opportunities: Maria Montessori pioneered the now widely accepted principle that the work of the hand informs the learning of the mind. Given this fundamental belief, Montessori classrooms are designed to provide active learning to all students. Montessori materials allow students to manipulate learning materials in order to experience the concrete representation of a given concept. Students are free to move about the classroom, providing important kinesthetic opportunities. Students have an active voice in their learning process, and rarely learn in a sit-and-listen format. Our place-based learning focus allows students multiple opportunities to actively engage in learning experiences outside the school walls. From exploring the wetland ponds on our school site to participating in the Model United Nations program, River Valley students continually experience and learn from the surrounding world in active ways.

“Curiosity is an impulse to investigate. Once the child has felt the fascination of one object, he will become zealous in the conservation of all objects.”

Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind

Developing a Sense of Social Justice in Children: Each of our classroom communities develops social contracts at the beginning of each year defining the expectations and conditions for peaceful, respectful and productive learning environments. This process provides opportunities for students to articulate and deepen their thinking regarding social justice in the school setting and beyond. The concept of social justice in a larger context comes as a natural extension of our efforts to build community within our school. As students come to see themselves as valued members of the classroom and school community, they are poised to see

“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”

Dr. Maria Montessori, Education and Peace

that they have connections to, and a role to play in, their local and global communities. River Valley students at all levels participate in community service work that provides them with new perspectives on larger communities and the issues that people beyond our school walls may face. Our younger students visit facilities for the elderly and disabled, and learn through experiences as they interact with these communities. Students in grades four through eight frequently engage in formal debates, and topics regularly center on social justice issues. Our E2 students work with a local soup kitchen, and are able to reflect upon the challenges this segment of our community faces. E1 and E2 students frequently design and run fundraising efforts for non-profit organizations, from the local food bank and animal shelter to hospitals and international NGOs. Our middle school students engage with and fundraise for a variety of social justice causes, including the above-mentioned campaign to steward the Merrimack River.

Curriculum Rooted in the Merrimack River Valley

Place-based learning is a central element of the River Valley curriculum. The geographic, historical and cultural resources of the Merrimack River Valley provide outstanding learning opportunities for our students, and the school is committed to integrating these resources into the curriculum for all students. We believe that learning experiences beyond the classroom walls are essential to fostering deeper knowledge and critical thinking. To this end, the RVCS Foundation, a 501(c)3 dedicated to supporting education at RVCS, committed \$35,000 in funding support for field trips during the 2016-2017 school year, and has committed \$45,000 for the 2017-2018 school year. These funds are drawn from parent donations to our annual fund, further strengthening the commitment and collaboration of our school community.

During the course of the 2016-2017 school year, faculty meeting time was devoted to strengthening our place-based learning programs. Using a backward design approach, teachers identified desired outcomes for their place-based learning projects, enabling them to integrate authentic assessment and meaningful

learning experiences into these efforts. This process brought new insights and opportunities for reflection to the River Valley faculty.

At the middle school level, students engaged in a yearlong “Sci-Manities” study responding to the National Geographic report citing the Merrimack River as the 8th most endangered river in the US. The Humanities and Science teachers collaborated to design a student-driven, year-long study of the threats and solutions to this situation, and the math and ELA teachers joined the effort to make this a fully interdisciplinary project. Students explored the threats of deforestation, development, storm water runoff, nitrogen, and direct pollution, and developed models and presentations to educate the community. They partnered with the local Conservation Commission to design rain gardens that use native plants to filter storm water, and these gardens are being installed by the local Department of Public Services this summer. They also created inspirational short films designed to educate and motivate residents of the Merrimack River Valley. This work culminated in a community-wide presentation, in collaboration with the Merrimack Valley River Watershed Council at the local performing arts center.

For the past two school years, Elementary Two (E2) students (grades 4-6) partnered with the Gulf of Maine Institute (GOMI) to design, build and deploy ocean drifters that carry GPS devices to track ocean currents in the Gulf of Maine. E2 teachers helped to launch the *GOMI Journal: Learning to Steward the Gulf*, and both RVCS teachers and students contributed articles to this periodical. Students travelled ten miles offshore to deploy their drifters, and have monitored the tracking data online.

Our E2 students also travelled to historical sites such as Lowell’s Boat Shop Museum in Amesbury, Historic New England in Newbury, the Parker River Wildlife Refuge in Newbury, the Minute Man Historical Park in Concord, the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport, the Clipper City Historic Trail in Newburyport, and the Lowell Boot Mills to study the rich history of our region. They additionally visited local artisans’ workshops, the Firehouse Center for the Arts, the Newburyport Art Association and local service organizations to explore the cultural elements of the area. The ecology of the Merrimack River Valley was researched through experiences rowing and clamming on regional tidal flats, engaging in pond studies on our campus, taking extended overnight trips to Nature’s Classroom and Camp Kieve, and conducting field studies in Maudslay State Park on the banks of the Merrimack River.

In Elementary One (grades 1-3) and Kinderhaus, students studied the history of the region through visits to Lowell’s Boat Shop Museum in Amesbury, Plimouth Plantation, Historic New England in Newbury, the Oak Hill Cemetery in Newburyport, Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, NH, and the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport. Cultural connections were made through visits to the Firehouse Center for the Arts, Avita of Newburyport, Cider Hill Farm in Amesbury and local service organizations. Connections to the local ecology occurred through the study of our local wetlands and forests, and through visits to the Central New England Fish Hatchery, the Seacoast Science Center, the Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, Mosely Woods Park and the Salisbury Beach State Reservation.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Capabilities

A Montessori classroom inherently provides opportunities for both critical thinking and problem solving. Students are offered freedom within limits, and this freedom requires that they develop their abilities to

“Adaptability- this is the most essential quality; for the progress of the world is continually opening new careers, and at the same time closing or revolutionizing the traditional types of employment.”

Dr. Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence

make positive and effective choices. The physical structure of our learning environments encourages collaborative work, where students exchange ideas and opinions. Through these two processes, both critical thinking and problem solving are fostered.

Within this framework, our teachers routinely seek to extend these skills by supplementing our core curriculum with additional opportunities.

River Valley students are regularly asked to discuss, explain and provide evidence for their thinking. Rather than relying on textbooks, teachers introduce concepts through small group lessons and the use of manipulative materials. Students then explore the concept and are encouraged to develop or discover connections with prior knowledge and life experience. The structure of the classrooms allows for extensive student collaboration, and students frequently engage in conversations to refine and extend their comprehension. Teachers are expected to emphasize higher order thinking skills and the “why” behind each concept. Project-based learning is a core element of the Montessori philosophy, and this allows students to more deeply explore a topic and extend their thinking beyond simply learning content.

In grades 4 through 8, students regularly engage in formal debates. Through the examination of an issue and the process of developing and defending a position, students improve their abilities to consider divergent viewpoints, articulate their thinking and consider the implications of policies and decisions. Most debates are scored and discussed by classmates, providing opportunities for all students to engage in higher order thinking on each topic.

Students in grades 4 through 6 participate in the Math Olympiad curriculum. Non-routine problems are presented each week, and students are exposed to a variety of problem solving approaches and encouraged to collaborate to find multiple solutions to each problem. While this program has been offered only to advanced students in the past, all E2 students participated in the Math Olympiad program during the 2016-2017 school year.

In the Middle School, students are challenged in all subject areas to engage in abstract and higher order thinking. All middle school teachers expect students to be prepared to provide evidence and explanation as they express their original ideas and positions. Content knowledge, though applicable in many situations, is secondary to developing the skills of curiosity, perseverance, and seeing mistakes as learning opportunities.

As one middle school teacher explained:

It is this wrestling with complicated webs of human activities, natural history, scientific concepts and students' own lives that is at the heart of our work with in the middle school. We also hope students will come to appreciate their environs with a deeper sense of understanding, connection and gratitude, perhaps leading to further exploration and stewardship of what's here.

Beyond classroom work, middle school students also participate in programs such as the Model United Nations, Destination Imagination, and Science Olympiad to further their creative and higher order thinking processes. These project groups run for the full school year, culminating in final presentations or competitions that represent durable learning experiences for the students.

Amendments to the Charter

The River Valley Charter School submitted no requests to amend its charter during the 2016-2017 school year.

Dissemination Efforts

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination (method, format, or venue used to share best practices)	Who was involved with the dissemination efforts? (Title)	Criteria that best aligns to the shared best practice	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices? (Partners and Locations)	Result of dissemination (Artifacts, materials, agendas, or results from partners. Indicate if the school received grant funding to disseminate and if a grant report was written.)
<i>Place-Based Learning Interdisciplinary Curriculum</i>	DESE DissemiNATION Fair Poster Display and Panel Presentation Participation	Colin Gibney (Middle School Humanities Teacher) Rebecca Schwer (Middle School Science Teacher)	Curriculum	DESE DissemiNATION Fair attendees	Poster display included curriculum outlines, evaluation rubrics and student work artifacts. Panel presentation centered on the Essential Question: How have humans and the natural environment shaped and changed our place in the Merrimack River Valley? Slide deck was shared with participants.
<i>RVCS Educator Growth Model</i>	New England League of Middle School (NELMS) Annual Conference Workshop presentation	Laura Hunt (Academic Program Coordinator) Colin Gibney (Middle School Humanities Teacher)	Professional Climate	Middle school administrators and educators from throughout New England	Slide deck shared with all participants – “ <i>Grow Teacher Grow – Encouraging Professional Growth in Teachers that is Relevant and Vital.</i> ” Presentation served as an initial training session on how to implement this work in other schools.
<i>RVCS Peace Education Curriculum</i>	Montessori Schools of Massachusetts (MSM) Annual Conference Workshop presentation	Andrew Willemsen (Director) Laura Hunt (Academic Program Coordinator) Colin Vandenburg (Middle School Coordinator)	Curriculum	Montessori administrators and educators from throughout Massachusetts	Presentation served as an initial training session on how to implement this work in other schools. Slide deck, rubrics, and other materials shared with participants. RVCS has been invited to partner with the Institute for the Future of Learning to participate in the Pioneer Lab initiative of the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution (CCPR). The Lab is a national community of practice among pioneers from across the country working in diverse learner-centered models, and the intention of

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		Peter McClure (Lead Teacher) Rebecca Schwer (Middle School Science Teacher)			the CCPR is to build a self-sustaining national movement that will transform existing models of education. We will be sending a team to Boston in November to participate in a two-day training and networking session, and will then be positioned to add the RVCS voice to this national network.
<i>Picturing Writing Curriculum</i>	RVCS hosted professional development workshops	Laura Hunt (Academic Program Coordinator)	Curriculum	Educators from local district & private schools	Ongoing conversations between educators about this curriculum and its implementation. Plans are in place to continue this collaboration in the upcoming school year.
<i>RVCVS Food Allergy Policy</i>	Networking with regional Montessori school leaders as well as local nurse leaders from district schools	Kimberly Putney (School Nurse) Jonnie Lyn Evans (Assistant Director) Andrew Willemsen (Director)	Social, Emotional, Health Needs	Hill View Montessori Charter Public School Thatcher Montessori School Boxford School District	RVCS policy served as a model for other schools. Initial network was established for further sharing of policy documents.
<i>Parent Education</i>	Three nationally-known speakers presenting in a Parent Speaker Series	Parents' Alliance Jonnie Lyn Evans (Assistant Director)	Family Engagement	Local community of parents and educators	<i>The Navigating the Parent Years Speaker Series</i> is a collaborative effort of the Newburyport Public Schools, The Newburyport Youth Services Commission and River Valley Charter School. In

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination (method, format, or venue used to share best practices)	Who was involved with the dissemination efforts? (Title)	Criteria that best aligns to the shared best practice	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices? (Partners and Locations)	Result of dissemination (Artifacts, materials, agendas, or results from partners. Indicate if the school received grant funding to disseminate and if a grant report was written.)
					addition to the presentation, books and audio tapes are made available.
<i>Public Montessori Policies and Practices</i>	In collaboration with the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector's Leadership Workshops we participated in online coaching sessions	Jonnie Lyn Evans (Assistant Director)	Curriculum, Instruction, School Leadership, Assessment and Program Evaluation	Public Montessori schools: Alighieri Montessori School, Boston MA City Garden Montessori School, St. Louis Mill Falls Charter Public School, Manchester NH Garrett Heights Elementary and Middle School, Baltimore, MD Latin American Montessori Bilingual, Washington DC	The group set up a drop box to share curriculum materials, policies, documents, etc.
<i>Place-Based Science Curriculum</i>	GOMI Journal	Elementary 2 Teachers and Assistant Teachers	Curriculum	Schools and other organizations connected to the GOMI network.	Place-based education was shared via the GOMI Journal, a quarterly, peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Academic Program Success

Student Performance

River Valley Charter School continued to be identified as a Level 1 School by DESE for the 2016-2017 academic year. The most recent, publicly available student performance data for River Valley Charter School is accessible via the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Report Card website at

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/SchoolReportCardOverview.aspx?linkid=105&orgcode=04820050&fycode=2016&orgtypecode=6&>.

Learning Goals Data

During the 2016-2017 academic year RVCS continued to employ a system for tracking student success that is aligned with Montessori principles, provides valuable governance information for the Board of Trustees' Accountability Committee, and illuminates areas for additional teacher focus.

The RVCS model moves away from common grade level assessments as these set the expectation that all students should know the same body of information and possess the same skill levels at the same moment. As a Montessori school, we are committed to offering as much individualized instruction and assessment as possible. As a result, we use our Student Progress Report data, which is based on Learning Goals (benchmarks) as our primary assessment reporting tool. Our progress reports are closely aligned with our curriculum maps and learning goals, so these are ideal tools for collecting and aggregating data representing student success. Teachers evaluate students on multiple academic learning goals, as well as social & emotional growth.

Our reporting tool provides aggregated data for each grade level for each of our three student progress reporting periods. For grades 1-6, a six-level scale is used to assess student progress, with measures including *Not Introduced*, *Introduced*, *Working with Support*, *Working Independently*, *Proficient*, and *Synthesis*. At the Middle School level, a four-level scale is used, based on the measures of *Introduced*, *Working*, *Mastery* and *Application*. Formal reports are presented to the RVCS Board of Trustees Accountability Committee. Student data is presented in adjacent columns corresponding to our three marking periods and highlights student progress at each grade level over the course of the school year. A sample of these reports can be found in the **APPENDIX**.

Program Delivery

Changes in School Curriculum

River Valley continued our mission-driven commitment to delivering a high-quality Montessori curriculum during the 2016-2017 academic year. As such, our core curriculum was largely unchanged, as we worked to integrate curricular additions and upgrades from the past several years. We continued to prioritize our proven Montessori curriculum, while also integrating place-based learning (PBL) that is a key design element of our mission and charter.

Implementation of the RVCS Peace Education Curriculum

One area of change was the creation of a pilot team that implemented a whole-child approach centered on our Peace Education Curriculum Map. Created with input from the entire RVCS community over the past several years, this document is a result of a substantial investment of time and effort on the part of the faculty, and supports the RVCS Strategic Plan. Through concentrated focus on core skills and habits of mind, our Peace Education map addresses the following priority areas for durable learning: Curiosity, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Citizenship, Compassion, Collaboration and Communication (the Seven C's).

We believe that student success in these core areas is a central part of our mission, and that these life-long skills represent the higher purpose of public education.

The pilot team, named the Montessori Growth Team (MGT), consisted of administrators and teachers from all levels of the school, and worked to integrate the priorities of the Peace Education Map into the daily practice of teaching and learning. The team met weekly to discuss strategies, review progress and challenges, and build tools for use by the entire faculty. One central component of these efforts was student portfolios. Every RVCS student keeps an annual portfolio, and these had traditionally been organized upon the core academic areas. The MGT worked with students of all ages to restructure portfolios on the Seven C's. When selecting work to include in their portfolios, students considered whether an artifact represented their growth in curiosity, communication, critical thinking, etc. Teachers found that student engagement in the portfolio process improved, and that student's written reflections were more thoughtful and diverse. Parents with students in the pilot classes also provided positive feedback on the new portfolio approach.

MGT teachers also created curriculum designed to foster student comprehension of the Seven C's in the earliest grades, and to build familiarity in the older grades. Both teachers and students designed rubrics used to evaluate student learning through the lens of the Seven C's, and this new perspective enriched student learning. Teacher and peer feedback incorporated the Seven C's, strengthening the depth of discussion and reflection.

In January, the MGT presented their results to teachers and administrators at the Montessori Schools of Massachusetts Annual Conference, and River Valley has been invited to present this work at the American Montessori Society's National Conference in Denver in March of 2017.

In June, the MGT teachers presented a summary of their year's work on the Seven C's with the entire RVCS faculty, and enthusiasm from other teachers was strong. The whole school will be adopting this curricular approach for the 2017-2018 school year, and the MGT teachers will lead faculty teams to implement this student-centered approach.

Revised Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

During the 2016-2017 school year, the core STEM teachers at RVCS collaborated to review the revised Massachusetts standards for science, technology and engineering. Our Middle School Science Teacher, Grades 1-6 Engineering Teacher, and our E2 Science Teacher worked to align the RVCS curriculum maps with the Next Generation Science Standards and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Our current curriculum maps and instructional practices reflect these revisions.

Our Academic Program Coordinator worked with all faculty to review the RVCS curriculum maps to assure alignment with the revised Massachusetts standards. Our current curriculum maps and instructional practices reflect these revisions. RVCS plans to send a representative to the August 3, 2017 DESE workshop with Teach+Plus to learn more about Massachusetts Curriculum Framework implementation.

Changes to Instructional Model

There were no significant changes to the instructional model at River Valley Charter School for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Changes in Assessment Methods

There were no significant changes to the assessment methods at River Valley Charter School for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Changes in Supports for Diverse Learners

Staffing: River Valley Charter School is fortunate to have had consistent staff in place to support our special education population and there were no staffing changes made during the 2016-2017 school year. Next year we will be adding an additional special education teacher to work primarily with a student who has significant learning delays. We are also hiring a new School Counselor for the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The outgoing counselor plans to work closely over the summer acclimating the new counselor to our school culture, population, and the associated caseload.

Programming: River Valley further reduced the number of instructional hours being delivered outside of the classroom during the past year. The school is committed to a full inclusion model to the greatest extent possible. Next year we will have 2.4 floating instructional assistants in addition to a staff of four special education teachers. The goal is for the majority of specialized instruction to be delivered within the classroom setting.

As part of our commitment to supporting diverse learners, we revamped our Response to Intervention Program, (called SST, or the Student Support Team). We changed the structure of this program by eliminating special education teachers from the core team. Instead, they serve in a consultancy role. This reduced the dependence on the special education staff for providing Tier 2 interventions. At the same time, the SST teams, which are level specific, were expanded to include all teachers from the level. This provided increased opportunities for collaboration about instructional and behavioral interventions.

During the 2016-2017 school year, we were accepted by the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association as a Model Demonstration School, specifically as it relates to our RTI programming. We will be working with an RTI expert/coach throughout the school year and anticipate this will allow us to further improve our approach to RTI next year.

River Valley did not identify any English Language Learners during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Provisions for the Social, Emotional, and Health of Students

The Montessori philosophy has at its core a commitment to the social, emotional and health needs of children and these areas are typically addressed directly in the classroom by the classroom teacher as part of day-to-day teaching. Our curriculum maps and progress reports reflect this with standards specific to social/emotional development. We report out to families on their individual child's social and emotional growth formally three times per year, and informally throughout the year.

The school counselor delivers whole-group, class-based curriculum for all classrooms (with the exception of one classroom where the classroom teacher implemented the social/emotional curriculum). The topics covered by the various research-based curriculum include bullying prevention, conflict resolution, self-advocacy, making good choices, etc. The school counselor draws from a number of curriculum resources including: Open Circle, Responsive Classroom, The Ophelia Project, and Olweus.

This year River Valley added dedicated time for programming in health and wellness for middle school students. The School Nurse, School Counselor, and the Academic Program Coordinator collaborated to create a comprehensive health curriculum that included instruction in multiple topic areas including mental health, anxiety, depression, nutrition, drug prevention, reproductive health and healthy relationships. Next year we plan to incorporate the DASH program for our Elementary 1 students (and the following year with our Elementary 2 students). DASH (Disability Awareness Starts Here) provides hands-on training for understanding the implications of living with a physical or emotional impairment. In keeping with the Montessori commitment to peace and acceptance, the DASH model focuses heavily on empathy and inclusivity. We will gradually expand upon this so that all students will be receiving a health and wellness curriculum within two years.

No changes were made to the school's approach to student discipline.

Organizational Viability

Organizational Structure of the School

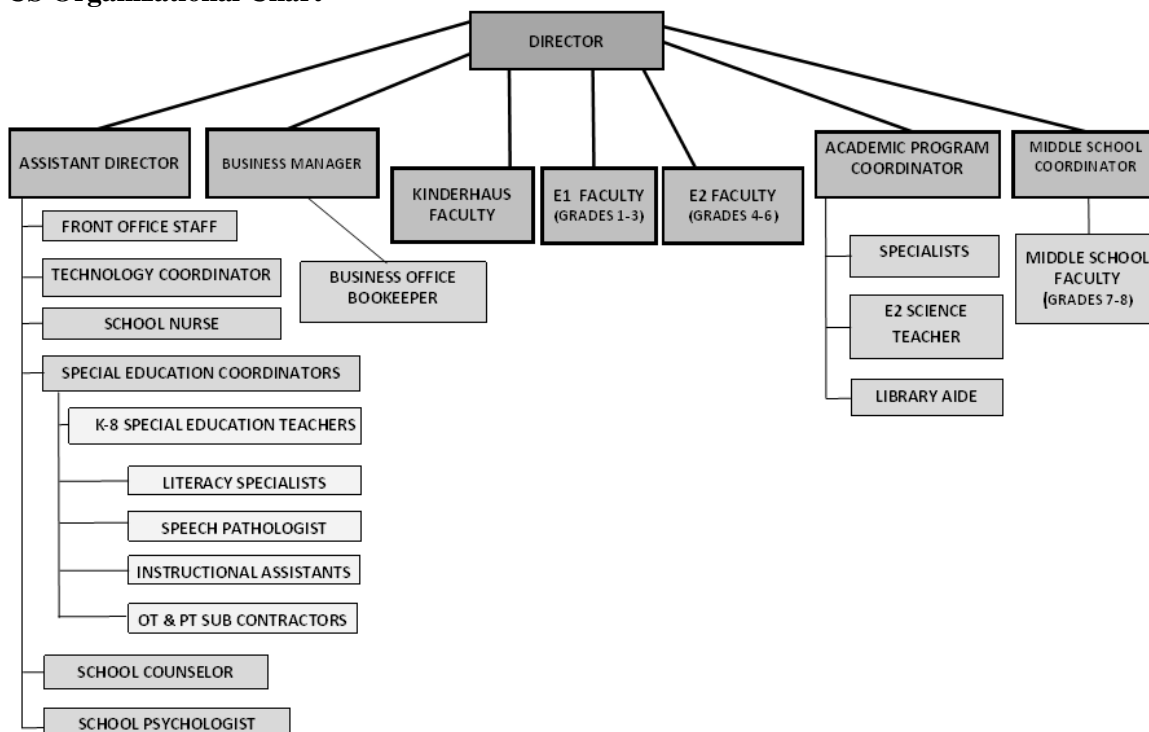
In order to provide more effective supervision, several changes were made to the RVCS Organizational Chart.

- The RVCS Assistant Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans, assumed responsibility for the school's RTI program, which is called the Student Support Team (SST).
- The Academic Program Coordinator, Laura Hunt, assumed supervision responsibilities for the specialist teachers (Art, Music, Physical Education, Engineering, Technology, Library, Literacy and E2 Science).
- The Special Education Coordinators, Patti Innes & Lisa Kelley, assumed supervision responsibilities for the Middle School SPED Teacher and Classroom Inclusion Aides.

In conjunction with these new roles, all administrators with supervisory roles participated in a year-long program with John D'Auria of Teachers 21 to strengthen coaching and feedback skills. An organizational change planned for the 2017-2018 school year involves the supervision and management of student support services. The Assistant Director will assume responsibility for student support services programming and staffing, including the School Counselor/504 Coordinator, the School Nurse, the Special Education Coordinators (who in turn oversee the special education teachers and ancillary service providers), and the School Psychologist. This organizational change provides the Assistant Director with additional supervisory responsibility. It is also a logical expansion of responsibility since historically her work has overlapped with this area. She currently oversees the school's RTI programming, serves as the school's major disciplinary resource, serves on the crisis prevention and intervention team, oversees the school's bullying prevention program, and qualifies families in need for financial relief, etc.

The 2016-2017 supervisory changes are reflected in the Organizational Chart below:

RVCS Organizational Chart



Teacher Evaluation

During the 2016-2017 school year, River Valley adopted the Educator Growth model that had been piloted by the school the previous year. The premise of this approach is to focus on strengthening professional development and to ensure that all teachers continually experience relevant professional growth. The RVCS model provides a framework for assessing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, and for improving practice via reflection, openness to change and innovation, and support from a collegial exchange among teaching professionals.

Using self-assessment tools from the book *The Best Teacher in You* (Quinn, Heynowski, Thomas & Spreitzer, 2013), each teacher identified areas of strength and opportunities for professional growth, and set individual goals based on this work. Each teacher then joined smaller “tribes” aligned around common goals. Tribes met monthly, and spent time observing in each other’s classrooms. A major component of the process was written reflection, and faculty meeting time was allocated for all faculty to journal regularly. All faculty met twice during the year with their supervisor to review goals and evaluate progress. After the spring meetings, all teachers provided written reflection on their growth as a result of using the Teacher Growth model.

One key element of the success of this process is that it is led by faculty with support from administration. Rather than a top-down approach, faculty are hearing from peers about the successes and challenges of this approach. This has led to increased faculty engagement, and a sense that teacher voice is valued. Two RVCS faculty members presented this approach to fellow educators and administrators at the New England League of Middle Schools Conference in March (details are included the Dissemination Table).

In June, feedback was solicited from all faculty with the intention of improving this process for the upcoming year. Based on this feedback, a small team of teachers is developing a teaching framework and self-assessment tool customized to the River Valley public Montessori model. Given the positive results from the first year, as well as the influence on professional culture and teacher engagement, RVCS is committed to the Teacher Growth model for the foreseeable future.

Facility Upgrades

During FY 2017, RVCS invested in the following capital improvements to the school building and site:

- Renovation of one Kinderhaus classroom and the cubby area to improve the flow of students in the space as well as provide a larger storage area for the classroom;
- Upgrades to the middle school science room, including new cabinetry and sinks;
- Creation of a new Faculty Room (RVCS had been without a Faculty Room for five years);
- Renovation of the existing school kitchen, including new cabinetry;
- New carpeting in the middle school Learning Center, ELA Room and Humanities Room.

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL	
Unaudited Statement of Revenue, Expense, and Change in Net Position at FY17 Year End	
OPERATING REVENUE	
Per-pupil tuition	\$ 3,874,558
In-kind MTRS pension	517,484
Program Fees	156,166
Government grants	72,795
Program specific private grants and contributions	70,575
In-kind transportation	25,861
Total operating revenue	4,717,439
OPERATING EXPENSES	
Personnel and related	
Salaries and wages	2,635,086
In-kind MTRS pension	517,484
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	400,338
Professional development	37,889
Total personnel and related	3,590,797
Occupancy	
Interest Expense	166,433
Repairs and maintenance	94,702
Utilities	37,702
Insurance	12,380
Taxes, sewer betterment	3,028
Vehicle Expenses	677
Total occupancy	314,922
Direct student costs	
Program expenses	102,392
Consultants and service contractors	67,839
Instructional materials	52,300
Technology and equipment	33,082
In-kind transportation	25,861
Testing and assessment	2,256
Total direct student costs	283,730
Other operating costs	
Insurance	40,457
Professional fees	33,998
Technology and equipment	22,460
Office supplies	19,060
Dues and subscriptions	14,857
Minor equipment	9,313
Miscellaneous	7,990
Equipment leases	7,008
Travel	6,015
Telephone	3,703
Printing and postage	3,539
Advertising and recruitment	1,738
Bad debt expense	506
Total other operating costs	170,644
Depreciation and amortization	240,335
Total operating expenses	4,600,428
CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS	117,011
GENERAL REVENUE (EXPENSE)	
Interest and other income	9,516
Community building events	(1,000)
Total general revenue	8,516
CHANGES IN NET POSITION	125,527
NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,822,768
NET POSITION, END OF YEAR	\$ 1,948,295

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
Unaudited Statement of Net Position for FY17 Year End

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,583,718
Accounts and grants receivable	19,607
Prepaid expenses and other	<u>9,718</u>

Total current assets 1,613,043

RESTRICTED CASH

202,152

CAPITAL ASSETS, net

4,291,585

Total assets

\$ 6,106,780

LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$ 32,163
Accrued expenses	19,164
Accrued payroll	240,772
Due to RVCS Foundation, current portion	<u>121,149</u>

Total current liabilities 413,248

LONG TERM LIABILITIES

Due to RVCS Foundation, long term	<u>3,745,237</u>
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Total liabilities

4,158,485

NET POSITION

Unrestricted:	
Operating	1,523,096
Invested in capital	<u>425,199</u>

Total unrestricted 1,948,295

Total net position

1,948,295

Total liabilities and net position

\$ 6,106,780

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
Operating Budget Approved by the Board of Trustees on June 16, 2016 for the Year
Ending June 30, 2018

OPERATING REVENUE

Per-pupil tuition	\$ 3,926,467
Government grants	52,000
Program Fees	50,000
Program specific private grants and contributions	36,000
Total operating revenue	4,064,467

OPERATING EXPENSES

Personnel and related

Salaries and wages	2,649,219
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	463,000
Professional development	46,600
Total personnel and related	3,158,819

Occupancy

Interest Expense	161,418
Repairs and maintenance	103,400
Utilities	43,000
Insurance	14,000
Taxes, sewer betterment	3,500
Vehicle Expenses	1,850
Total occupancy	327,168

Direct student costs

Consultants and service contractors	74,000
Instructional materials	67,000
Technology and equipment	20,000
Program expenses (RVCS)	11,200
Testing and assessment	1,800
Total direct student costs	174,000

Other operating costs

Professional fees	55,000
Insurance	44,300
Technology and equipment	27,500
Office supplies	22,000
Dues and subscriptions	16,200
Minor equipment	10,250
Miscellaneous	10,100
Travel	8,450
Equipment leases	7,500
Printing and postage	6,000
Telephone	4,200
Advertising and recruitment	2,350
Total other operating costs	213,850

(Operating budget continued)

(Operating Budget continued)

Depreciation and amortization	227,500
Total operating expenses	4,101,337
OTHER REVENUE (EXPENSES)	
Community Building Events	2,500
Contingency-Board of Trustees	4,230
Total other revenue (expenses)	6,730
Total expenses	4,108,067
CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS	(43,600)
GENERAL REVENUE	
Interest and other income	3,600
Total general revenue	3,600
CHANGES IN NET POSITION	(40,000)
NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,822,768
NET POSITION, END OF YEAR	\$ 1,782,768

Capital Plan FY18

The River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees has committed to funding a restricted Capital Reserve Fund for future infrastructure needs. Trustees have allocated \$40,000 per year to this fund over the last several years, and the fund balance as of June 30, 2017 is \$202,152. These funds will be available for any urgent facility or site needs, as well as any planned infrastructure expenses. Through careful fiscal planning, the Trustees expect to position the school to absorb any unforeseen infrastructure costs without significant impact on annual operations.

During FY18, RVCS plans the following capital improvements:

- Renovation of the existing middle school space – Estimated investment: \$300,000 (see details below).
- Installation of new carpeting in all upstairs hallways and three offices - Estimated investment: \$12,500
- Renovation of the existing Nurse's Office and relocation of existing janitor's closet – Estimated investment: \$9,500
- Repair and sealing of existing roof – Estimated cost: \$5,000

As mentioned in last year's Annual Report, RVCS is renovating our middle school space during the summer of 2017. This is a public procurement job, and the low-bid contractor is Integrated Facilities Construction Corporation of Medford, MA. The total cost projection for the job, including architect's fees, is \$330,000. In FY 2017, the school used \$28,988 of capital reserve funds to pay architectural fees. Also during FY 2017, the school implemented a capital campaign to raise funds for this project, with a total of \$90,000 of restricted donations expected to be in hand by August 1st. The RVCS Foundation has committed an additional \$50,000 to support this project. The school plans to use up to \$160,000 of existing capital reserves for this renovation project. The RVCS Trustees additionally voted to allocate up to \$25,000 of cash reserves to furnish the new middle school space.

During FY 2017, RVCS completed capital improvements to the school building and site, with total expenditures as follows:

- Leasehold improvements/Total investment: \$41,402
- Investment in capital equipment/Total investment: \$10,724

Also during FY 2017, the middle school renovation project was initiated, with the following investment impact:

- Renovations in Progress (Including Architect Fees): \$76,213

Total expenditure on capital improvements for FY 2017 was \$128,339. Of these funds, \$97,040 of Capital Reserve Funds were used to partially offset leasehold and capital equipment investments. The remaining funds of \$31,299 were drawn from existing cash reserves, and did not impact the school's Capital Reserve Fund.

With the school's current Capital Reserve Fund balance, as well as the Board's ongoing commitment to annual contributions to this fund, River Valley has taken a conservative and visionary approach to the future needs and financial stability of the school.

Additional Information

Accountability Plan Performance: Faithfulness to the Charter

	2016-2017 Performance	Evidence
Objective 1: River Valley Charter School will provide a high quality Montessori learning environment for all students.		
<p>Measure 1A: River Valley will alternate internal and external audits of its Montessori program every year. Both audits will assess the school's Montessori programming against the American Montessori Society's (AMS) "Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector". (A summary of "Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector" is included as an ATTACHMENT on page 37.)</p>	Met	<p>The 2016-2017 school year represented the internal cycle of our Montessori program audit. River Valley administrators conducted the internal audit October 24-27, 2016. The audit consisted of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documents, protocols, and policies • Evaluation of the AMS "Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector" • Classroom observations • Work engagement observations • Focus group interviews <p>The audit results were highly positive and the findings of the complete audit are on file at the school.</p>
<p>Measure 1B: Annually, River Valley will be found to be in compliance with a minimum of 18 of the 20 applicable American Montessori Society's (AMS) "Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector"*. <i>* Exception: The document contains 22 elements. Two elements require a 2.5-6 year old multi-age grouping that is not possible due to MA public school design limitations. RVCS excludes these two elements from the measurement.</i></p>	Met	<p>RVCS met all 20 applicable elements during the fall 2016 audit.</p> <p>Two of the full 22 elements describe age groupings for ideal Montessori programming. RVCS does not offer a preschool program that starts at age 2.5, and therefore, does not offer a three-year age grouping in Kinderhaus. RVCS does satisfy the remainder of components of these elements.</p> <p>A table summarizing RVCS' performance against the elements is included in the ATTACHMENTS on page 39.</p>
<p>Measure 1C: At the end of each academic year, at least 90% of lead teachers in grades K-6 will be Montessori trained by an accredited training institution.</p>	Met	<p>All K-6 (eleven) lead/co-lead teachers are Montessori trained or certified. Additionally, all 9 assistant teachers in our K-6 classrooms are also Montessori trained or certified.</p> <p>Credential information is stored in the school's Student/Staff Information Management System.</p>

Objective 2: Every River Valley Charter School student will demonstrate their learning about the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.		
Measure 2A: Annually, every class will engage in a minimum of three place-based learning experiences about the history, culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.	Met	Supporting evidence summarizing every classroom's place-based learning experiences is on file at the school.
Measure 2B: Annually, every student in grades 3 through 8 will demonstrate their place-based knowledge to a group of peers and adults through written, oral or multi-media presentations. A minimum of 85% of students at each grade level will earn a score of 3 or better, on a 1 to 4 scale, on an assessment rated against a standardized place-based learning rubric for their grade level. Rubrics will include specific language designed to assess the level of student learning about the history, culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.	Partially Met	<p>Half of the grade levels met the measure of 85%+ of students demonstrating their place-based knowledge with an average score of 3 or better on a place-based rubric. The percentage of students at each grade level who scored 3 or better follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 94% of third year students ✓ 76% of fourth year students ✓ 97% of fifth year students ✓ 100% of sixth year students ✓ 77% of seventh year students ✓ 78% of eighth year students <p>A graph of the percentage of students scoring 3 and above on the place-based rubric is included as an ATTACHMENT on page 43.</p>

Accountability Plan Performance: Academic Program Success

Objective 3: Every graduating student will demonstrate the ability to critically self-reflect and to assess their academic strengths and challenges.		
Measure 3A: Annually, 100% of graduating students will successfully create and deliver a River Valley Celebration of Learning (COL). Every COL will include a portfolio of student work with corresponding reflections for selected artifacts, as well as a formal presentation to peers and adults.	Met	All 32 graduating 8 th grade students created and delivered their Celebration of Learning, which included a formal presentation as well as a portfolio of their work. The portfolio portion included new guidelines that draw from the school's work on its Peace Curriculum (i.e., the 7 Cs: compassion, curiosity, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication). The schedule of COL presentations, as well as project guidelines (summarizing the required contents of the COL), are on file at the school.
Measure 3B: 90% of graduating students will earn a final score of 3 or better, on a 1 to 4 scale, on rubrics specifically designed to assess the student's ability to critically self-reflect. Rubrics will be completed by a minimum of four jurors, including both internal RVCS staff and external, non-RVCS jurors. (From 2011-2013, graduating classes have averaged 91% on this measure.)	Met	100% (32 students) received a final score of 3 or better on their COL rubric. The average score for all 32 8 th grade students was 3.7 overall. A graph of COL scores is included as an ATTACHMENT on page 43. A binder containing completed rubrics for each student is on file at the school.

Accountability Plan Performance: Dissemination

Objective 4: RVCS will share its Montessori curriculum with other schools in Massachusetts over the course of its charter term.		
Measure 4A: By the end of this charter term, RVCS staff will lead at least ten workshops or presentations for non-RVCS teachers to disseminate best practices in public Montessori education. RVCS staff will average two workshops or presentations per year toward this objective.	Met	<p>RVCS faculty presented at three conferences this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place-Based Learning Interdisciplinary Curriculum at the DESE DissemiNATION Fair• RVCS Educator Growth Model at the New England League of Middle School's Annual Conference• RVCS Peace Education Curriculum at the Montessori Schools of Massachusetts Annual Conference. <p>Presentation information is on file at the school. Total presentations to date this charter term is eleven.</p>

River Valley met 7 of its Accountability Plan measures, and partially met one.

Recruitment Plan
2017 – 2018

School Name: River Valley Charter School

2016-2017 Implementation Summary:

River Valley Charter School fully implemented its recruitment strategies as laid out in its 2016-2017 Recruitment Plan and received 99 new applications for enrollment (57 for kindergarten where the majority of spots are available). The school asks attendees at Enrollment Information Sessions to share how they learned about RVCS but does not ask this on the enrollment application. Most Information Session attendees indicate that they hear about River Valley Charter School by word of mouth. Future applications will be changed to include a question about the applicants' source of information about RVCS. This will help us to better gauge the impact of our recruitment strategies.

This year we increased the number of venues receiving flyers about the enrollment period and we specifically targeted those venues that might include families from the ELL and economically disadvantaged subgroups. We are not able to assess the success of these strategies since ELL and income information is not collected at application time. We know that our incoming Kinderhaus class of 32 students (of which ten are siblings of currently enrolled students) includes at least one child of Hispanic descent and at least one who will be categorized as economically disadvantaged.

RVCS would welcome further communication with the Department to support the school in recruiting ELL and economically disadvantaged students after October SIMS data is submitted.

Describe the school's general recruitment activities, i.e. those intended to reach all students.

General Recruitment Activities for 2017-2018:

General advertising activities include print and electronic media as well as an ongoing connection with the Greater Newburyport Mothers and Families Club where we present at the annual Early Education Information Night. We also use personal outreach to local preschools and day care facilities, and speaking engagements at various locations to expand our recruitment efforts. Additional general recruitment activities include advertising efforts via:

- Facebook
- press release,
- posts in the local papers and libraries,
- public service announcements,
- flyer distribution,
- Enrollment Information Sessions,
- posts on the school website

Recruitment Plan –Strategies	
List strategies for recruitment activities for <u>each</u> demographic group.	
Special education students/students with disabilities	
<p>(a) CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 12.2%</p> <p>GNT percentage: NA</p> <p>CI percentage: 12.1%</p> <p>The school is <u>above</u> CI percentages.</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met GNT/CI: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute informational flyers to the special education departments of each of our sending districts. • Connect with local school SEPACs.
Limited English-proficient students/English learners	
<p>(a) CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 0.0%</p> <p>GNT percentage: 0.1%</p> <p>CI percentage: 0.2%</p> <p>The school is <u>below</u> GNT percentages and below CI percentages</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute informational flyers to ELL coordinators of each of our sending districts. • Publish enrollment materials with a banner/footer indicating that translation and interpreter services are available if needed. • Make the Montessori Enrollment Session video available to all attendees in Spanish. • Have bilingual (Spanish-speaking) parents available at Enrollment Sessions. • Ask Spanish-speaking parents to share enrollment information in their multicultural communities. • Distribute giveaways, with reference to enrollment in Spanish, at local organized family activities. <p>Enhanced recruitment strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers at studios that teach ethnic dance • Distribute flyers to local adoption agencies • Distribute flyers to local Rec Departments where there may be increased incidence of minority populations <p>(c) 2017-2018 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did not meet GNT/CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVCS will provide access to enrollment applications online in addition to paper-based applications. The new online applications will be available in at least one language other than English. • Distribute flyers to individuals taking Beginning and Intermediate English classes with Newburyport Adult and Community Education. • Connect with the Newburyport Human Rights Commission, and individuals working on Sanctuary City status, to establish relationships with organizations who work with immigrants. • Connect with immigration attorney Becki Jacobson to share enrollment information with her clients who represent 30 countries. <p>All strategies will be implemented during the FY18 school year. RVCS anticipates 2-3 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch (Low Income/Economically Disadvantaged)	
<p>(a) CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 6.3%</p> <p>GNT percentage: #%</p> <p>CI percentage: 12.1%</p> <p>The school is below CI percentages</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact and distribute flyers to community service agencies (Head Start, Hugh Doyle Resource Center, Salvation Army, Pettingill House, SNAP, WIC) • Have presence at a local soup kitchen and local food pantry to share enrollment information with those obtaining free meals/food • Distribute flyers to the low-income housing developments in our sending towns. <p>Enhanced recruitment strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak at low-income housing development event. • Provide economically disadvantaged students reduced rates or free service for before and after school childcare for working parents/guardians. <p>(c) 2017-2018 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did not meet GNT/CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVCS has initiated a collaboration with a food equity organization called Nourishing the North Shore. This partnership will bridge connections with low income adults in the area. • RVCS will post enrollment information at a local soup kitchen (Among Friends) and food pantry with whom the school has a collaborative relationship. • RVCS will post a large banner advertising its free, full day kindergarten program in a conspicuous place in town. <p>All strategies will be implemented during the FY18 school year. RVCS anticipates 2-3 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>
<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers to local tutoring agencies.
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVCS's summer drop-in sessions for middle school students are attractive to families who may have students at risk of dropping out of school.
<u>Students who have dropped out of school</u>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p>NA</p>
<p>OPTIONAL</p> <p><u>Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap</u></p>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVCS's free full day kindergarten program and our before/after care program are attractive options for the subgroup of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap.

Retention Plan 2017 – 2018	
<p align="center">2016-2017 Implementation Summary:</p> <p>Our retention rate for 2016-2017 was 95.3%, surpassing our 92% goal.</p> <p>RVCS successfully implemented its retention strategies from last year but still sees students leaving for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at 6th grade and the middle school level students withdraw to attend private school (as a mechanism to improve the likelihood of admission to private high schools in 9th grade) • at the 6th grade level students report leaving to support their future transition to the district school after middle school • to accommodate family relocation. <p>River Valley recently created the following programs to support improved retention for all students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer parents of students transitioning between levels (i.e., moving into 1st grade and 4th grades) an opportunity to learn about the expectations, curriculum and practices of the subsequent level. • host parents of students entering middle school to a small group tour and meeting with the Middle School Coordinator prior to the end of students' 6th grade year. • invite and encourage parents of children in lower grades to attend the school's 8th grade graduation requirement, the Celebration of Learning, for at least one graduating student. This strategy ensures that parents of younger children have a firsthand view of what an RVCS graduate is capable of upon leaving RVCS. <p>Looking forward we know that thirteen students will not return in the 2017-2018 year due to relocation or to enhance their transition into high school.</p>	

Overall Student Retention Goal	
Annual goal for student retention (percentage):	92%

Retention Plan –Strategies	
List strategies for retention activities for <u>each</u> demographic group.	
Special education students/students with disabilities	
<p>(a) CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 6.1%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 6.5%</p> <p>The school is below third quartile percentages.</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a strong special education program staffed by qualified professionals. • Offer summer sessions to qualifying students. • Maintain a Response to Intervention program/Student Support Team. • Offer afterschool enrichment programs where less emphasis is placed on academics. <p>Enhanced retention strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer additional support services before and after school to middle school students. • Train at least one staff member in Positive Behavioral Intervention practices to better support students with extensive behavioral needs. • Revamp the school’s Student Support Team protocol to improve classroom teachers’ ability to support students with diverse learning needs.
	<p>(c) 2017-2018 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ELs were enrolled during the 2016-2017 school year. No retention strategies needed.</p>
Limited English-proficient students/English learners	
<p>(a) CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: NA%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 0.0%</p> <p>The school did not enroll LEP students and therefore there were none to retain.</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a relationship with an ELL service provider. • Ensure adequate number of teaching staff are SEI-endorsed. • Maintain SEI endorsement of at least one member of the administrative team and increasing numbers of the teaching staff. • Provide extra services (by an ELL service provider) to students who are not qualified ESL learners but whose backgrounds suggest that they are struggling due to English language learning (e.g., parents speak non-English at home, etc.) • Ensure current families are aware that RVCS offers ELL services. • Offer all families an afterschool foreign language program to allow Spanish-speaking families opportunities to share their culture within the community.
	<p>(c) 2017-2018 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ELs were enrolled during the 2016-2017 school year. No retention strategies needed.</p>

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch	
<p><u>(a) CHART data</u></p> <p>School percentage: 0%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 8.5%</p> <p>The school is below third quartile percentages.</p>	<p>(b) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Below median and third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to school-based counselor to identify additional services available in the area. • Provide a high quality free or reduced price lunch program to qualifying students. • Provide reduced cost before and after care program to qualifying students. • Provide reduced cost enrichment programming to qualifying students. • Working with the school nurse, provide economically disadvantaged families with access to donated winter clothing and Rotary-funded Thanksgiving dinner food items.
<p><u>Students who are sub-proficient</u></p>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide summer sessions to qualifying students.
<p><u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u></p>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide drop-in summer sessions for Middle School students.
<p><u>Students who have dropped out of school</u></p>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p>NA</p>
<p>OPTIONAL</p> <p><u>Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap</u></p>	<p>(d) 2016-2017 Strategies</p> <p>NA</p>

School and Student Data

Student demographic information is located on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website at: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=04820050&orgtypecode=6&>.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION		
Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	2	.3
Asian	11	3.8
Hispanic	8	2.8
Native American	1	.3
White	256	89.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	10	3.5
Special education	35	12.2
Limited English proficient	0	0
Low income/Economically disadvantaged	18	6.3

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR			
Name, Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date
Andrew Willemsen, Director	Serves as the organization's Chief Executive Officer providing organizational and academic leadership	07/01/2013*	NA
Jonnie Lyn Evans, Assistant Director	Serves as the organization's Chief Operations Officer overseeing marketing, accountability, human resources and operations/systems	07/01/2013*	NA
Laura Hunt, Academic Program Coordinator	Serves as curriculum coordinator and supervisor of academic programs	09/01/2014*	NA
Lisa Kelley/Patricia Innes, Special Education Co- Coordinators	Supervise special education programs at the K-grade 3 and grade 4-8 levels, respectively	08/01/2015*	NA
Colin Vandenburg, Middle School Coordinator	Oversees the middle school curriculum as well as evaluation of middle school faculty	09/01/2014*	NA
Pamela Dawe Jones, Technology Coordinator	Oversees the technological infrastructure of the school	11/01/2011	NA
Deb McCrevan, Business Manager	Provides financial and facility management	01/01/2000	NA
* date represents the member's start date in this position; member was previously an RVCS employee			

TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR				
	Number as of the last day of the 2016-2017 school year	Departures during the 2016-2017 school year	Departures at the end of the school year	Reason(s) for Departure
Teachers	44	3	3	Three teachers left to pursue teaching/administrative opportunities in other schools; one teacher left to stay home with her child; one teacher left to pursue an alternative career; one teacher left for health reasons.
Other Staff	12	0	1	One staff member is pursuing a position at a charter school closer to home.

Teaching and staff retention continues to be favorable at River Valley.

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR				
Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Number of terms served	Length of each term (including date of election and expiration)
John Siegfried	Trustee, Vice Chair	Executive, Accountability	First term in progress	2015-2018
Peter Zetlan	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2015-2018
Mark Gustavson	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2015-2018
Nat Coughlin	Trustee, Chairperson	Executive	First term completed Second term in progress	2013-2016 2016-2019
Conall Ryan	Trustee	Accountability Chair	Term completed	2014-2017
Mark Belanger	Trustee, Treasurer	Executive, Finance	First full term in progress	2014 2015-2018
Jennifer McCormick	Trustee	Development Chair	First term completed Second term in progress	2014-2017 2017-2020
Stacy Gijbsers	Trustee	Development	Left term early on 9/2016	2014-2017
Kimberly Klibansky	Trustee	Accountability	First term completed Second term in progress	2014-2017 2017-2020
Katherine Brown	Trustee, Secretary	Executive	First term in progress	2016-2019
Ben Scherz	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2016-2019
Josh Porter	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	2016-2019
Mason Mitchell-Daniels	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2016-2019
Ellen Oliver	Trustee	Development	Left term early on 6/17	2016-2019
Jane Noyes	Ex officio Staff Representative	NA	One year term completed	2016-2017

Additional Required Information

Key Leadership Changes

Position	Name	No Change/New/Open Position
Board of Trustees Chairperson	Nat Coughlin	No Change
Charter School Leader	Andy Willemsen	No Change
Assistant Charter School Leader	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No Change
Special Education Director	Lisa Kelley and Patricia Innes	No Change
MCAS Test Coordinator	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No Change
SIMS Coordinator	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No Change
English Language Learner Director	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No Change
School Business Official	Debra McCrevan	No Change
SIMS Contact	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No Change

Enrollment

Action	2018-2019 School Year Date(s)
Student Application Deadline	February 13, 2018, 4:00 pm
Lottery	February 15, 2018, 4:00 pm

Complaints

River Valley Charter School had no formal complaints during the 2016-2017 school year.

Measure 1A: Essential Elements



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives

Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public School Sector

Montessori Teachers

- Employ Montessori teachers who have Montessori credentials for the levels they teach.
- Maintain an active and open recruitment for Montessori credentialed teachers.
- Budget for future Montessori teacher education for non Montessori-credentialed teachers.
- Provide professional Montessori in-service by experienced credentialed Montessori educators.
- Contract for on-going internal and periodic external Montessori consultation and/or professional support as a follow up to Montessori teacher education.
- Employ one paraprofessional per classroom, each having received Montessori orientation for that role.

Administration

- Employ an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as curriculum coordinator.
- Employ a building principal/educational leader who has knowledge of Montessori principles and curriculum through Montessori coursework, Montessori Administrator Credential and/or annual conference exposure.
- Maintain commitment to the core Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.
- Sustain the support of the central administration through high profile communications about program development.
- Recognize that the best implementation process is to begin with the 2.5-6 age group and add one age at a time for a gradual progression.

Recruitment/Parent Education

- Provide Montessori parent education programs that promote understanding of Montessori principles and curriculum.
- Develop an admission process that informs parents about the nature of Montessori and seeks the necessary commitment to the program.

Curriculum/Environment

- Offer a full complement of Montessori materials purchased from Montessori dealers.
- Develop a classroom design that is compatible with Montessori "prepared environment" principles.
- Create uninterrupted daily work periods of 90 minutes to 3-hours, considering the 3-hour work cycle as ideal.
- Integrate specialty programs (music, art, physical education, etc.) around the uninterrupted work periods.
- Apply the appropriate multi-age groupings: 2.5-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18 necessary for the diversity, flexibility, and reduced competition integral to Montessori.

Assessment

- Use a process of reporting student progress that is compatible with Montessori and includes parent conferences and authentic assessment tools such as observation, portfolio, performance assessment with rubric, etc.
- Implement state mandated assessments in such a way that the character of the Montessori program is not compromised.

Professional Development

- Budget for continuing education through Montessori workshops and conferences.
- Maintain membership with one or more of the professional Montessori organizations and seek Montessori accreditation to assure consistent quality.

This document was drafted and endorsed in the late 1990s by several Montessori organizations wishing to help guide the growth of public school Montessori. It has been presented at a number of Montessori conferences since then and used by various school districts preparing to offer a Montessori option.*

**The American Montessori Society, the Association Montessori Internationale, the North American Montessori Teachers' Association, Montessori Educational Programs International, and the Southwestern Montessori Training Center.*

Measure 1B: RVCS Measured against the Essential Elements

**Essential Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector, the American Montessori Society*

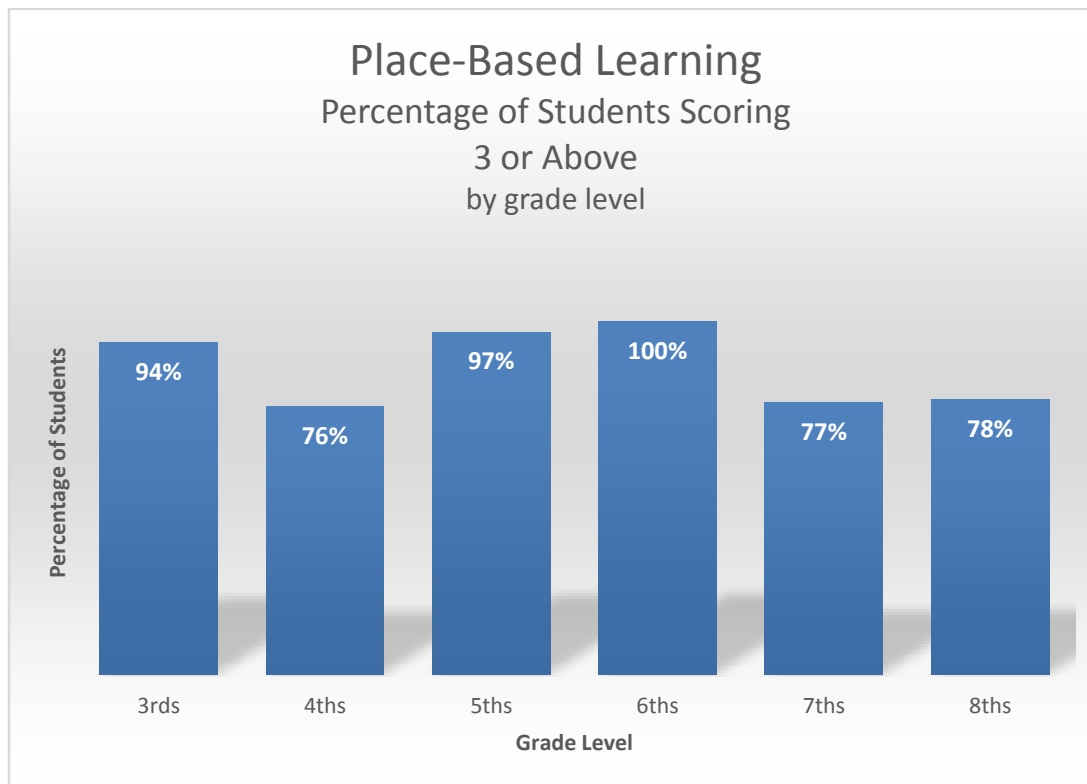
Area & Number	Component	✓	Notes
1 Montessori Teachers	Employ Montessori teachers who have Montessori credentials for the levels they teach.	✓	All K-6 head teachers are Montessori trained or certified. Additionally, in 9 of the 10 K-6 classrooms, the assistant teachers are also Montessori trained or certified. Middle school faculty has strong knowledge of the Montessori Method for adolescents and expertise in specific content areas. The Middle School Coordinator is AMS certified in Elementary I and II. The Academic Program Coordinator is experienced and Montessori-trained at the EL I-II level.
2 Recruitment	Maintain an active and open recruitment for Montessori credentialed teachers.	✓	All classroom teacher openings are posted on various education websites, including common Montessori websites and the school's website.
3 Training Budget	Budget for future Montessori teacher education for non-Montessori credentialed teachers.	✓	The school's budget routinely includes a line item for Montessori training. Four teachers are currently receiving training funded by the school.
4 Professional Development	Provide professional Montessori in-service by experienced credentialed Montessori educators.	✓	Michael Dorer has provided Montessori guidance during August and September PD days. The school is an active participant in local and national conferences. Additionally, credentialed in-house administrators are guiding professional development initiatives during the current school year.
5 Ongoing Consultation	Contract for on-going internal and periodic external Montessori consultation and/or professional support as a follow up to Montessori teacher education.	✓	This audit represents the bi-annual internal Montessori review conducted by River Valley administrators. Professional support as follow up to this audit and Montessori training are provided in-house by the Academic Program Coordinator and the Director, both certified Montessori educators. Montessori professionals conduct the bi-annual External Montessori Audits. John Freeman, Director of a Montessori Magnet School in Hartford, CT, will be visiting RVCS to provide consultation in December 2016.
6 Assistants	Employ one paraprofessional per classroom, each having received Montessori orientation for that role.	✓	All K-6 classrooms have either a lead teacher and an assistant teacher or co-lead teachers. All assistant teachers are either Montessori trained or have received Montessori orientation.
7 Curriculum Coordinator	Employ an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as curriculum coordinator.	✓	River Valley's Director, Andy Willemsen, the Academic Program Coordinator, Laura Hunt and the Middle School Coordinator, Colin Vandenburg are all experienced and credentialed Montessori teachers.

8 Administration	Employ a building principal/educational leader who has knowledge of Montessori principles and curriculum through Montessori coursework, Montessori Administrator Credential and/or annual conference exposure.	✓	The RVCS Director, Andy Willemsen is a credentialed and experienced Montessori teacher. The Assistant Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans, has over ten years of Montessori administrative service, as well as two years of Montessori classroom teaching.
9 Curricular Commitment	Maintain commitment to the core Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.	✓	No administrative staffing changes were made in the last year. All key administrators have Montessori experience.
10 Communication	Sustain the support of the central administration through high profile communications about program development.	✓	As a Commonwealth Charter School, RVCS is its own school district, and reports to the state Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (OCCSR). The OCCSR approved the school's Annual Report and results for the RVCS Accountability Plan. Communication with state accountability personnel is ongoing.
11 2.5-6 Age Range	Recognize that the best implementation process is to begin with the 2.5-6 age group and add one age at a time for a gradual progression.	n/a	While the recognition of the importance of the multi-age program exists, limitations and restrictions on town and state funding for early childhood programs prevent RVCS from offering enrollment to pre-school aged students. The existing Kinderhaus classrooms are excellent examples of high quality Montessori environments.
12 Parent Education	Provide Montessori parent education programs that promote understanding of Montessori principles and curriculum.	✓	Prospective and new parent orientation sessions, as well as parent nights in each classroom provide essential information regarding the Montessori Method. In addition, the Director offers monthly morning meetings with parents as well as sending home 'Director's Notes' regularly which outline key aspects of Montessori education. In spring of 2016 the school hosted a parent education evening focused on the Montessori cultural curriculum. Plans are underway for a similar evening in spring 2017 with a focus on literacy and writing.
13 Admissions	Develop an admission process that informs parents about the nature of Montessori and seeks the necessary commitment to the program	✓	This process is well established from the first contact at the Enrollment Information Sessions through Kinderhaus screening and New Parent Orientation. The Assistant Director holds multiple information sessions for prospective families, and offers additional Montessori education sessions for parents during Kinderhaus screening days.

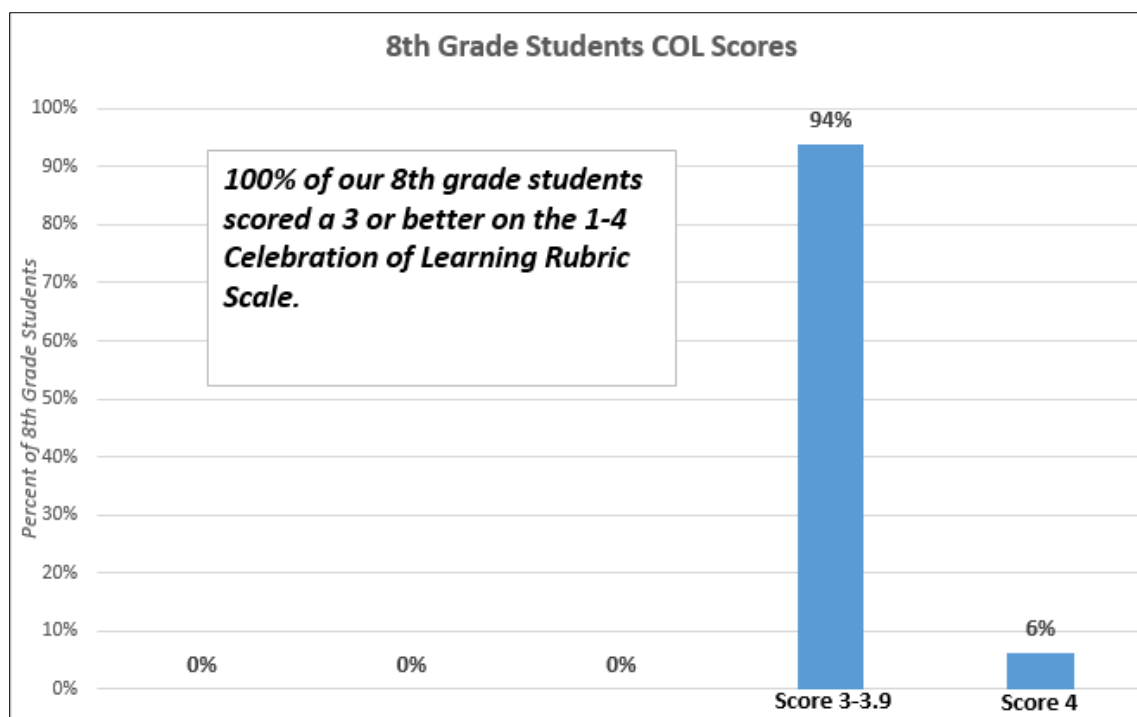
14 Montessori Materials	Offer a full complement of Montessori materials purchased from Montessori dealers.	✓	All K-6 classrooms are equipped with a wide array of Montessori materials. The RVCS Foundation funds a \$5,000 annual grant to assure the ongoing acquisition of Montessori materials for all levels. Materials and classroom furniture are sourced from high quality Montessori vendors.
15 Prepared Environment	Develop a classroom design that is compatible with Montessori "prepared environment" principles	✓	The overall beauty of K-6 classrooms was impressive, with materials thoughtfully presented and kept in good condition. Furniture is purchased from Montessori distributors, and suits the developmental needs of the children. All K-6 classrooms have tiled and carpeted areas for student learning, as well as in-class water sources and dedicated bathrooms. Large group, small group and individual learning areas exist in all K-6 rooms. Plants are present in all rooms, and animals in many. E1 rooms provided peace corners, and E2 rooms all offered upholstered seating options. Middle school classrooms provide flexible environments that foster both group and individual learning spaces.
16 Work Periods	Create uninterrupted daily work periods of 90 minutes to 3-hours, considering the 3-hour work cycle as ideal.	✓	All K-6 classroom have uninterrupted work blocks of at least 90 minutes scheduled every day. The current schedule for specials and instrumental lessons has put pressure on the continuity of the work period, with increased interruptions to the three-hour work cycle. There is broad consensus that the specials programs are of high quality and offering meaningful learning to all students, yet teachers are feeling the stress of the tight scheduling and the many demands on student's time. The middle school schedule includes 120-minute learning blocks for science and humanities classes, and a minimum of 60 minute classes for mathematics and language arts classes. The specials schedule is working well for the middle school program.
17 Integrated Specials	Integrate specialty programs (music, art, physical education, etc.) around the uninterrupted work periods.	✓	As mentioned above, the breadth of enrichment classes included in the RVCS curriculum presents ongoing scheduling challenges. Great care and planning are invested in minimizing the impact on the morning work periods, so that all classrooms have at least three days with a three-hour work period, and work periods of at least 90 minutes on other days.
18 Age Groupings	Apply the appropriate multi-age groupings: 2.5-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18 necessary for the diversity, flexibility, and reduced competition integral to Montessori.	n/a	RVCS recognizes the importance of these multi-age groupings, but is unable to offer a 2.5-6 program due to limitations and restrictions on town and state funding for early childhood programs
19 Progress Reporting	Use a process of reporting student progress that is compatible with Montessori and includes parent conferences and authentic assessment tools such as observation, portfolio,	✓	RVCS progress reports have been updated to align with Montessori curriculum and reflect student progress toward learning goals. Both faculty and parents report positive feedback from this effort. Additional emphasis has been placed on parent conferences, which occur three times annually. Performance assessment data is reflected in progress reports. Teachers at all levels are piloting an innovative approach to portfolio assessments, and will solicit feedback from parents and students as the year progresses. Portfolio use is strongly and consistently implemented at the MS level culminating in Celebrations of Learning in the spring.

	performance assessment with rubric, etc.		
20 Assessment	Implement state mandated assessments in such a way that the character of the Montessori program is not compromised.	✓	RVCS uses the MCAS as its state mandated assessment tool. Though these remain high-stakes tests, the current administration has attempted to reduce the impact of these tests on daily school culture. The faculty also use a variety of internal assessments to assist in progress report data. Teachers and administration continue to develop assessment tools that align with the Montessori philosophy.
21 Professional Development	Budget for continuing education through Montessori workshops and conferences.	✓	The budget continues to reflect an investment in Montessori workshops and conferences.
22 Memberships	Maintain membership with one or more of the professional Montessori organizations and seek Montessori accreditation to assure consistent quality.	✓	RVC is a member of the American Montessori Society and the Montessori Schools of Massachusetts.

Measure 2B: Place-Based Learning Assessment Results



Measure 3B: 8th Grade COL Scores



APPENDIX: Sample of Learning Goals Data

Student Progress by Learning Goal, Percent of Students at Each Level- 6th Grade ELA

2016-2017	GRADE	6	LANGUAGE ARTS						Number of students: 30			7/10/2017
%	fall	winter	spring		fall	winter	spring		fall	winter	spring	
Writing process			Expository			Fiction						
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	3%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
W - With Support	20%	3%	0%	W - With Support	3%	0%	0%	W - With Support	7%	0%	0%	
WI - Independently	50%	57%	17%	WI - Independently	67%	67%	33%	WI - Independently	40%	27%	13%	
P - Proficient	23%	33%	67%	P - Proficient	20%	27%	47%	P - Proficient	47%	67%	57%	
S - Synthesis	7%	7%	17%	S - Synthesis	7%	7%	20%	S - Synthesis	7%	7%	30%	
Reading comprehension			Analytical reading			Spelling						
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	3%	3%	
W - With Support	10%	3%	0%	W - With Support	10%	7%	3%	W - With Support	30%	17%	13%	
WI - Independently	43%	30%	3%	WI - Independently	43%	40%	10%	WI - Independently	40%	33%	40%	
P - Proficient	43%	60%	73%	P - Proficient	47%	50%	67%	P - Proficient	17%	30%	23%	
S - Synthesis	3%	7%	23%	S - Synthesis	0%	3%	20%	S - Synthesis	13%	17%	20%	

Student Progress by Learning Goal, Percent of Students at Each Level- 6th Grade Math

2016-2017	GRADE	6	MATH						Number of students: 30			7/10/2017
%	fall	winter	spring		fall	winter	spring		fall	winter	spring	
Approaches problem solving with a positive attitude and persistence			Sees mistakes as a learning opportunity			Fractions						
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
W - With Support	10%	7%	3%	W - With Support	20%	13%	3%	W - With Support	30%	13%	10%	
WI - Independently	23%	13%	13%	WI - Independently	43%	33%	27%	WI - Independently	53%	47%	30%	
P - Proficient	63%	73%	53%	P - Proficient	33%	50%	53%	P - Proficient	17%	40%	50%	
S - Synthesis	3%	7%	30%	S - Synthesis	3%	3%	17%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	10%	
Decimals			Geometry			Measurement						
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	47%	27%	0%	Not Introduced	27%	27%	0%	
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	
W - With Support	40%	13%	13%	W - With Support	17%	13%	13%	W - With Support	3%	3%	3%	
WI - Independently	60%	67%	63%	WI - Independently	37%	60%	50%	WI - Independently	53%	53%	77%	
P - Proficient	0%	20%	23%	P - Proficient	0%	0%	33%	P - Proficient	17%	17%	20%	
S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	3%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	
Data and statistics			Algebraic thinking			Ratios and proportional relationships						
Not Introduced	27%	27%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	17%	17%	0%	
I - Introduced	47%	17%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	10%	13%	0%	
W - With Support	17%	17%	17%	W - With Support	40%	37%	17%	W - With Support	7%	7%	17%	
WI - Independently	10%	40%	70%	WI - Independently	33%	20%	30%	WI - Independently	33%	30%	37%	
P - Proficient	0%	0%	13%	P - Proficient	27%	37%	40%	P - Proficient	23%	33%	47%	
S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	7%	13%	S - Synthesis	10%	0%	0%	