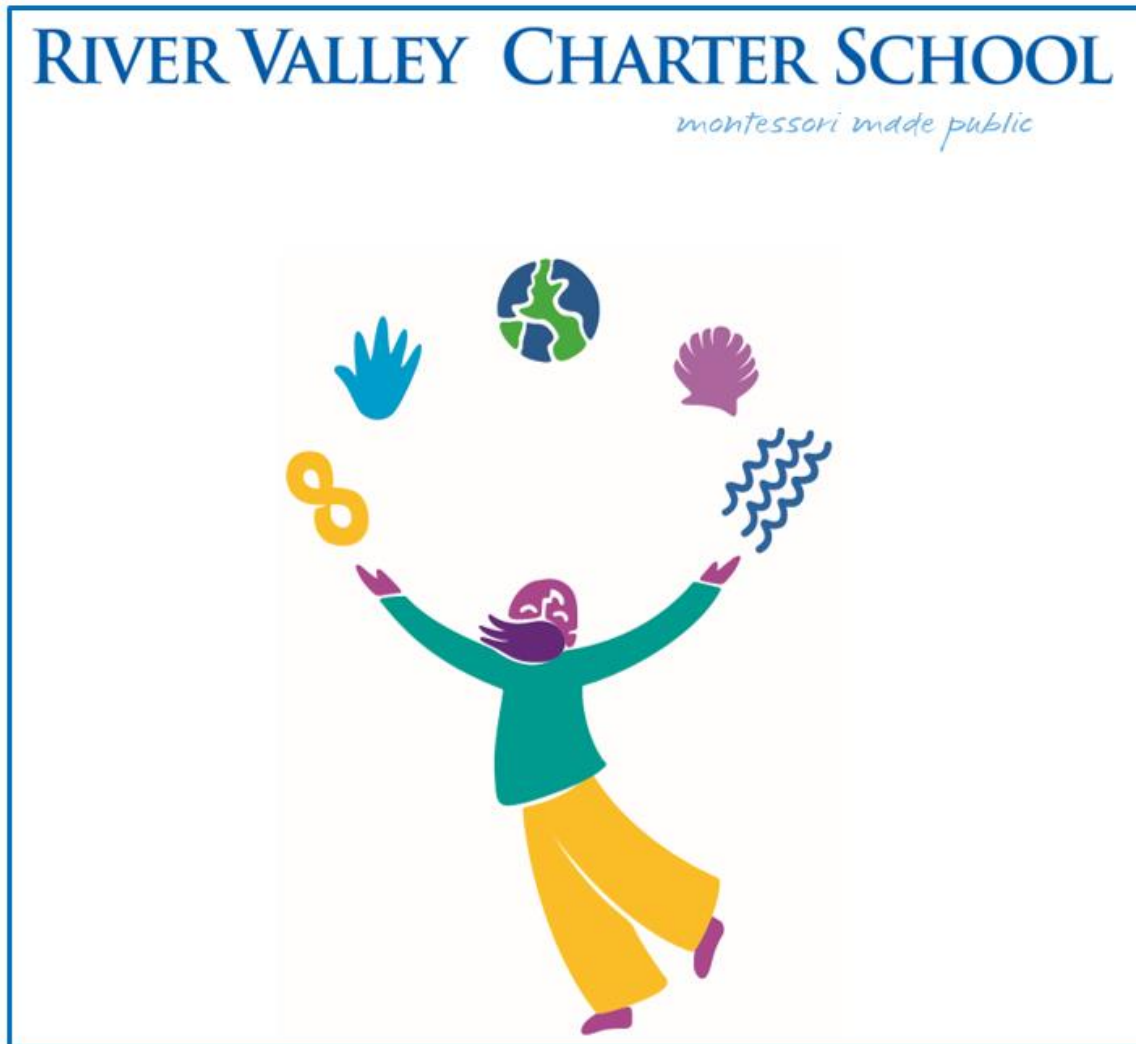


# Annual Report of a Public Charter School



**RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL**

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Board of Trustees Approval Date:

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Submission Date: July 30, 2018

## **LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' CHAIRPERSON**

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July 16, 2018

To the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

We are proud to submit the River Valley Charter School Annual Report for the 2017-2018 academic year. As you will see from the report, the school continues to flourish, consistently delivering a rigorous academic program that is true to our charter. RVCS has combined the best elements of public education and the Montessori philosophy while rooting our programming in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. As 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.

In the 2017-2018 school year River Valley has continued in its quest to modernize Montessori teaching to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Tactically, this has resulted in strengthening of curriculum maps and learning goals consistently across the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade levels including a new Peace Education Map and Habits of Learning teaching and assessment framework. The curriculum has been successfully integrated into the fabric of the school in a few short years.

This year we also opened the doors to a newly renovated middle school space. This space is vibrant and provides the perfect environment for exploration. The revised middle school includes a 'Maker Space' where students are provided the materials and technology with which to create new prototypes and experiments. At the center of the space is a shared learning area that supports individual and group learning and performances.

The Board of Trustees continues to provide sound governance for the school and maintains proper oversight for the school's policy framework, budget, and fiscal controls. This year the Board is most proud of the efforts it undertook in concert with the Executive Director to address teaching and staff retention. Together we have been able to make significant wage increases this year and we continue to shift costs from plant to people through responsible stewardship of our assets and building loan.

Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed report. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Mark Belanger  
Chair, Board of Directors  
River Valley Charter School

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## INTRODUCTION TO RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

<i>Name of School</i>			
<b>Type of Charter</b> (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	<b>Location of School</b> (Municipality)	Newburyport
<b>Regional or Non-Regional?</b>	Regional	<b>Chartered Districts in Region</b>	1
<b>Year Opened</b>	1999	<b>Year(s) Renewed</b>	2003, 2009, 2014
<b>Maximum Enrollment</b>	288	<b>Current Enrollment</b>	287 on 6/21/2018
<b>Chartered Grade Span</b>	K-8	<b>Current Grade Span</b>	K-8
<b># of Instructional Days per school year</b>	180	<b>Students on Waitlist</b>	161 on 6/04/2018
<b>School Hours</b>	8:30am – 3:10pm	<b>Age of School</b>	Nineteen
<b>Mission Statement</b>  The mission of 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 and 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.			

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

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### ***Faithfulness to the Charter***

#### **Mission and Key Design Elements**

*There have been no significant changes to our mission or key design elements during the 2017-2018 school year.*

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 program based on the Montessori philosophy
- 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.

#### **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 accredited Montessori training to 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. (One grade 4-6 classroom has co-lead teachers.) During the 2017-2018 school year, all eleven Lead Teachers were Montessori trained, and nine have Montessori certification. Seven of our nine 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. This contributes to the development of 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 learn 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 are encouraged to make decisions from the earliest grades and learn to make good choices and manage their time well. They also learn that mistakes are part of the learning process and provide important opportunities for self-reflection and growth. The independence and the 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

*"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*

individualized approach to instruction 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.

During the 2017-2018 school year, every classroom implemented the RVCS Habits of Learning curriculum to prioritize and strengthen our whole child approach to education. The Habits of Learning curriculum is described in detail in the [Program Delivery](#) section of this report.

**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

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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 our place-based learning curriculum and community-building activities are emphasized. These trips allow students to demonstrate their skills and abilities outside of the academic 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 personal and community connections. In order to develop school-wide community, River Valley holds regular, monthly 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.

*"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*

**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 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

*"...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*

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, modeling the skills required for success beyond the school environment.

**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 pace and style 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.

*"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*



Much of the student work is project-based, and students frequently have a voice in the topics they research. For example, every October our Elementary 1 students (E1), in 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 and parents while dressed in the costume of their historical figure. Our Elementary 2 students (E2), in 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.

**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

*“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*

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.

**Developing a Sense of Social Justice in Children:** Each of our classroom communities develops social contracts at the beginning of each school 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 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 faced by this segment of our community. 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

*“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*



engage with and fundraise for a variety of social justice causes, including a multi-year 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, 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 River Valley Charter School Foundation, a 501(c)3 dedicated to supporting education at RVCS, provided \$45,000 in funding support for field trips during the 2017-2018 school year, and has committed \$50,000 for the 2018-2019 school year. These funds are received from private foundations and families, further strengthening the commitment and collaboration of our school community.

During the 2017-2018 school year, River Valley students participated in over 175 field trips resulting in abundant place-based learning projects and experiences. The descriptions below represent only a fraction of the total student outings.

At the middle school level, students extended their multi-year “Sci-Manities” study responding to the National Geographic report citing the Merrimack River as the 8<sup>th</sup> most endangered river in the United States. The Humanities and Science teachers collaborated to design a student-driven, year-long study of the threats and solutions to this situation. During the 2016-2017 school year, student activism

*“We cannot create observers by saying ‘observe’, but by giving them the power and the means for this observation and these means are procured through education of the senses.”*  
*Dr. Maria Montessori*

raised enough money to officially “adopt” a mile of the Merrimack River for 2017-2018. This year, students set out to provide stewardship over that adopted mile of the river through such efforts as building storm gardens, marking storm drains and advocating for zero waste initiatives. Students

presented their work at the local farmer’s market in May, delivering short speeches to inform market-goers about their efforts, as well as asking residents to sign a Watershed Pledge saying that they would help to steward their own property for the health of the river. Students partnered with the Newburyport City Engineer, Newburyport Parks Commission, as well as local organizations like The Merrimack River Watershed Council, with representatives from each organization working collaboratively with the students and faculty.

Our E2 students travelled to historical sites such as the Tsongas Industrial History Center, Lowell’s Boott Mills, the Harvard Museum of Natural History, the Exeter Independence Museum and the Spencer-Pierce-Little Farm in Newbury to study the rich history of our region. All Elementary 2 students participated in an extensive study of immigration, culminating in a re-enactment of a day at Ellis Island, with all students, staff, and community partners in costume and character. Ecological studies were supported through trips to such locations as Maudslay State Park, Plum Island National Wildlife Refuge, Massachusetts Audubon, the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary, Fletcher Farm and Pawtuckaway State Park. Community service work included weekly trips to St. Paul’s Soup Kitchen and service at The Emery House.

E1 and Kinderhaus students studied the history of the Merrimack River Valley through trips to such locations as the Mary Baker Eddy Library, the Spencer-Pierce-Little Farm, Strawberry Banke and the Museum of Fine Arts. Their study of local ecology was supported through trips to the Parker River

Wildlife Refuge, the Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Moseley Pines and the Bradley Palmer State Park. All Elementary 1 students participated in a year-long project to support the endangered Blandings Turtle, with every class raising turtles in their classroom, recording and sharing data, and a release-to-the-wild event in the spring. Community service work included trips to The Heritage House, Avita Assisted Living Center, and Our Neighbor's Table.

### 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

*“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*

abilities to 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 understand that effective instruction will 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 four through eight, 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 five and six 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.

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 vital 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

*There was one amendment to the charter during the 2017-2018 school year.*

In keeping with new regulatory interpretation regarding charter school enrollment, River Valley Charter School submitted an updated Enrollment Policy to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in November 2017. The new policy eliminates the rollover of grandfathered students on the school's waitlist, requiring the school to clear the waitlist and establish new waitlists each year. The 2018 lottery was our first lottery under the new policy. Simultaneously, the school transitioned to an online application and application management system. For the 2018-2019 school year, there were approximately 200 applicants for grades K-8. Enrollment was offered to 32 kindergarten aged students. The remainder of applicants were placed on the waitlist. Whenever an opening occurs, the school will offer enrollment to the next student on the waitlist as guided by the policy and taking into account preference for siblings and residents. A copy of the new Enrollment Policy is available on the school's website and at the school for applicants to review.

Date	Amendment Requested	Pending or Approved?
11/16/2017	Enrollment Policy	Approved

## Access and Equity

*There have been no significant changes in access and equity during the 2017-2018 school year.*

Access to curriculum, and equity in programming is inherent in the Montessori Method. The high level of individualized instruction allows teachers to customize curriculum and assessment for every child. Work is assigned to students based on their current level of achievement and their readiness to learn new concepts and skills.

Working in conjunction with their teachers, students at higher grade levels set academic and personal goals for their own individual progress. The school's Learning Goals are clearly articulated to both students and parents, and include benchmarks for the Habits of Learning (described in the [Program Delivery](#) section below), as well as traditional academic areas. Student progress toward the achievement of academic and Habits of Learning goals is relayed to parents and the school's Accountability Committee three times per year; to parents via Progress Reports and conferences, and to the Accountability Committee via documentation of Learning Goal Data. RVCS teachers are available to families through email, phone, and in-person meetings throughout the school year.

Daily and/or weekly workplans help students monitor their day-to-day progress and hold students accountable for work completion. Learning is scaffolded for students when needed, and is provided through modifications and/or accommodations, thus ensuring that all students, regardless of their ability, are given equal access to curriculum, programming, and learning.

### Behavioral Expectations

The Habits of Learning, combined with Montessori's Grace and Courtesy lessons, serve as the backbone of behavioral expectations for River Valley Charter School students. All behavioral infractions are viewed as opportunities for learning, and natural consequences are favored over prescribed punishments. River Valley's Code of Conduct highlights the school's individualized approach to discipline. Most often, behavioral issues are handled by the classroom teacher with the support of the School Counselor. When necessary, the Assistant Director becomes involved. Involvement of administrative staff, and the extent of a disciplinary response, is dependent on the significance and/or frequency of behavioral breaches. The more severe, or the more frequent, the more school support personnel and/or administration are involved.

Out-of-school suspensions are not used as a form of discipline except in extremely limited circumstances such as those that would occur if a student were to engage in illegal behavior. In-school suspensions are also used infrequently. River Valley Charter School matches its disciplinary response to behavioral infractions using concepts of Restorative Justice and logical behavioral consequences. As an example, during the 2017-2018 school year, a student was alleged to have glorified the Holocaust to his peers through action and writing. The actions of the student included saluting in "Heil Hitler" fashion as well as drawing swastikas on school furniture. The following logical consequences and restorative actions were assigned to the student by working in collaboration with teachers, administration and the family:

- 1) Meet with teachers and administration to take responsibility for the actions.
- 2) Reflect on the implications of the behavior, the importance of positive behavior, and role modeling for other students.

- 3) Erase and clean tables throughout the middle school, specifically in those rooms where the graffiti was written.
- 4) Watch the movie *Shindler's List*, and the documentary *Paperclip*, both about the Holocaust, and share learning from these with teachers and peers.
- 5) Participate in a teacher-led tour of the Holocaust Museum while on the eighth-grade trip to Washington DC.
- 6) Create an expression of remorse and/or apology.

During the 2017-2018 school year, there were three in-school suspensions and one out-of-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year.

## Dissemination Efforts

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	Criteria that best aligns to the shared best practice	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
<b>Habits of Learning (SEL) Curriculum</b>	American Montessori Society National Conference	Alison Fields (E2 Lead Teacher) Andy Willemsen (School Director)	Presenting at professional conferences; Curriculum	Montessori Educators & Administrators	Peace Education Curriculum Map, Habits of Learning Guidelines, Student Reflection & Portfolio Process Documents and Presentation Slide Deck were all posted on the American Montessori Society website for dissemination to all 4,000 conference attendees.
<b>Systems View of High Quality Public Montessori</b>	Hosted the First Annual Public Montessori Convening	RVCS Faculty, Andy Willemsen (School Director), Jonnie Lyn Evans (Assistant Director)	Hosted educators from five public Montessori Schools Presented programs and curriculum	Teachers and administrators from five public Montessori schools.	Keynote presentation slide deck, RVCS Peace Education Curriculum Map and RVCS Educator Growth Model documents shared with attendees.
<b>Habits of Learning (SEL) Curriculum</b>	Shared Peace Education Curriculum Map with the Montessori Institute of New England (educator training program)	Andy Willemsen (School Director)	Sharing resources or programs developed at the school	Montessori Institute of New England Leaders and Teacher Trainers	Peace Education Curriculum presented as part of Montessori teacher training program.

<b>Best Practice Shared</b>	<b>Vehicle for Dissemination</b>	<b>Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?</b>	<b>Criteria that best aligns to the shared best practice</b>	<b>With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?</b>	<b>Result of dissemination</b>
<b>Habits of Learning (SEL) Curriculum</b>	Shared Peace Education Curriculum Map	Andy Willemssen (School Director)	Sharing resources or programs developed at the charter school	Johnna Maraia, principal of Sanfordville Elementary School in Warwick Valley School District, NY	District to review curriculum for possible implementation.
<b>RVCS Educator Growth Program</b>	Shared RVCS Professional Practice Framework & Educator Growth Process documents	Andy Willemssen (School Director)	Sharing resources or programs developed at the charter school	Sparhawk School, Amesbury Mass.	School to review program & process for possible implementation.
<b>Formative Assessment Practices</b>	Modeled & shared formative assessment practices.	Colin Gibney (Middle School Teacher)	Sharing resources and hosting educators	Salem State University MEd Program Director & a Fulbright Scholar	RVCS practices to be used as exemplars in the SSU 4+1 MEd Program.
<b>Food Allergy Management &amp; Prevention Plan</b>	Shared RVCS Policy & Plan	Kimberly Putney (School Nurse)	Sharing resources or programs developed at the charter school	Amesbury School District, Mass	District to review policy & plan for possible implementation.
<b>Kindergarten Montessori Program</b>	Hosted representatives from the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector to observe our public	Kinderhaus Teachers	Hosting other educators at the charter school	National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, Washington, D.C.	Evaluated our program to influence guidance for best practices in the national movement.



Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	Criteria that best aligns to the shared best practice	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
	Kinderhaus program.				
<b>Parent Education</b>	Two 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 addition to the presentation, books and audio tapes are made available.

## Faithfulness to the Charter

### Student Performance

*There have been no significant changes in student performance in the 2017-2018 school year.*

River Valley Charter School's school report card can be accessed at

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/accountability/report/school.aspx?fycode=2017&orgcode=04820050>

Learning Goal Data, which is derived from student progress report data is aggregated and shared with the Board's Accountability Committee of the Board of Trustees so that they may have insight into the progress of students overall. A sample of the information delivered to the Accountability Committee is available as **ATTACHMENT 1: Sample of Learning Goals Data.**

Changes are being made to the school's progress reports for the 2018-2019 school year ([described below](#)). These changes will impact what data is shared with the Board's Accountability Committee. The adoption of Universal Screeners (also described below) will provide the school with information that is consistent from classroom to classroom for tracking individual student progress. Some form of information aggregated from this data will be shared with the Accountability Committee to replace the Learning Goal Data that was previously used.

### Program Delivery

*There were minor changes to program delivery in the 2017-2018 school year.*

#### Habits of Learning Curriculum/Student Portfolios

During the 2016-2017 school year, teacher representatives from each level piloted the implementation of our Habits of Learning curriculum. Based upon the RVCS Peace Education Curriculum Map and rooted in Dr. Montessori's vision of education as a vital tool to promote peace, the RVCS Habits of Learning infuse our core beliefs about life-long learning into the daily work of both students and staff. The curriculum is structured upon the Eight "Cs": Curiosity, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Commitment, Communication, Citizenship, and Compassion.

For the 2017-2018 school year, the entire faculty and all students brought the Habits of Learning curriculum to the center of the daily life of the school. The teacher pilot team shared their experiences and lessons-learned with their colleagues during June and August faculty meetings, providing a common approach to implementation. Students in all classrooms worked to develop student-centered definitions of the Eight Cs; teachers in the lower grades developed Montessori-style hands-on materials; and students in the upper grades posted definitions with clarifying descriptors. As students reflected on their work or their interactions with others, the Habits of Learning were consistently referenced. The Eight Cs became part of the daily lexicon of the classrooms, and student project presentations were often scored with rubrics built upon the Habits of Learning.

One innovative implementation of the Habits of Learning is our new approach to student portfolios. Portfolios have long served as a central component of our student assessment system, yet the approach and criteria used to assemble them has varied between classrooms and levels. As piloted last year, the entire school structured all student portfolios on the Habits of Learning this year. In the past our portfolios, like most, were organized into the core academic areas – math, language, science & history. Beginning this year, portfolios are organized according to the Eight Cs. Accordingly, when reflecting on a piece of academic work, a student considers what Habits of Learning they employed. A student may explain that a piece of math work, for example, demonstrates Creativity in a problem-solving approach, or Commitment due to the effort invested in its completion. This new approach allows students to build upon their strengths and see themselves as unique learners, rather than simply expressing what subject area appeals to them or where they feel less motivated. Students, teachers and parents all report that the caliber and depth of students’ written reflections have never been so high.

As an added element of the portfolio process, students have each created their own “Traveler” portfolio. At the end of each year, students select one artifact (and corresponding reflection) from each of the Habits of Learning and add these to a portfolio that will travel with them from Kinderhaus through grade eight. This becomes an historical archive and timeline of the student’s learning during their years at River Valley.

### **Supports for Diverse Learners**

*The school’s approach to supporting students with diverse learning needs was augmented during the 2017-2018 school year.*

During the 2017-2018 school year, River Valley Charter School received a Model Demonstration School (MDS) grant from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA). The grant provided us with access to a Response to Intervention (RtI) expert and a staff member from the MCPSA. The RtI program at River Valley is known as the Student Support Team (SST).

The goal of our work as a Model Demonstration School was to “create structures, systems, and practices that are viable, sustainable, and accepted by the team, to restructure the SST/RtI process, provide reflective opportunities for teachers to examine their own practices, enhance their toolkit to ensure that ALL students meet their individual potential.”

A working group of educators and other support staff from River Valley was formed to participate in the yearlong study. The MDS team consisted of representatives from each of our grade levels (with the exception of middle school), the School Counselor, the School Psychologist, Special Education Co-ordinators, Special Education Teachers, the Assistant Director (who oversees Student Support Services), and the two external members; one from the MCPSA and one from the May Institute, a national leader in the field of applied behavior analysis that services thousands of individuals annually. The Team met multiple times over the year for extended working sessions.

The MDS work began with a review of best practices in RtI. An anticipated challenge to this work was ensuring that recommendations from the MDS team would align with the school’s Montessori mission. After a thorough evaluation of universal screeners was conducted, the team identified screeners to use in three curricular areas: mathematics, literacy, and social/emotional behavior. A few classrooms at each level piloted the screeners to provide feedback to the team.

Next, an inventory of school-based resources for interventions was created, and the processes and systems to improve River Valley's RtI program overall were designed. A summary of the work will be presented to faculty prior to the start of the 2018-2019 school year and the use of common Universal Screeners in every K-6 classroom will be initiated.

The yearlong initiative has been important to the growth of River Valley as a school. Whereas teacher recommendations were previously used to identify students for SST/RtI, the new system ensures valid data is being used to identify RtI students; there is consistency across classrooms; there is better distribution of RtI resources; and most importantly, increased capacity is being built within the classroom.

During the 2017-2018 school year, River Valley added an additional special education teacher to work 1:1 with a student whose disabilities require 1:1 support. The addition of this special education teacher brings the school's total special education staff to nine dedicated staff (four special education teachers, an Orton-Gillingham specialist, a literacy interventionist, a speech and language pathologist, and two learning assistants). River Valley subcontracts for occupational therapy and physical therapy. Next year the literacy interventionist will be a full-time position. One of our special education teachers is training to achieve Orton-Gillingham certification. River Valley will also employ a part time Literacy Coach who will work to increase literacy capacity among our K-6 teaching staff. These changes represent an increased emphasis on reading and literacy going forward. (Staffing changes are described more fully below in the Organizational Viability section.)

### **New Progress Reports**

RVCS sends progress reports to families three times each year. Historically, these reports have required extensive amounts of time and effort on the part of teachers, adding undue stress to the working environment. With Montessori-based measures and as many as forty separate indicators, progress reports have also been difficult for families to fully comprehend. In an effort to reduce teacher stress and improve the quality of the information provided to families, we convened a teacher team to redesign our progress reports. The team consisted of educators from all levels as well as administrators. We gathered progress report examples from our sending districts, from other public Montessori schools, and from private Montessori schools. Each was analyzed and evaluated for their merits. We also held parent focus groups to solicit feedback and conducted a parent survey that yielded over 60 responses. The main desires from parents were for fewer "check-boxes", an indication of whether or not their student is "on-target", and consistency of the narrative remarks.

Based on this input, the team drafted new progress reports and then shared them with faculty to gather additional feedback. By June, a final draft emerged, and was well received by faculty. The new progress reports feature a page for evaluation of student progress in our Habits of Learning curriculum, including a narrative section for each term. For the academic portion, students are scored on fewer measures for each core area, but are rated on both their engagement and their skill level, including an on-target indicator. Each academic area will have a narrative comment for each term that includes a strength and a goal. The team created exemplars for the narrative comments, and these were shared with the entire faculty to assure consistency of expectations. The new progress reports are now complete and will be implemented for the upcoming school year. An example is included as **ATTACHMENT 2: Updated Progress Report Sample**.

## Organizational Viability

### Organizational Structure of the School

*There were changes to the organizational structure of the school during the 2017-2018 school year.*

Immediately prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year, an Upper Elementary teacher resigned to take a position at a new school. After careful consideration, it was decided that the Academic Program Coordinator, who had years of teaching experience at River Valley, would temporarily return to the classroom. Her administrative responsibilities were parsed out to the remaining members of the administrative team. After a year back in the classroom, she has decided to remain a classroom teacher. She will also serve as a Level Team Coordinator, a new job responsibility created within the school and described below.

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, there will be a Level Coordinator for every level as well as for the Specialists (art, music, physical education, technology, engineering, etc.). The Level Coordinator position will be fulfilled by a current classroom teacher and will be shared among faculty in a rotating manner, i.e., each year a different teacher will serve in this role. Level Coordinators will maintain their classroom teaching responsibilities while assuming minor additional administrative duties related to their level. The Coordinators will attend weekly administrative meetings, represent the perspective and needs of staff, discuss ongoing initiatives, assure open and continuous communications, facilitate level meetings, and provide support for some level-related administrative functions.

River Valley is also piloting three coaching initiatives during the 2018-2019 school year. We have contracted with a renowned public Montessori Coach and Consultant to support teachers in their day-to-day Montessori practices. The Montessori coach/consultant will spend one day each month at River Valley and will be available for support conversations in between onsite visits. She will provide feedback to teachers regarding their Montessori practice including curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

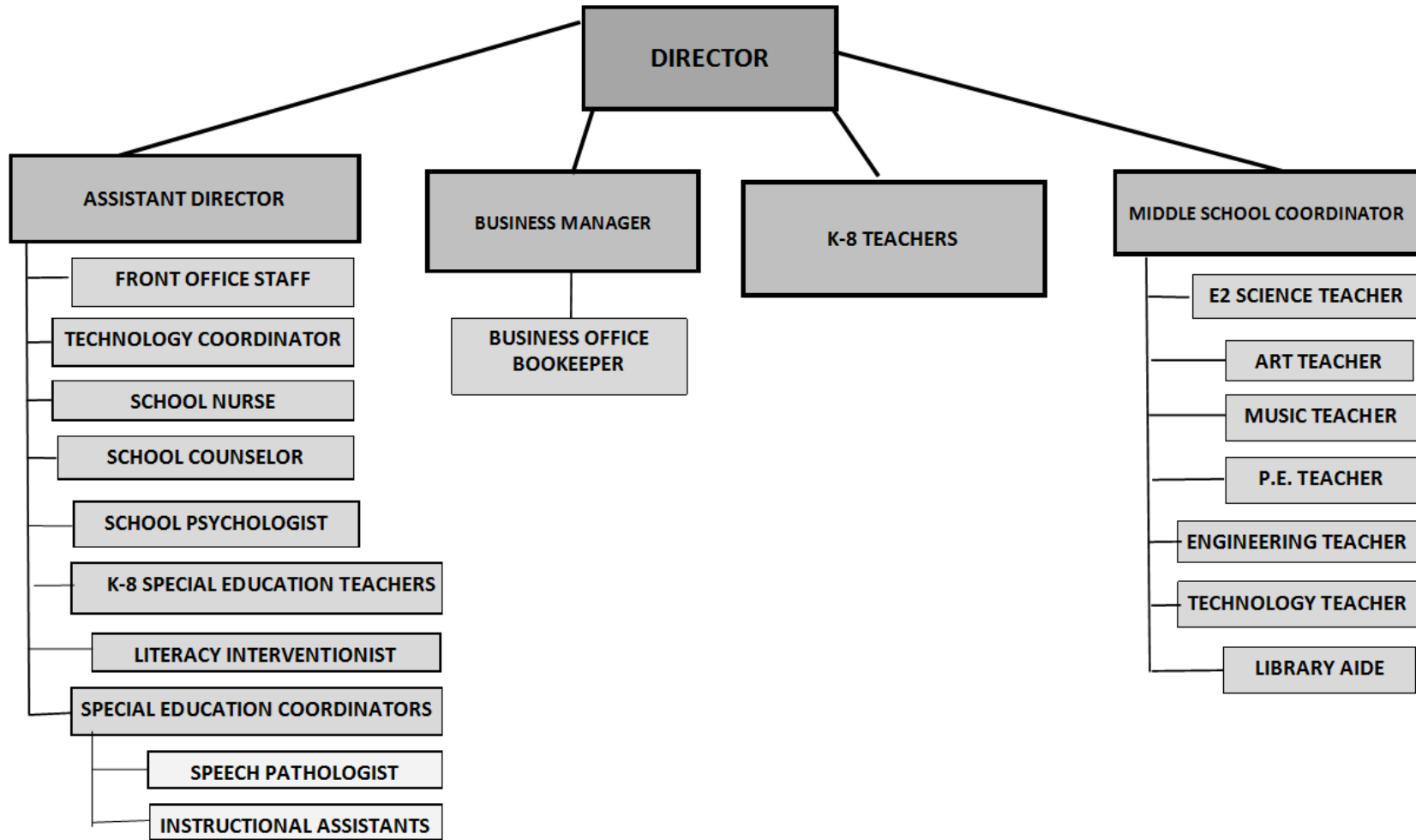
We have also contracted with a Literacy Coach and Consultant to provide literacy coaching to all K-6 teachers. The Literacy coach/consultant will provide consultation to school leadership and teachers to promote the expertise of all Kinderhaus and Elementary faculty with a focus on implementing rigorous literacy instruction, and the effective use of assessment information to support targeted individualized instruction. This coach/consultant will be at the school one morning each week through the fall and then bi-weekly until the remainder of the year.

A veteran River Valley middle school teacher will be augmenting his teaching role with coaching of our Upper Elementary and Middle School faculty as well during the 2018-2019 school year. After participating in a variety of coaching trainings, the new coach is excited to bring this practice to our school. Based on the educator-centered coaching model, the support will be collaborative, non-evaluative and confidential. Teachers will set the agenda through discussions with the coach. Dialogue, observation and self-reflection will serve as a central elements of the program. This is not a “fix-it” approach to teacher support, but rather a natural extension of the educator growth process at River Valley.

An additional organizational change was piloted during the 2017-2018 school year and will continue going forward. During 2017-2018, the Assistant Director assumed responsibility for the oversight and supervision of all student support personnel, i.e., the School Nurse, the School Counselor, the School Psychologist, and the two Special Education Coordinators. Previously this responsibility was under the School Director. The Assistant Director will continue overseeing this department because of her experience with diverse learners and passion for systems and processes.

Other organizational modifications planned for the 2018-2019 school year include changes to the supervision of middle school staff and specialists. The School Director will resume supervision of Middle School faculty (teachers of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts, science, mathematics, and humanities). This change is being implemented so that the Middle School Coordinator will function as a peer to the middle school staff rather than in an evaluative position, facilitating the Middle School Team's ability to be a high functioning team. In addition, providing the School Director with supervisory responsibility for all grade K-8 general education teachers ensures curricular and instructional continuity between each of the K-8 general education levels. The Middle School Coordinator will take over supervision of the Specialists (teachers of art, physical education, music, engineering, technology, E2 science, and library studies). This change further integrates specials with the general education curriculum so that students are better equipped to draw connections across the curriculum. With these supervisory changes, the addition of the Level Coordinators, and both a literacy and a Montessori coach, River Valley is continuing to respond to the needs of students while simultaneously building increased capacity among its employees.

## Organizational Chart





## Teacher Evaluation

### RVCS Educator Growth Process

During the summer of 2017, a faculty team built upon the feedback from the 2016-2017 Educator Growth process to draft the RVCS Professional Practice Framework (PPF). (**See ATTACHMENT 3: Professional Practice Framework**). Modeled on the four-quadrant structure of other successful tools (e.g. Danielson, Marzano), the Professional Practice Framework articulates what effective teaching practice looks like at River Valley Charter School. During our August meetings, all faculty members reviewed and revised the PPF. There was strong consensus regarding quadrant descriptors, and solid teacher buy-in about the value of the tool.

The next step was for each teacher to self-assess their practice based on the PPF. Quadrant descriptors were mixed into a general survey, and each teacher evaluated their strengths and areas for growth. The descriptors were then transferred back into the framework, providing teachers a visual representation of areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

The self-assessment process informed each teacher's efforts to establish a professional practice goal for the year. Teachers then completed their own RVCS Goal Setting & Professional Growth Plan forms. The forms included:

- the PPF quadrant of focus,
- the specific indicators from the PPF for focus,
- a professional goal that addressed the quadrant of focus,
- a description of the expected impact achieving the goal would have on their practice,
- evidence of goal achievement and/or methods for measuring achievement,
- action steps
- resources required to support attainment of the goal.

Teachers met with supervisors in the fall to review and refine goals, and again in the spring to reflect on growth. The premise of this approach is to focus on strengthening professional development and to ensure that all teachers continually experience relevant professional growth.

As piloted in 2016-2017, each teacher then joined smaller "tribes" of teachers aligned around common goals. Tribes met monthly, and some 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.

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 have applied to present this approach to fellow educators and administrators at the American Montessori Annual Conference in Washington D.C in 2019.

The Teacher Growth Team also worked to develop a new Educator Observation, Feedback & Reflection Record (**included as ATTACHMENT 4: Observation, Feedback and Reflection Record**). This form is formatted so that a written conversation can take place between the observer (usually the supervisor) and the teacher. Observations maintain a focus on instructional practices, student engagement, and the Montessori prepared environment. After the observer provides written

feedback, the teacher can provide context, thoughts and other comments. After collecting a year's worth of observation data, both the supervisor and teacher will write summary reflections, and use that information to draft an initial professional practice goal for the upcoming year.

In June, feedback was solicited from all faculty with the intention of improving this process for the upcoming year. Every faculty member also took the Clifton/Gallup Strengths Assessment and participated in a workshop led by Julie Wilson of the Institute for the Future of Learning. Wilson shared evidence from years of data collection indicating that greater professional growth happens when an individual focuses on their strengths, rather than on their weaknesses. As we move into the upcoming year, self-reflection and goal setting will be informed by this knowledge, and we are optimistic about the continued improvement of the RVCS Educator Growth Process.

## Budget and Finance

### FY18 Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Change in Net Position Unaudited, at FY18 Year End

#### OPERATING REVENUE

Per-pupil tuition	\$	4,032,958
In-kind MTRS pension		545,906
Program Fees		133,765
Program specific private grants and contributions		91,281
Government grants		83,963
In-kind transportation		26,586
<b>Total operating revenue</b>		<b>4,914,459</b>

#### OPERATING EXPENSES

##### Personnel and related

Salaries and wages	2,800,633
In-kind MTRS pension	545,906
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	422,571
Professional development	36,204
<b>Total personnel and related</b>	<b>3,805,314</b>

##### Occupancy

Interest Expense	161,418
Repairs and maintenance	132,992
Utilities	43,144
Insurance	14,057
Taxes, sewer betterment	2,942
<b>Total occupancy</b>	<b>354,553</b>

##### Direct student costs

Program expenses	109,859
Instructional materials	84,234
Consultants and service contractors	64,507
Technology and equipment	29,012
In-kind transportation	26,586
Testing and assessment	2,101
<b>Total direct student costs</b>	<b>316,299</b>

*continued*

<b>Other operating costs</b>	
Professional fees	43,327
Insurance	42,456
Technology and equipment	32,638
Office supplies	21,186
Dues and subscriptions	15,891
Minor equipment	9,777
Travel	9,412
Miscellaneous	8,261
Equipment leases	6,774
Telephone	3,989
Printing and postage	3,744
Advertising and recruitment	1,672
Bad debt expense	1,156
<b>Total other operating costs</b>	<b>200,283</b>
<b>Depreciation and amortization</b>	<b>257,200</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>4,933,649</b>
<b>CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>(19,190)</b>
<b>GENERAL REVENUE (EXPENSE)</b>	
Capital grants through RVCS Foundation	109,110
In-kind services-contribution of volunteer hours	13,450
Interest and other income	4,113
Contributions	615
Community building events	(1,542)
<b>Total general revenue</b>	<b>125,746</b>
<b>CHANGES IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>106,556</b>
<b>NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>1,918,193</b>
<b>NET POSITION, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 2,024,749</b>

## Unaudited Statement of Net Assets for FY18 Year End

### ASSETS

#### **CURRENT ASSETS**

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	1,647,148
Accounts and grants receivable		26,297
Prepaid expenses and other		6,456

Total current assets		1,679,901
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#### **RESTRICTED CASH**

59,767

#### **CAPITAL ASSETS, net**

4,329,459

#### **Total assets**

\$	<b>6,069,127</b>
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### LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION

#### **CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Accrued payroll	\$	267,225
Due to RVCS Foundation, current portion		126,380
Accrued expenses		16,784
Accounts payable		14,855
Deferred revenue		277

Total current liabilities		425,521
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#### **LONG TERM LIABILITIES**

Due to RVCS Foundation, long term		3,618,857
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#### **Total liabilities**

<b>4,044,378</b>
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#### **NET POSITION**

##### Unrestricted:

Operating		1,440,527
Invested in capital		584,222

Total unrestricted		2,024,749
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#### **Total net position**

<b>2,024,749</b>
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#### **Total liabilities and net position**

\$	<b>6,069,127</b>
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## FY19 Operating Budget

**Approved by the Board of Trustees on June 20, 2018 for the Year Ending June 30, 2019**

### OPERATING REVENUE

Per-pupil tuition	\$	4,223,648
Program specific private grants and contributions		95,000
Government grants		60,000
Program Fees		55,000
<b>Total operating revenue</b>		<b>4,433,648</b>

### OPERATING EXPENSES

#### Personnel and related

Salaries and wages	2,935,000
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	476,500
Professional development	50,500
<b>Total personnel and related</b>	<b>3,462,000</b>

#### Occupancy

Interest Expense	156,187
Repairs and maintenance	121,600
Utilities	48,000
Insurance	14,500
Taxes, sewer betterment	3,500
Vehicle Expenses	1,250
<b>Total occupancy</b>	<b>345,037</b>

#### Direct student costs

Consultants and service contractors	104,500
Instructional materials	73,950
Technology and equipment	22,500
Program expenses (RVCS)	11,500
Testing and assessment	2,000
<b>Total direct student costs</b>	<b>214,450</b>

*continued*

<b>Other operating costs</b>	
Professional fees	52,100
Insurance	44,600
Technology and equipment	34,000
Office supplies	22,000
Dues and subscriptions	17,000
Minor equipment	9,250
Miscellaneous	9,500
Travel	12,500
Equipment leases	7,000
Printing and postage	5,000
Telephone	4,200
Advertising and recruitment	2,350
<b>Total other operating costs</b>	<b>219,500</b>
<b>Depreciation and amortization</b>	<b>258,000</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>4,498,987</b>
<b>OTHER REVENUE (EXPENSES)</b>	
Community Building Events	1,500
Contingency-Board of Trustees	1,761
<b>Total other revenue (expenses)</b>	<b>3,261</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>4,502,248</b>
<b>CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>(68,600)</b>
<b>GENERAL REVENUE</b>	
Interest and other income	3,600
<b>Total general revenue</b>	<b>3,600</b>
<b>CHANGES IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>(65,000)</b>
<b>NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>2,024,749</b>
<b>NET POSITION, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 1,959,749</b>



## **FY19 Capital Plan**

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 six years, and the fund balance as of June 30, 2018 is \$59,767. 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 FY 2018- 2019, RVCS plans the following capital improvements:

- Renovation of the existing after-care space – Estimated investment: \$8,000.
- Miscellaneous minor improvements – \$7,500 (new water bubbler, new appliances, etc.).
- Potential replacement of a rooftop HVAC unit - \$15,000 (pending analysis by engineer).

During FY 2017-2018, RVCS completed capital improvements to the school building and site, including completion of the middle school renovation project, with total expenditures as follows:

- Leasehold improvements/Total investment: \$200,409.
- Investment in capital equipment/Total investment: \$3,945.

Total expenditure on capital improvements for FY 2018 was \$313,464. Of these funds, \$182,467 of Capital Reserve Funds were used to partially offset leasehold and capital equipment investments. The remaining funds of \$21,887 were drawn from existing cash reserves and did not impact the school's Capital Reserve Fund. The remainder of the capital improvement funding, \$109,110, came in the form of a capital grant from the River Valley Charter School Foundation to support the middle school renovation project.

The School Board, in conjunction with the RVCS Foundation Board, is pursuing refinancing of the school's mortgage debt. The RVCS Foundation is seeking a 15-year fixed rate to limit market risk and reduce the school's facility costs.

With the school's current Capital Reserve Fund approach, as well as the Board's efforts to secure a low interest rate on the mortgage debt for an extended period, River Valley has taken a conservative and visionary approach to the future needs and financial stability of the school.

## Additional Information

## Appendix A: Accountability Plan Evidence 2017-2018

## Faithfulness to Charter

2017-2018 Performance		Evidence
<b>Objective 1: River Valley Charter School will provide a high-quality Montessori learning environment for all students.</b>		
<p><b>Measure 1A:</b> 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 <b>Accountability Attachment for Measure 1A: Essential Elements.</b>)</p>	Met	<p>Rob Keys, an esteemed Montessori consultant and thirty year Montessori veteran, conducted our Montessori school audit in October 2017. Rob works at The Cornerstone School as well as serves as a Montessori consultant and teacher trainer at the Seacoast Center.</p> <p>His audit consisted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of documents, protocols, and policies</li> <li>• Evaluation of the AMS "Elements of a Successful Montessori School in the Public Sector"</li> <li>• Classroom observations</li> <li>• Work engagement observations</li> <li>• Focus group interviews</li> </ul> <p>The audit results were highly positive and the complete audit report is on file at the school.</p>
<p><b>Measure 1B:</b> 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</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>

<i>not possible due to MA public school design limitations. RVCS excludes these two elements from the measurement.</i>		A table summarizing RVCS' performance against the elements is included as <b>Accountability Attachment for Measure 1B: RVCS Measured on the Essential Elements.</b>
<b>Measure 1C:</b> 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.	<b>Met</b>	All K-6 (eleven) lead/co-lead teachers are Montessori certified or in the process of completing certification. Additionally, seven of nine assistant teachers in our K-6 classrooms are Montessori trained or certified.  Credential information is stored in the school's Student/Staff Information Management System.

<b>Objective 2: Every River Valley Charter School student will demonstrate their learning about the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</b>		
<b>Measure 2A:</b> 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.	<b>Met</b>	RVCS students participated in over 175 field trips during the school year. Supporting evidence summarizing every classroom's place-based learning experiences is on file at the school.
<b>Measure 2B:</b> 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.	<b>Partially Met</b>	Students in grades 3 and 4 met the measure (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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 91% of third year students</li> <li>✓ 94% of fourth year students</li> <li>✓ 79% of fifth year students</li> <li>✓ 78% of sixth year students</li> <li>✓ 74% of seventh year students</li> <li>✓ 67% of eighth year students</li> </ul> A graph of the percentage of student scores on their place-based rubric is included as <b>Accountability Attachment for 2B: Place-Based Learning Assessment Results.</b>

		Professional development on place-based learning with faculty will continue. It will include a review of the rubric, creation of an improved scoring system, and training so that faculty use multiple learning experiences to evaluate PBL experiences rather than one standardized experience for all students in a level. This aligns with the individualized teaching of the Montessori classroom. Professional development for teachers and a wider range of opportunities for students to demonstrate their place-based knowledge will positively impact this measure in the future.
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<b>Objective 3: Every graduating student will demonstrate the ability to critically self-reflect and to assess their academic strengths and challenges.</b>		
<b>Measure 3A:</b> 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.	<b>Met</b>	<p>All 30 graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade students created and delivered their Celebration of Learning, which included a formal presentation as well as a portfolio of their work. This year the Celebration of Learning requirements were updated to include reflections from the Habits of Learning.</p> <p>The schedule of COL presentations, as well as project guidelines (summarizing the required contents of the COL), are on file at the school.</p>
<b>Measure 3B:</b> 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.	<b>Met</b>	<p>100% (30 students) received a final score of 3 or better on their COL rubric. 30% of students received a perfect score of 4. The average score for all 30 8<sup>th</sup> grade students was 3.8 overall.</p> <p>A graph of COL scores is included as <b>Accountability Attachment for 3B: 8th Grade Celebration of Learning Scores</b>. A binder containing completed rubrics for each student is on file at the school.</p>

Dissemination

<b>Objective 4: RVCS will share its Montessori curriculum with other schools in Massachusetts over the course of its charter term.</b>		
<b>Measure 4A:</b> 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.	<b>Met</b>	<p>RVCS faculty presented at one national conference this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Habits of Learning at the American Montessori Society (AMS) National Conference. Slides and supporting material were posted to the AMS website.</li></ul> <p>RVCS hosted the first annual Public Montessori Convening to bring together public Montessori schools located in the Northeast for collaboration and sharing of best practices. Approximately 70 individuals attended the half day event where RVCS staff led workshops on multiple topics relevant to public Montessori programming.</p> <p>Presentation information is on file at the school. Total presentations to date this charter term is thirteen.</p>

## Appendix B: Charter School Recruitment and Retention Plan

### Recruitment Plan

2018-2019

School Name: RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

#### 2017-2018 Implementation Summary

River Valley Charter School implemented its recruitment strategies as laid out in its 2017-2018 Recruitment Plan and received 207 applications, representing successful recruitment efforts for the school. 72 of the new applications were for kindergarten where the majority of spots are available.

This year's enrollment lottery was impacted by changes to the school's Enrollment Policy. Under the newly adopted policy, all students must apply every year regardless of when they initially applied to River Valley (previously, grandfathered waitlists rolled over from year to year, and applicants could indicate automated re-application if desired). Under the new enrollment policy, River Valley erased approximately 400 students from the rolling waitlists. Our recruitment efforts were increased to offset this loss and were successful as indicated by the fact that we had more than double the number of applicants than in the previous year.

The kindergarten roster of 32 students who began attending River Valley Charter School in the 2017-2018 school year included 12.5% who were identified for financial hardship. Four of those incoming kindergarten students have individualized educational programs (IEPs).

Like previous years, a number of the open Kinderhaus spots are taken by siblings of currently enrolled students. In 2018-2019, ten of the 32 spots will be filled with siblings. Given this influence, as well as the limited diversity in our sending districts, our incoming class of Kinderhaus students will probably not alter our enrollment statistics significantly despite increased recruitment efforts. RVCS welcomes further communication with the Department to support the school in recruiting ELL and economically disadvantage students after the October SIMS data is submitted.

General Recruitment Activities for 2018-2019	
<p>General waitlist activities will include print and electronic media advertising as well as the ongoing partnership with the Greater Newburyport Mothers' and Families' Club where we will present at the annual Early Education Information Night. We will also reach out to local preschools and day care facilities. Additional general recruitment activities include advertising efforts via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Press releases</li> <li>• Posts in the local newspaper and at libraries</li> <li>• Public service announcements on the local cable television network</li> <li>• Flyer distribution to schools (guidance counselors, ELL coordinators, etc.</li> <li>• Enrollment Information Sessions (offered at night and weekends)</li> <li>• Posts on the school website</li> </ul>	

Recruitment Plan – 2018-19 Strategies	
List strategies for recruitment activities for <u>each</u> demographic group.	
Special education students/students with disabilities	
Continued 2017-18 Strategies	
<p><b>CHART data</b></p> <p><b>School percentage:</b> 14.2%</p> <p><b>GNT percentage:</b> NA%</p> <p><b>CI percentage:</b> 12.7%</p> <p>The school is <u>above</u> CI percentages</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Met GNT/CI: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute informational flyers to the special education departments of each of our sending districts.</li> <li>• Connect with local school SEPACs.</li> </ul>



Limited English-proficient students/English learners	
<p><b>CHART data</b></p> <p>School percentage: 0% GNT percentage: .2% CI percentage: .4%</p> <p>The school is <u>below</u> both GNT percentages and CI percentages</p>	<p><b>Continued 2017-18 Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute informational flyers to ELL coordinators of each of our sending districts.</li> <li>• Publish enrollment materials with a banner/footer indicating that translation and interpreter services are available if needed.</li> <li>• Make the Montessori Enrollment Session video available to all attendees in Spanish.</li> <li>• Have bilingual (Spanish-speaking) parents available at Enrollment Sessions.</li> <li>• Ask Spanish-speaking parents to share enrollment information in their multicultural communities.</li> <li>• Distribute giveaways, with reference to enrollment in Spanish, at local organized family activities.</li> <li>• Distribute flyers at studios that teach ethnic dance</li> <li>• Distribute flyers to local adoption agencies</li> <li>• Distribute flyers to local Rec Departments where there may be increased incidence of minority populations</li> <li>• RVCS will provide access to enrollment applications online in addition to paper-based applications. The online application is available in languages other than English.</li> <li>• Distribute flyers to individuals taking Beginning and Intermediate English classes with Newburyport Adult and Community Education</li> <li>• Connect with the Newburyport Human Rights Commission, and individuals working on Sanctuary City status, to establish relationships with organizations who work with immigrants.</li> <li>• Connect with immigration attorney Becki Jacobson to share enrollment information with her clients who represent 30 countries</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2018-2019 Additional Strategy(ies)</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Did not meet GNT/CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</i></p> <p>There are no trends to report in this demographic subgroup but RVCS will continue its recruitment efforts including the following new strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placing a sticker advertisement in Spanish in the local newspaper. The stickers adhere to the front page, top of the fold, and are thus visible to all readers, as well as to customers in any retail establishment that sells newspapers regardless of whether the paper is purchased.</li> <li>• Partner with the local the Chamber of Commerce to share recruitment information with agencies that support diverse communities. Part of this effort will include hosting an Eye Opener Breakfast specifically for nonprofit organizations that target diverse demographic subgroups in our area. The event will include a tour of the school so that agencies can help serve as ambassadors for RVCS. RVCS will ask to be included in events these agencies</li> </ul>

	<p>hold where there is a population of non-English speaking families and local resources are being presented.</p> <p>All strategies will be implemented annually RVCS anticipates 2-3 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>
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Students eligible for free or reduced lunch (Low Income/Economically Disadvantaged)	
<p><b>CHART data</b></p> <p><b>School percentage:</b> 7.6%</p> <p><b>CI percentage:</b> 13.6%</p> <p>The school is <u>below</u> CI percentages</p>	<p><b>Continued 2017-18 Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contact and distribute flyers to community service agencies (Head Start, Hugh Doyle Resource Center, Salvation Army, Pettingill House, SNAP, WIC)</li> <li>• Distribute flyers to the low-income housing developments in our sending towns/Speak at low-income housing development events.</li> <li>• Provide economically disadvantaged students reduced rates or free service for before and after school childcare for working parents/guardians.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Post enrollment information at a local soup kitchen (Among Friends) and food pantry with whom the school has a collaborative relationship.</li> <li>• Post a large banner advertising our free, full day kindergarten program in a conspicuous place in town.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2018-2019 Additional Strategy(ies)</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Did not meet CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</i></p> <p>The trend for enrolling Economically Disadvantaged students has increased over the last four years, growing from 1.0% in 2014 to 7.6% in 2018. RVCS believes it will continue to see increased numbers of economically disadvantaged students as it continues to increase targeted recruitment efforts.</p> <p>New strategies to implement in the 2018-2019 school year include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Suzanne Dubus, CEO of the Jeanne Geiger Center, to identify and connect with clients served by this agency.</li> <li>• Conduct a fall outreach and a secondary outreach closer to the time of the lottery at Kelleher Park, a low income residential area in Newburyport.</li> <li>• Working through Nancy Earls, the Director of the Newburyport Learning Enrichment Center, invite the the tenant leadership group to visit RVCS so that they can reinforce the information that we share with residents of the park.</li> </ul> <p>All strategies will be implemented annually. RVCS anticipates 2-3 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>

<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	<b>2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute flyers to local tutoring agencies.</li> </ul>
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	<b>2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<u>Students who have dropped out of school</u>	<b>2018-2019 Strategies</b> NA
<b>OPTIONAL</b> <u>Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap</u>	<b>2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>

## Retention Plan 2018-2019

### 2017-2018 Implementation Summary:

Prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year, there were an unusually high number of student withdrawals, at 28 students. We did not meet our 92% goal; instead our retention rate was 89.1%.

An analysis of the withdrawals/transfers provided the following information:

- eleven withdrew because the family relocated out of our area
- seven withdrew to attend private schools
- ten withdrew to return to our sending district schools

We are less focused on out of district moves and transfers to private schools. We learned the following reasons for the other eleven withdrawals:

- 3 students were impacted by teacher turnover right before the start of the year (RVCS students are placed with the same teacher for three years in grades 1-6)
- 3 students left early to address anxiety regarding the high school transition
- 2 students cited social limitations

We continue to identify ways to increase retention rates including: sharing information about our middle school with parents of younger students, fostering greater social connections between classrooms.

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

Retention Plan –2018-19 Strategies	
Special education students/students with disabilities	
<p><u>CHART data</u></p> <p><b>School percentage:</b> 8.1%</p> <p><b>Third Quartile:</b> 5.3%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is <u>above</u> third quartile percentages.</p>	<p><b>Continued 2017-18 Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a strong special education program staffed by qualified professionals.</li> <li>• Offer summer sessions to qualifying students.</li> <li>• Maintain a Response to Intervention program/Student Support Team.</li> <li>• Offer afterschool enrichment programs where less emphasis is placed on academics.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhanced retention strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer additional support services before and after school to middle school students.</li> <li>• Train at least one staff member in Positive Behavioral Intervention practices to better support students with extensive behavioral needs.</li> <li>• Revamp the school's Student Support Team protocol to improve classroom teachers' ability to support students with diverse learning needs.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2018-2019 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Above third quartile: additional and/or enhanced strategies described below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a Literacy Coach to support teachers in increasing their capacity to support students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Change Literacy Interventionist position to full time and staff with a highly qualified individual who has both literacy expertise and special education credentials.</li> </ul> <p>These strategies will be implemented annually and will impact retention data within 2 years.</p>

Limited English-proficient students/English learners	
<p><b><u>CHART data</u></b></p> <p><b>School percentage:</b> NA%</p> <p><b>Third Quartile:</b> 5%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> third quartile percentages.</p>	<p><b>Continued 2017-18 Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a relationship with an ELL service provider.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate number of teaching staff are SEI-endorsed.</li> <li>• Maintain SEI endorsement of at least one member of the administrative team and increasing numbers of the teaching staff.</li> <li>• 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.)</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>2018-2019 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>No ELs were enrolled during the 2017-2018 school year. No retention strategies needed.</i></p>

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch (low income/economically disadvantaged)	
<p><b><u>CHART data</u></b></p> <p><b>School percentage:</b> 7.1%</p> <p><b>Third Quartile:</b> 8.4%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> third quartile percentages.</p>	<p><b>Continued 2017-18 Strategies</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Below median and third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to school-based counselor to identify additional services available in the area.</li> <li>• Provide a high quality free or reduced-price lunch program to qualifying students.</li> <li>• Provide reduced cost before and after care program to qualifying students.</li> <li>• Provide reduced cost enrichment programming to qualifying students.</li> <li>• Working with the school nurse, provide economically disadvantaged families with access to donated winter clothing and Rotary-funded Thanksgiving dinner food items.</li> </ul>

<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	<b>2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide summer sessions to qualifying students.</li> </ul>
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	<b>(e) 2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide drop-in summer sessions for Middle School student</li> </ul>
<u>Students who have dropped out of school</u>	<b>(f) 2018-2019 Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
<b>OPTIONAL</b> <u>Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap</u>	<b>(g) 2018-2019 Strategies</b>

## Appendix C: School and Student Data Tables

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=2017&orgtypecode=6&>.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION		
Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	2	.7
Asian	8	2.8
Hispanic	7	2.4
Native American	1	.3
White	258	89.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	12	4.2
Special education	41	14.2
Limited English proficient	0	0
Economically Disadvantaged	22	7.6

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR			
Name, Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date
Andrew Willemssen Director	Serves as the organization's Chief Executive Officer providing organizational and academic leadership. Supervises all K-8 faculty.	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. Additionally, supervises all Student Support Services program staff.	07/01/2013*	NA



ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR			
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 and supervises all Specialists faculty.	09/01/2014*	NA
Pamela Dawe Jones Technology Coordinator	Oversees the technological infrastructure of the school.	11/01/2011	NA
Deb McCreven 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 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR				
	Number as of the last day of the 2017-2018 school year	Departures during the 2017-2018 school year	Departures at the end of the school year	Reason(s) for Departure
Teachers	42	0	4	Two teachers left to pursue other employment opportunities elsewhere. Two teachers left to stay at home.
Other Staff	11	0	0	NA

BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION	
Number of commissioner approved board members as of August 1, 2018	12* *four pending Commissioner approval
Minimum number of board members in approved by-laws	11
Maximum number of board members in approved by-laws	20

BOARD MEMBERSHIP FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR				
Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Number of terms served	Length of each term Terms begin July 1 and end June 30
Amber Hewett	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	2017-2020
Nina Keery	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2017-2020
Pam Brockmeier Armstrong	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term in progress	2017-2020
Mason Mitchell-Daniels	Trustee Treasurer	Finance	First term in progress	2016-2019
John Siegfried	Trustee Vice Chair	Executive Committee on Trustees	Completed first term Second term in progress	2015-2021
Peter Zetlan	Trustee		First term in progress	2015-2018
Mark Gustavson	Trustee		Resigned mid first term	2015-2018
Nat Coughlin	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	Completed first term Second term in progress	2013-2016 2016-2019
Mark Belanger	Trustee Chairperson	Executive	First full term in progress	2014 2015-2018
Jennifer McCormick	Trustee	Development Chair	Completed first term Second term in progress	2014-2017 2017-2020
Alfred Link	Trustee	Accountability Finance	First term in progress *returning board member	2017-2020
Kimberly Klibansky	Trustee	Accountability	First term complete Resigned mid second term	2014-2017 2017-2018
Katherine Brown	Trustee Secretary	Executive	First term in progress	2016-2019
Ben Scherz	Trustee	Accountability Chair	Resigned midterm for RVCS employment	2016-2018
Josh Porter	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	2016-2019
Colin Vandenburg	Ex officio Staff Representative	NA	One year term completed	2017-2018

## Appendix D: Additional Required Information

### Key Leadership Changes

Position	Name	No Change/ New/Open Position
Board of Trustees Chairperson	Mark Belanger	New
Charter School Leader	Andrew Willemsen	No change
Assistant Charter School Leader	Jonnie Lyn Evans	No change
Special Education Directors	Patricia Innes and Lisa Kelley	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	Deb McCrevan	No change
SIMS Contact	Jonnie Lyn Evans/Patricia O'Leary	No change

### Enrollment

Action	2018-2019 School Year Date(s)
Student Application Deadline	Tuesday February 26, 2019
Lottery	Thursday February 28, 2019

## Accountability Attachment for 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.*

## Accountability Attachment for Measure 1B: RVCS Measured on 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.	✓	RVCS lead teachers, Kinderhaus through E2, possess a Montessori credential for the levels they teach or are candidates to receive a credential within the year(three E2 teachers). One E2 classroom uses a co-teacher arrangement. In addition, the Director possesses an Elementary I-II credential.
2 Recruitment	Maintain an active and open recruitment for Montessori credentialed teachers.	✓	RVCS employs several outlets when positions need to be filled. The American Montessori Society, Montessori Schools of Massachusetts, Montessori conferences, NCMPS, NCMPSA, and SchoolSpring.
3 Training Budget	Budget for future Montessori teacher education for non-Montessori credentialed teachers.	✓	RVCS Annual Report FY2017 lists \$46,600 for Professional Development, covering continuing education and teacher-training for non-credentialed teachers.
4 Professional Development	Provide professional Montessori in-service by experienced credentialed Montessori educators.	✓	The faculty of RVCS is very active at both national and local Montessori conferences. Michael Dorer, a very well-respected, nationally-recognized Montessorian, provided webinar support. In addition, the caliber of Montessori expertise that exists on staff is well prepared to give professional development as needed. Also, the adoption of the Professional Practice Framework is a testament this overall effort.
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 is an area of special commendation. RVCS contracts for an external Montessori audit by a qualified Montessorian every other year, opposite internal Montessori audits compiled by staff. These annual audits are comprehensive and provide pathways for the school moving forward.
6 Assistants	Employ one paraprofessional per classroom, each having received Montessori orientation for that role.	✓	There was always at least one paraprofessional per classroom during my classroom observations. RVCS employs an in-house orientation for paraprofessionals.

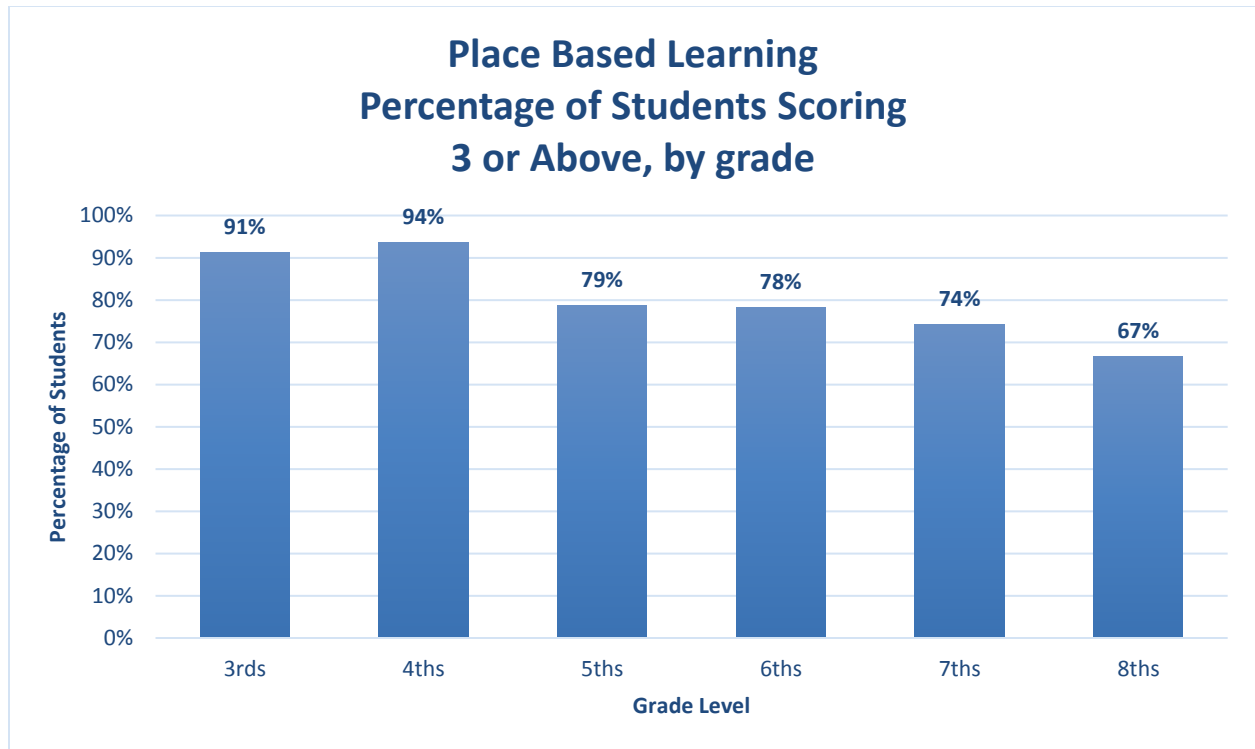
7 Curriculum Coordinator	Employ an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as curriculum coordinator.	✓	The curriculum coordinator is an experienced, credentialed Montessorian. This year, to cover the loss of an E2 teacher close to the opening of school, the curriculum coordinator moved into the classroom. The Director has taken over as much of that role as is possible.
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.	✓	A strength of RVCS is the tenure, stability, commitment, vision, and effective leadership provided by the Director.
9 Curricular Commitment	Maintain commitment to the core Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.	✓	There have been few changes in the administration staff in the last five years
10 Communication	Sustain the support of the central administration through high profile communications about program development.	✓	There is a vast amount of information available to parents, staff, and other educators outside of RVCS. DESE DissemiNATION Fair, New England League of Middle School (NELMS), Annual Conference, Montessori Schools of Massachusetts (MSM) Annual Conference, RVCS hosted professional development workshops, In collaboration with the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector's Leadership Workshops RVCS participated in online coaching sessions. Place-based education was shared via the GOMI Journal, a quarterly, peer-reviewed scientific journal.
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	External constraints limit the Kinderhaus to a single-age. E1 and E2 are three-year age spans, and the Middle School is two-year, 7th/8th grade grouping.
12 Parent Education	Provide Montessori parent education programs that promote understanding of Montessori principles and curriculum.	✓	RVCS offers many opportunities for parent education including parent education evenings and "Director's Notes". In addition, three nationally-known speakers presented in a Parent Speaker Series.

13 Admissions	Develop an admission process that informs parents about the nature of Montessori and seeks the necessary commitment to the program	✓	RVCS provides comprehensive information to applicant families. General information, bibliography, etc... This is followed by three informational sessions (at different times and days) which include videos, explanations of Montessori in the public sector. This is followed by a tour. If you are accepted, this is followed by an orientation into Kinderhaus.
14 Montessori Materials	Offer a full complement of Montessori materials purchased from Montessori dealers.	✓	All observed classrooms presented beautiful Montessori prepared environments, fully stocked with a full complement of quality Montessori materials.
15 Prepared Environment	Develop a classroom design that is compatible with Montessori "prepared environment" principles	✓	A strength noted during this audit was the consistency of quality environments throughout the school.
16 Work Periods	Create uninterrupted daily work periods of 90 minutes to 3-hours, considering the 3-hour work cycle as ideal.	✓	Scheduling opportunities for art, music, PE, engineering, and library/technology is a perennial and universal challenge for every Montessori school, perhaps especially for those holding public charters. In addition, requirements for SPED services, outside OT, the field trip demand borne of a place-based curriculum, can create substantial obstacles to the maintenance of the long, uninterrupted work cycle. The administration and faculty are well aware of this balance, and are continually investigating the trade-offs that are a natural consequence.
17 Integrated Specials	Integrate specialty programs (music, art, physical education, etc.) around the uninterrupted work periods.	✓	Creative and detailed scheduling attempts to protect the three-year age cycle, while acknowledging that the transition can be chaotic at times.
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	Three-year Multi-age classrooms are provided at E1 and E2; the Middle School is a two-year environment
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	✓	RVCS uses Student Progress Report data, which is based on Learning Goals (benchmarks) as their primary assessment reporting tool. Their progress reports are closely aligned with 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.

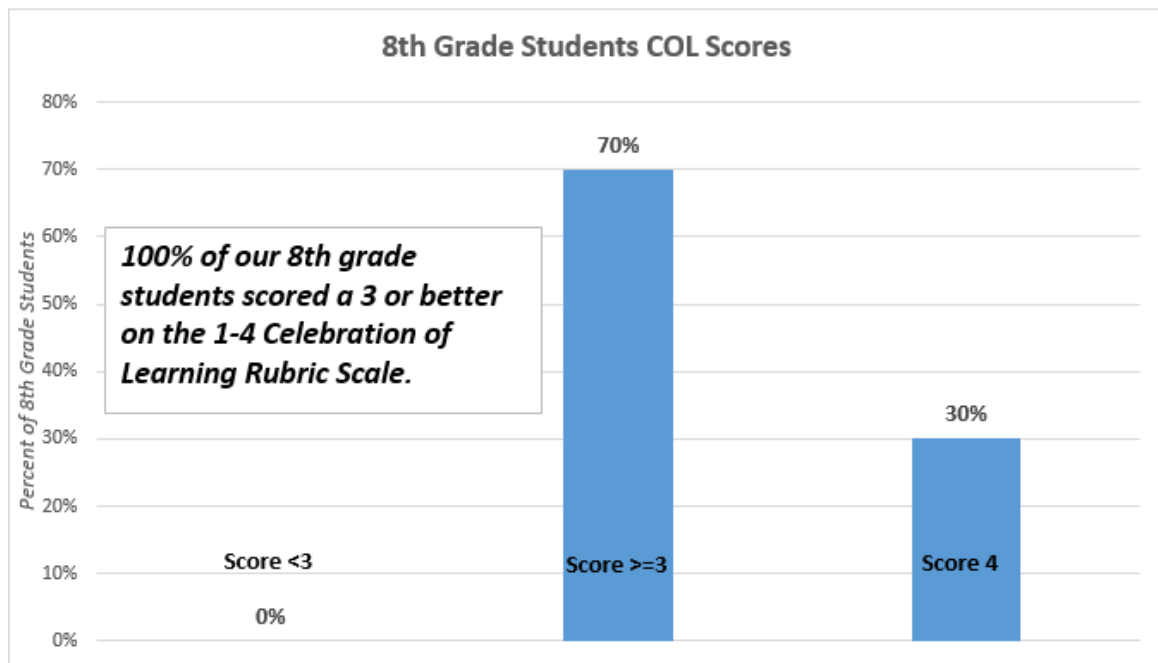


	observation, portfolio, performance assessment with rubric, etc.		
20 Assessment	Implement state mandated assessments in such a way that the character of the Montessori program is not compromised.	✓	RVCS administers the MCAS as their only state-mandated assessment. Teacher preparation and presentation is in service to Montessori, not the test.
21 Professional Development	Budget for continuing education through Montessori workshops and conferences.	✓	RVCS Annual Report FY2017 lists \$46,600 for Professional Development, covering continuing education and teacher-training for non-credentialed teachers. This number can increase or decrease depending on the needs of any given year.
22 Memberships	Maintain membership with one or more of the professional Montessori organizations and seek Montessori accreditation to assure consistent quality.	✓	RVCS is a member school of the American Montessori Society, Montessori Schools of Massachusetts, and NCMPS.

## Accountability Attachment for 2B: Place-Based Learning Assessment Results



## Accountability Attachment for 3B: 8th Grade Celebration of Learning Scores



## ATTACHMENT 1: Sample of Learning Goals Data


### Student Progress by Learning Goal, Percent of Students at Each Level- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA

ASSESSMENT			LANGUAGE ARTS			Grade: 06			Number of students: 32			7/19/2018		
	fall	winter	spring			fall	winter	spring				fall	winter	spring
Writing process			Expository			Fiction								
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	25%	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	6%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
W - With Support	41%	28%	25%	W - With Support	13%	3%	3%	3%	W - With Support	9%	3%	3%	3%	3%
WI - Independently	28%	34%	38%	WI - Independently	56%	66%	56%	56%	WI - Independently	44%	50%	50%	50%	50%
P - Proficient	31%	34%	31%	P - Proficient	6%	25%	41%	41%	P - Proficient	47%	47%	47%	47%	47%
S - Synthesis	0%	3%	6%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Reading comprehension			Analytical reading			Spelling								
Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WS - With Support	3%	3%	6%	W - With Support	6%	3%	6%	6%	W - With Support	16%	22%	19%	19%	19%
WI - Independently	41%	34%	25%	WI - Independently	47%	50%	34%	34%	WI - Independently	44%	38%	38%	38%	38%
P - Proficient	56%	56%	63%	P - Proficient	47%	41%	53%	53%	P - Proficient	38%	31%	38%	38%	38%
S - Synthesis	0%	6%	6%	S - Synthesis	0%	6%	6%	6%	S - Synthesis	3%	6%	6%	6%	6%


### Student Progress by Learning Goal, Percent of Students at Each Level- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

ASSESSMENT			MATH			Grade: 06			Number of students: 32			7/19/2018		
	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%	0%	Not Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WS - With Support	9%	6%	6%	WS - With Support	9%	3%	3%	3%	WS - With Support	28%	19%	6%	6%	6%
WI - Independently	47%	47%	28%	WI - Independently	69%	66%	59%	59%	WI - Independently	66%	66%	66%	66%	66%
P - Proficient	44%	47%	66%	P - Proficient	22%	31%	38%	38%	P - Proficient	6%	16%	28%	28%	28%
S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Decimals			Geometry			Measurement								
Not Introduced	22%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	31%	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I - Introduced	3%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WS - With Support	22%	19%	16%	W - With Support	25%	16%	6%	6%	W - With Support	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WI - Independently	47%	63%	38%	WI - Independently	44%	84%	63%	63%	WI - Independently	50%	94%	69%	69%	69%
P - Proficient	6%	19%	47%	P - Proficient	0%	0%	31%	31%	P - Proficient	0%	6%	31%	31%	31%
S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data and statistics			Algebraic thinking			Measurement								
Not Introduced	56%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	31%	0%	0%	0%	Not Introduced	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I - Introduced	19%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	I - Introduced	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
W - With Support	3%	31%	9%	WS - With Support	9%	19%	13%	13%	W - With Support	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WI - Independently	22%	69%	66%	WI - Independently	59%	81%	53%	53%	WI - Independently	50%	94%	69%	69%	69%
P - Proficient	0%	0%	25%	P - Proficient	0%	0%	34%	34%	P - Proficient	0%	6%	31%	31%	31%
S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	S - Synthesis	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## ATTACHMENT 2: Updated Progress Report Sample


 <b>River Valley Charter School Progress Report</b>		KEY				C=Consistently    U=Usually    S=Sometimes    R=Rarely			
<b>HABITS of LEARNING</b>		Fall	Winter	Spring					
Social/Emotional	<b>Communication</b>				<b>Fall Comment</b>				
	Speaks and listens with understanding and respect								
	Expresses ideas clearly								
					<b>Winter Comment</b>				
	<b>Collaboration</b>								
	Interacts cooperatively with peers								
Executive Functioning					<b>Spring Comment</b>				
	<b>Compassion</b>								
	Shows sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others								
					<b>Strength:</b> <b>Goal:</b>				
	<b>Commitment</b>								
	Persists and follows work through to completion								
Connections and Extensions					<b>Strength:</b> <b>Goal:</b>				
	<b>Critical Thinking</b>								
	Makes connections and challenges assumptions								
					<b>Strength:</b> <b>Goal:</b>				
	<b>Curiosity</b>								
	Investigates/explores interests with passion								
				<b>Strength:</b> <b>Goal:</b>					
<b>Citizenship</b>									
Contributes as a community member									
				<b>Strength:</b> <b>Goal:</b>					
<b>Creativity</b>									
Generates original ideas and work									

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

 <b>Academic Learning LANGUAGE ARTS</b>	<b>Engagement Level</b> KEY   V=Vibrant   S=Strong   E=Emerging   R=Reluctant			<b>Skill Level</b> E=Extended   OT=On Target   D=Developing   NP=Needs Practice		
	<b>Engagement Level</b>			<b>Skill Level</b>		
	fall	winter	spring	fall	winter	spring
Reading						
Writing						
Grammar/Word Study						
Mechanics						

<b>Fall Comment</b>  strength: goal:
<b>Winter Comment</b>  strength: goal:
<b>Spring Comment</b>  strength: goal:

 <b>Academic Learning MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>Engagement Level</b>			<b>Skill Level</b>		
	KEY      V=Vibrant    S=Strong    E=Emerging    R=Reluctant			E=Extended    OT=On Target    D=Developing    NP=Needs Practice		
	<b>Engagement Level</b>			<b>Skill Level</b>		
	<i>fall</i>	<i>winter</i>	<i>spring</i>	<i>fall</i>	<i>winter</i>	<i>spring</i>
<i>Number Sense and Operations</i>						
<i>Patterns and Relationships (Algebraic Thinking)</i>						
<i>Measurement</i>						
<i>Problem Solving and Reasoning</i>						
<i>Data and Statistics</i>						
<i>Geometry</i>						

Fall Comment
<p><i>strength:</i></p> <p><i>goal:</i></p>
Winter Comment
<p><i>strength:</i></p> <p><i>goal:</i></p>
Spring Comment
<p><i>strength:</i></p> <p><i>goal:</i></p>



**Academic Learning  
CULTURAL**

<b>Engagement Level</b>					<b>Skill Level</b>		
KEY	V=Vibrant	S=Strong	E=Emerging	R=Reluctant	E=Extended	OT=On Target	D=Developing NP=Needs Practice
<b>Engagement Level</b>					<b>Skill Level</b>		
	fall	winter	spring		fall	winter	spring
Geography							
History							
Science							
Research/Writing							

Fall Comment
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>strength:</p> <p>goal:</p> </div> <div style="width: 60%;"></div> </div>
Winter Comment
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>strength:</p> <p>goal:</p> </div> <div style="width: 60%;"></div> </div>
Spring Comment
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>strength:</p> <p>goal:</p> </div> <div style="width: 60%;"></div> </div>

### ATTACHMENT 3: Professional Practice Framework

River Valley Charter School, montessori made public			
Professional Practice Framework			
Stability	<<<< >>>>	Fluidity	
<b>The Prepared Environment &amp; Planning</b> ... for a Shared Journey of Learning and Inquiry		<b>Your Craft</b> The “How” of Teaching and Learning	
Use Principles of “Backward Design” Based on Objectives Establish Classroom Systems, Routines, and Culture Collaborate with Peers Around Planning Connect Objectives to: — Montessori Approach, Albums and/or Materials — Curriculum Maps/Learning Goals/MA Frameworks Develop and Employ Formative and Summative Assessments Plan Goings Out/Place-Based Education/Service Learning		Engender a Sense of Shared Discovery with Children Balance “Follow the Plan” with “Follow the Child” Differentiate Instruction to Reach ALL Learners Model Grace & Courtesy/Character/Confidence Create an Effective Teaching Practice Practice Positive Classroom Management Employ Your Creativity Foster a Harmonious Classroom Culture and Community Support Social-Emotional Learning/Peace Education Observe, Gather, and Share Evidence of Academic Growth	
You as Teacher			
<b>Professional Growth</b> Mindset of Continuous Improvement		<b>Relationships &amp; Communication</b> Building Trust with Clarity	
Be Open to Professional Observations, feedback Set, Refine, and Fulfill Professional Goals Practice Formal Reflection on Craft Embrace Experimentation, F.A.I.L.ure and Resiliency Engage in and/or Influence School-Based PD Pursue Independent PD Collaborate Professionally with Colleagues Share Ideas, Passions, and Differences		Know and Show Your Authentic Self Honor the Whole Child Demonstrate Honesty & Integrity in the School Community: — Self, Students, Families, Peers, Admin Communicate Effectively with Students Communicate with and Engage Families Be Curious about the Perspective of Others Collaborate and Communicate with Fellow Staff Partner Outside the School Community	



## ATTACHMENT 4: Observation, Feedback and Reflection Record

River Valley Charter School Educator Growth Model		
Educator Observation, Feedback & Reflection Record		
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>School Year:</b>
<b>Professional Practice Quadrant:</b>		<b>Professional Practice Goal:</b>
<b>Observations, Evidence, Questions &amp; Feedback:</b>		<b>Teacher Feedback, Reflection &amp; Further Evidence of Effective Practice &amp; Growth:</b>
<b>Observer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Observations:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Questions:</b>		
<b>Feedback:</b>		
<b>Observer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Observations:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Questions:</b>		
<b>Feedback:</b>		
<b>Summative Supervisor Feedback:</b>		<b>Summative Teacher Reflection:</b>
<b>Initial Professional Practice Focus Area for Next School Year:</b>		
<b>Draft Goal for Next School Year:</b>		