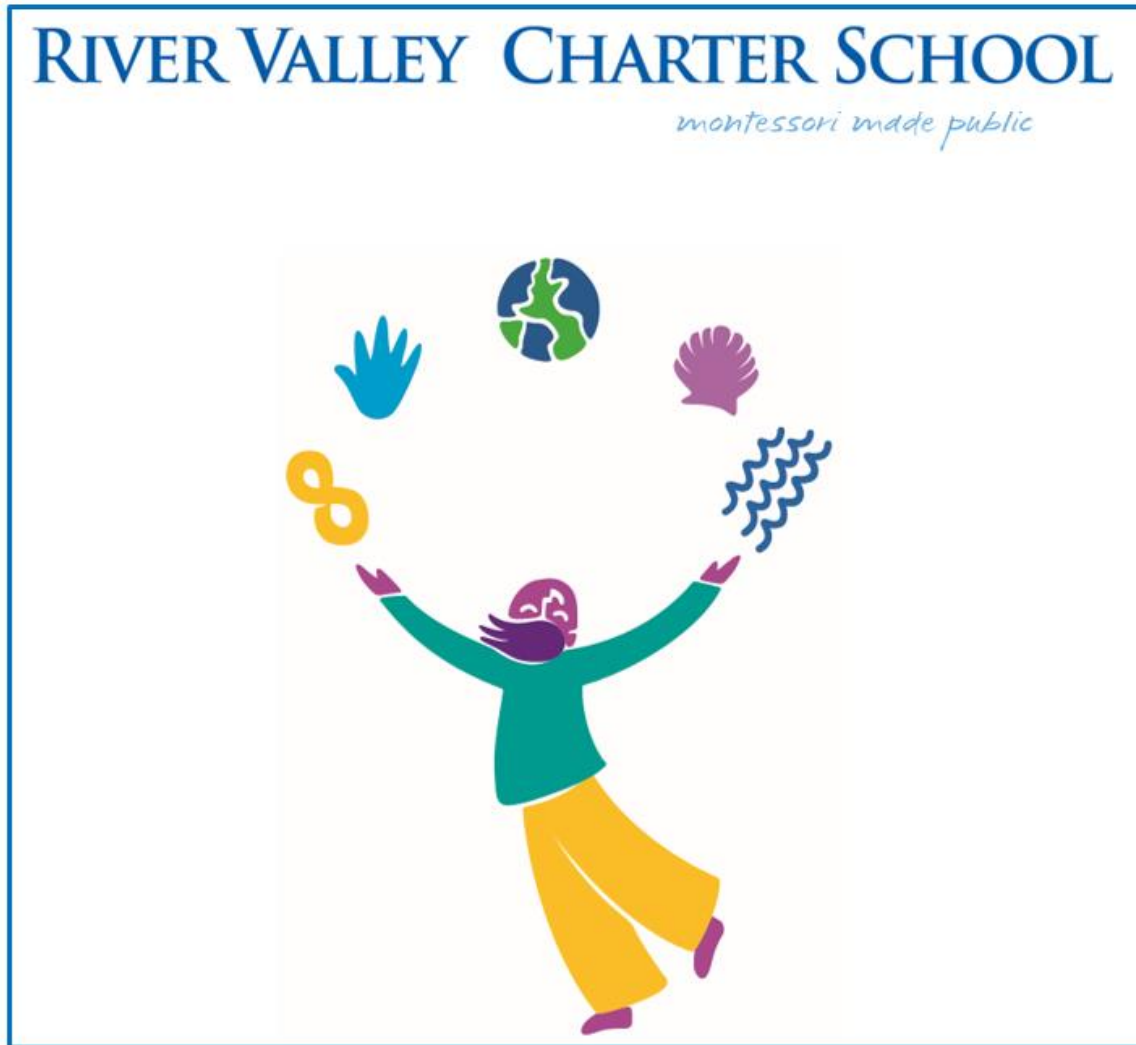


Annual Report of a Public Charter School 2020-2021



RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

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Date Report Finalized: July 28, 2021

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INTRODUCTION TO RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

<i>River Valley Charter School (RVCS)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location of School	Newburyport
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Chartered Districts in Region	Amesbury, Newburyport, Pentucket, Triton
Year Opened	1999	Year(s) Renewed	2003, 2009, 2014, 2019
Maximum Enrollment	288	Enrollment as of 6/18/2020	286
Chartered Grade Span	K-8	Current Grade Span	K-8
# of Instructional Days per School Year (as stated in the charter)	180	Students on Waitlist as of July 6, 2021	168
# of Instructional Days during the 2020-2021 School Year	170 total days		
School Hours	8:10am – 3:10pm Monday-Friday	Age of School as of 2020-2021 School Year	Twenty-one years
Mission Statement 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.			

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

July 15, 2021

To the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

It is our pleasure to submit to you the 2020-2021 Annual Report for the River Valley Charter School (RVCS). This has been a remarkable year in education. The COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of school, from fiscal planning to operations to programming and curriculum. It has been the most challenging year that RVCS has faced. We are thankful to report that RVCS has responded to this crisis with creativity, grace, and skill, and that the school remains on firm footing.

River Valley Charter School provides a high-quality public Montessori program. Though many aspects of our programming adjusted to meet safety considerations this year, the school remained true to its Montessori philosophy and centered on 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. The school pivoted this year in response to shifting pandemic information and safety requirements while providing a responsive Montessori program. While it was a challenge to apply some Montessori tenets, such as flexible seating and shared materials, this crisis gave the school the opportunity to enhance other aspects of the Montessori philosophy. For example, this year RVCS ran a significant outdoor education program allowing for increased health and safety as well as rooting our E2 students deeply in the local Merrimack River Valley and Plum Island ecosystems. In the midst of a crisis, the school found opportunities for enriching its academic program in ways that we plan to continue.

RVCS has been fortunate in a crisis year to maintain sound financial practices and relatively smooth school operations. The RVCS Board of Trustees and the Business Office chose to take a conservative approach to budgeting in acknowledgment of the uncertainty that lay ahead. We made capital investments to improve health and safety within and around the building. As the year unfolded and the general financial climate became more reliable, we amended the school budget to better compensate teachers and to adjust for the unprecedented conservatism that was taken in preparation for the 2020-2021 school year.

The demands of the year also required at least three major changes in school programming and scheduling in response to the shifting phases of the pandemic. The school's Health Office engaged around-the-clock in the daily triaging of safety and health concerns. Coordinating school programming with health and safety required intensive attention and planning by the Administration and ceaseless flexibility from teachers, families, and students. The result was that RVCS students attended a hybrid program in which the vast majority were physically at school every day.

Our entire school community is responsible for the success of RVCS this year, but it began and continues with the deeply compassionate and grounded leadership of our 2nd year Executive Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans. This year, Jonnie Lyn received the Newburyport Chamber of Commerce's Educator of the Year Award for her commitment and creativity in leading RVCS through the uncharted territory of the

pandemic crisis. She identified the critical priorities of the year with focus on the overall wellness of the school, including attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion. She was supported by a creative, flexible, and dedicated team of faculty and staff. Our students and their families demonstrated flexibility and resilience. The Board of Trustees remained dedicated and consistent. The success of this year is the result of the attention and care of the *entire* community under the leadership of an excellent Executive Director.

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

Sincerely,
Pamela Armstrong
Chair, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Pamela Armstrong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pamela" and last name "Armstrong" clearly legible.

Pamela Armstrong
Chair, Board of Trustees

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Faithfulness to the Charter

Mission and Key Design Elements

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

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

- An educational 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.

COVID Response

In advance of the 2020-2021 school year, River Valley Charter School endeavored to create an educational program that would respond to the challenges of operating during the COVID-19 pandemic while simultaneously staying as true to the Montessori pedagogy as possible. Recognizing that emotional health was vital and nearly as important as physical safety, River Valley put together a team of educators, representing all grade levels and specials within the school, to design a program that specifically addressed the individual needs of students. As such, the school created multiple programs specially designed to meet the holistic needs of students based on their age, developmental level, emotional maturity, social needs, and ability to thrive in an electronic educational environment. Beyond staff and student safety, the highest priority was to provide consistent, in-person teaching and learning to the fullest extent possible. We achieved our goal by creating individual programs at each level: kindergarten, Elementary 1, Elementary 2, and middle school. As such, we brought grade K-6 students to school, in-person, every day of the week. Middle school students were in school three out of five days per week.

Recognizing that first-grade students had missed in-person learning in the latter part of their kindergarten year and that their social-emotional health was a top priority, we returned first grade students to known teachers rather than moving them to new teachers. Multi-age groupings, described in more detail below, are a hallmark of the Montessori pedagogy and combining kindergarten with first grade was a logical application of this tenet. To address class size, we added an additional classroom, literally constructing another kindergarten/grade 1 classroom and re-allocating staff to teach in it. We divided the three K/1 classrooms of approximately 24 students each into two cohorts: a morning cohort and an afternoon cohort such that each classroom had no more than ten-twelve students in it at any given time.

With first grade students joining incoming kindergarten students and staying with their known kindergarten teachers, the Elementary 1 program changed to include only second and third grade students. These students also returned to the same teachers they had had the prior year, as typically

happens in a multiage, looping environment. (Montessori does not use the expression looping but in effect that is what occurs with students staying with the same teacher for multiple years.) Students in the multiage grade 2/3 classrooms were also divided into two cohorts, attending in-person either morning or afternoon sessions. Each of the four 2/3 classrooms had approximately eight-ten students in attendance at any given time.

All grade K-3 cohorts attended school for three hours every day of the week. The other half of the day was allocated to specials including physical education, art, music, and engineering. Specials occurred on-line so that general education lessons were maximized during the in-person component of the day.

In our upper elementary program, we also prioritized in-person learning. Physical space constraints and distancing requirements created significant challenges. We investigated the option of holding classes off-site, determining that off-site and outdoors not only provided a safe environment in terms of viral transmission, but also aligned with our mission and commitment to place-based learning. We reached out to a number of local non-profit organizations and proposed the idea of hosting full-day outdoor classes every day of the week at their sites.

The idea of holding class outside all day long and all year long, through all weather conditions, sounded radical, but met our safety needs and also provided partner non-profits with income and purpose during the pandemic. Like grades K-3, grade 4-6 classes were also split into two cohorts with each cohort alternating one week inside the school building and the other week offsite at an outdoor location.

Four offsite locations provided space for approximately 10-12 students on any given day. Sites included the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Historic New England's Spencer-Peirce Little Farm, Maple Crest Farm, and Beech Hill Farm. Sites were equipped with porta-potties and temporary shelters made from tarps and tents. One lead outdoor educator and as assistant teacher lead each of the four outdoor programs. Specials were provided every other week when students were physically in the building.

"My hat is off to you! Your hard work and diligent planning have paid off! So far so good here at the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. RVCS is a role model for schools going forward!"

Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm School and Youth Programs

The outdoor program supported the needs of our 9-12-year-old students by optimizing their time together, providing hands-on outdoor experiences, maintaining daily connections, and leveraging our commitment to the "local history,

culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley". Like grade 1, 2, and 3 students, grade 5 and 6 students returned to known in-school classroom teachers as well. For the full year, with the exception of two months following winter break, our Upper Elementary students attended school for full days in-person. During January and February, we shortened the in-person component of their program to half days like their lower-grade peers. The second half of the day included remote teaching and learning. This approach provided stronger academic opportunities when the cold weather impacted delivery of certain curricular components such as writing. In March, Upper Elementary students returned to full days both inside and outdoors.

In middle school we created five cohorts of students. Every cohort was in-person for three full days/week and remote for two days. Specials were delivered both in-person and remotely depending on the rotation. For two weeks following winter break, middle school students stayed fully remote, a mitigation strategy undertaken in response to rising viral rates locally, and in recognition that older children were experiencing more exposure to the virus during out-of-school activities, especially sports. We also created a small outdoor program for middle school students wherein every cohort was offsite, outdoors for one full day, approximately one day per month, through the end of the school year.

A fully remote program, called the Family Selected Remote Program (FSR), was also created. Like its name suggests, families could select remote programming for their children. Five separate remote programs were created: one for kindergarten students, one for grade 1 students, a multi-age program for grade 2 and 3 students, a multi age program for grades 4-6, and a middle school program. All grade K-1 remote students chose to return to school in-person in mid-March. A small number of grade 2-8 students remained in remote programming through the end of the year. In total, we ran five different FSR programs during the 2020-2021 school year accommodating approximately three dozen students overall.

To the greatest extent possible, River Valley remained true to its Montessori principles despite the pandemic. Some of the key tenets of the Montessori philosophy are described below and where modifications were made, they are highlighted.

Montessori Principles

Montessori Trained Educators: The school maintained its commitment to the Montessori pedagogy by employing Montessori-trained and/or certified teachers in every indoor classroom. Five of eleven grade K-6 classrooms had two adults - a full-time lead teacher and a full-time assistant teacher. This configuration is a core component of the Montessori approach. The remainder of the indoor classrooms were staffed with only one adult as we reassigned faculty members to accommodate the creation of multiple small cohorts and additional classrooms.

As indicated above we merged kindergarten and first grade during 2020-2021 and had three K/1 classrooms, each with two Montessori-certified adults. The four Elementary 1 classrooms were reconfigured to include grade 2-3 students with all lead teachers Montessori certified. The four grade 4-6 indoor classrooms also had Montessori-certified lead teachers.

Montessori Materials: While classrooms continued to be outfitted with genuine Montessori learning materials and furniture, many were not utilized fully in order to minimize the risk of viral spread. Where possible, students used Montessori manipulatives which were sanitized between use. In grade K-3 classes, we also created replicas of key Montessori materials for each individual child. This helped us maintain our commitment to the Montessori learning environment and the tenet that “the hand teaches the mind”.

Whole-Child Education: 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. Fortunately, with students returning to school for in-person learning

on a daily basis, the school year seemed as close to normal as possible. River Valley teachers provided the much-needed emotional support as well as opportunities to continue traditional academic learning.

Our learning environments typically operate on the principle of freedom within limits. This contributes to the development of independence and decision-making skills. Most lessons are given in small group settings and are customized to meet the learning needs of each student. Whereas instruction is usually individualized to the greatest extent possible, this was made especially challenging under COVID-19 restrictions. The 2020-2021 restrictions required us to adopt more

“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

traditional whole-group teaching strategies than would be typical. To the fullest extent possible, teachers provided Montessori lessons based on both their training and adhered to the guidelines of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Students who would typically be permitted to move around during classroom learning periods, were limited by the creation of “bubbles” or “homes” with perimeters within which they needed to stay for safety reasons. We maximized the time that students were outdoors both via offsite outdoor programming, and also by creating outdoor learning centers on campus. Outdoor opportunities created for on-campus students helped kinesthetic learners access their strengths. While the pandemic caused the world to turn to electronics to stay connected, our commitment to maximizing in-person learning allowed us to minimize screen time, something that we believe is not healthy for young children when used in excess.

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 others. This was especially important this year as we worked with students to help them protect both themselves, their peers, their families, and the greater community.

During the 2020-2021 school year, every classroom continued to implement the RVCS Habits of Learning curriculum ([described in more detail in the Academic Performance section of this document](#)) which prioritizes and strengthens our whole child approach to education. We continued the use of online portfolios, something we had transitioned to during the 2019-2021 COVID-19 closure. This initiative is continuing to be refined. The goal is to make online portfolios as reflective and robust as genuine artifacts are.

The success of our approach was evident through both the social/emotional health of our students, and their academic progress. Despite the pandemic, we saw children continue to develop skills and characteristics near typical of a regular school year. At the grade K-3 level, our approach to in-person learning prioritized reading, writing, and mathematics. At the Elementary 2 level, additional skills and curricular components made the year more robust than other years. Specifically, we enhanced the curriculum with additional life science studies, as well as extensive studies of the local environs including farms, fields, woods, marshes, the Merrimac River, and the Atlantic Ocean.

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 opportunities for all students. Montessori manipulative materials allow students to experience concrete representation of abstract concepts.

“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

To the greatest extent possible this year, we allowed students to use the hands-on Montessori materials. They were sanitized between usage. In many circumstances, we recreated

homemade versions of key materials so each student could have their own individual sample of Montessori-like manipulatives.

Our outdoor programming for grades 4-6 allowed students daily opportunities to actively engage in learning experiences outside the school walls. From exploring farms, fields, wildlife preserves, marshes, forests, and other outdoor areas, our students strengthened their awareness and focus on climate change, ecosystems, the natural environment, and the role it plays on all of our everyday lives. Students in outdoor classes tapped maple trees to make maple syrup, learned how to whittle, tracked and identified wildlife, learned survival skills, strengthened their understanding of weather and ecosystems, etc. The opportunities for learning in the outdoors were endless.

In the spring of 2021, we created a Gardening special for our grade K-3 students, partially in response to parents’ desire for younger children to have similar outdoor experiences as older peers and also as a way to increase opportunities for active learning and social connection.

Kindergarten students, who had not returned to full day in-person learning yet were invited to the school for a two hour weekly outdoor garden program. Grades 1-3 added an additional special to their weekly rotation, providing them with an enriching outdoor program focused on plant science, nutrition, food insecurity, etc. The gardening special further reinforced our commitment to the school’s mission by providing grade K-3 students with the opportunity to study the local ecology, even during the pandemic.

“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

Strong Sense of Community: Each cohort of approximately ten students functioned as its own small community this year. At yearend, with pandemic numbers vastly improved and surveillance testing fully-functioning, we brought back grade K-3 students for full in-person days. Cohorts doubled in size, reuniting children who had been separated for over a year.

Students at all levels ate snack and lunch outdoors, even in the worst of weather conditions. Every student had a five-gallon bucket that housed their personal items. Students would take the bucket outside and place it in one of the hula-hooped outlines to ensure physical distancing. This also provided informal social time that fostered personal and community connections.

Our specials schedule for grades K-3 was fully remote for the vast majority of the year. During 2020-2021, we provided K-3 specials programming by class rather than by mixing classrooms. We also

offered kindergarten students an engineering special for the first time. We plan to return to mixed classroom specials next year, assuming pandemic precautions do not preclude this. We also plan to continue the kindergarten engineering special.

"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

Grade 4-8 students who would typically participate in overnight field trips where place-based learning and community-building activities are emphasized, received ample opportunities for this via the outdoor program. In fact, the weeklong rotations at outdoor sites

allowed us to focus on place-based education to a degree far greater than we had in the past. For some students, they were able to demonstrate skills and abilities outside of the academic environment, further strengthening their standing within their classroom community. Some students, especially those who struggle academically in traditional educational environments, reported having had "the best year ever".

A Sense of Social Justice: Despite the pandemic, or maybe because of it, students continued to participate in community service work that provided them with perspectives on larger communities and the issues that people beyond our school walls may face.

Our younger students made cards and gifts for the elderly and disabled, especially important for those living in isolation during the pandemic. Grades four through eight continued to engage in formal and informal debates, where topics regularly centered on social justice issues. Our Elementary 2 students also performed regular community service work at their outdoor locations. They reconditioned an old chicken coop, fed farm animals, created campaigns to curb roadside disposal of cigarette butts on Plum Island, wrote grants to run beach cleanup programs, cleaned the beaches, planted and picked fruit and vegetable fields, etc. Our middle school students participated in community seminar which engaged them in deep discussions and project work about the year's most pressing social justice issues. As the greater society continued to reckon with racial injustices, our

"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

middle school students' studies dove deeper into the history of racism, structural racism, and ways they could help effect change to reverse it.

Every classroom community develops a social contract at the beginning of the school year to define the expectations and conditions for a peaceful, respectful, and safe learning environment for the year. This process provides opportunities for students to articulate and deepen their thinking regarding social justice and other lofty social issues. This year it extended to include global and national health issues, and related inequities, as well.

For many years, our belief was that the concept of social justice in a larger context would come as a natural extension of our efforts to build community within the 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.

In 2020-2021, we continued to broaden our approach to social justice making it more intentional than it had been in the past. Mystery History, and Dead and Famous projects, respectively for lower elementary and upper elementary, are annual research projects wherein each child selects a notable historical figure, researches their life, creates a biography, and formally presents their research to peers. In prior years, students selected characters of their choice. This year we required students to focus this research on changemakers and other notable historical figures who played a role in human rights activism. We also augmented our grade 4-6 literature circle books and our middle school literature collections to ensure we were providing representation in characters and authors. We maintained a Queer Straight Alliance for students, advised by a trained employee. With the alliance's input, we created a form for student use to support them as they explore and indicate their gender identities. We also participated in schoolwide and individual professional development to help us better understand and teach about social justice issues. For families, we launched a quarterly book club and read and discussed books about transgender children, systemic racism, technology, and other issues. Additionally, the School Director repeatedly reinforced the school's commitment to expanding staff and student understanding about privilege and systemic racism via schoolwide communications.

While our Montessori pedagogy ensures that students have a sense of social justice in general terms, living in a community with limited racial and ethnic diversity makes it easy to ignore societal inequities on a day-to-day basis. We will continue to reaffirm our commitment to teaching about racial injustice and hold each other responsible for addressing it. We are committed to teaching about equity, ensuring equity, and helping students accept responsibility for this work as well.

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 has been committed to integrating these resources into the curriculum for all students. We believe that learning experiences beyond the classroom walls are essential in fostering deeper knowledge and critical thinking. As mentioned previously, River Valley not only preserved this commitment during the global pandemic but used the crisis to further recommit to its mission of place-based education as well.

During the 2020-2021 school year, all River Valley students participated in daily, weekly, or monthly outdoor education experiences resulting in a myriad of place-based learning and projects. The descriptions below represent a fraction of the total student experiences.

Elementary 1 students, comprised of only second and third grade students this year, completed a biodiversity study in three local ecosystems of the Merrimack River Valley: the stream, the wetlands, and the temperate forest. For the study of the stream, students explored food chains and food webs, identifying producers, primary, secondary, and tertiary consumers, and decomposers. Key takeaways were that all organisms depend on each other in an ecosystem.

One classroom raised native brook trout. Science lab work included chemistry tests of pH, ammonia, nitrates, and nitrites, and daily monitoring of temperature and lifecycle. At the fry stage students began feeding, water changes, and tank debris removal. Students met off site at Bradley Palmer State Park to release the trout into the wild. Students observed the stream ecosystem and identified

various macroinvertebrates, plant and animal diversity. Students also created food webs demonstrating the stream food web.

At the temperate forest, students classified living organisms as Kingdom Plante, Kingdom Fungi, and Kingdom Animalia. Animals were identified as vertebrates and invertebrates and trees were classified as conifers or deciduous. Students traveled along the Clipper City Rail Trail in search of samples and recorded information in their field study guides. Follow up work was spent experimenting with spores, seeds, and owl pellets.

At the wetlands site outside River Valley Charter School, students identified and distinguished between the native broad-leaved cattail and the invasive phragmites. Students identified vernal pools

"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

as habitats for the threatened species of native Blanding's Turtles. All four classes head started Blanding's Turtles in their classrooms. Weekly, the students measured the mass and length of the carapace and plastron. This data was

provided to Mass Wildlife in partnership with the Parker River Clean Water Association's Blanding's Headstart Program.

Our Elementary 2 students had significant experiences in the local environment through the Outdoor Education program created in response to the pandemic/as means to bring children to school in-person every day. Weeklong activities at the outside sites taught students a wide range of skills, both academic and social/emotional. The sites included farmlands, forests, fields, marsh, river, and ocean. Students tapped maple trees and made maple syrup over an outdoor fire, they monitored weather and weather patterns, observed wildlife, planted and harvested fruits and vegetables, studied the wind, and all sorts of topics. Students took significant ownership of their sites, often performing community service work including beach cleanups, reconstruction of a chicken coop, feeding farm animals, planting, and harvesting. The history of the Merrimack River Valley was also integrated into the outdoor program and included studying the history of farming, architecture, etc.

At the middle school level, students continued to participate in place-based curriculum outdoors, offsite. These experiences were true science immersion days and occurred at the local state park. At this site, the Merrimack River and its surrounding forest and fields served as a classroom for group challenges and labs. Outdoor activities provided an opportunity for students to practice collaboration and critical thinking skills. Students developed a greater appreciation of the outdoors, as well as their own resilience. Students experienced seasonal changes in the watershed through general observations and more specific sit spots where they recorded impressions through writing and sketching.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Capabilities

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

River Valley students are regularly asked to discuss, explain, and provide evidence for their thinking. Without the use of textbooks, teachers introduce concepts through small group lessons, literature, current events, discussions, and real-life activities. Students then explore the concept and are

“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

encouraged to develop or discover connections with prior knowledge and life experience. 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 providing students deeper exploration of topics and the opportunity to extend their thinking beyond simply learning content.

In grades four through six, students regularly engage in formal debates and teachers in grades seven and eight employ the Socratic dialogue technique. 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. While it was challenging to have students safely participate in team preparation for debates during the pandemic, we were able to continue this traditional practice to some degree.

Critical thinking and creative problem solving was also raised to new levels by participation in outdoor programming. Students were forced to identify ways to keep themselves warm, or cool, dry, sheltered, defended from bugs, etc. They used problem-solving skills to create learning experiences and demonstrate their knowledge through nature and the outdoors, building, for example, sundials out of sticks, a quinzee (Canadian snow shelter), and a pole beam structure.

In the middle school, students were challenged to engage in abstract and higher order thinking in all subject areas. Within the framework of the Democracy and Ancient Greece unit, students learned about Ancient Greece architecture. They also learned about the different architectural styles and periods that are prevalent in the surrounding area (e.g., First Period, Georgian, Federal, etc.) and how to identify them.

They applied what they had learned by finding elements of Greek architecture and identifying architectural styles/periods in their local communities. This included finding examples of Doric columns, Ionic columns, Corinthian columns, cornices, dentils, pilasters, and two elements of their choosing. The project replicated an architectural scavenger hunt.

In the Democracy and Ancient Greece unit, students studied how elections work on a national and local level, using the 2020 elections as an example. Students learned about local political candidates, voting laws and regulations in MA, and analyzed the results by county.

Middle school students spent the final four weeks of the school year studying the history of the English language. They started the unit looking at the spread of the English language and the different ways it is spoken - including accents and dialects. As part of this introduction, students took a quiz that attempts to locate where they are from/raised based on word choice and pronunciation. They also learned about elements that make up local accents and dialects.

Due to the restructuring required because of the pandemic, middle school project groups were redesigned as individual Passion Projects and community seminar time. Passion Projects utilized some of the student's remote learning time and allowed them to develop and complete individual projects. Their projects reflected their personal interests and desire to explore and expand their knowledge and ability in a chosen area. They showcased interests ranging from podcast development, culinary arts, handcrafts, and building a computer from scratch.

Community Seminar developed as a response to the many social issues facing our students, such as social justice, climate change, the role that social media and technology play in their lives and much more. Community Seminar provided a forum in which students developed their ability to have important conversations with one another, listened to the thoughts and opinions of others, and decided how they want to move forward and act on the issues that are important to them. To cap off the year in Community Seminar, each cohort was tasked with creating and implementing a community project. Their efforts included acts of kindness, fundraising, planting, and community awareness.

In the upcoming year, we will return to the pre-Covid Project Group format and, because of its value, continue with Community Seminar.

Amendments to the Charter

Date	Amendment Requested	Pending or Approved?
not submitted yet	Updated Enrollment Policy	Pending

Following the 2021 enrollment period, changes to the Enrollment Policy were recommended to ensure compliance and make adjustments that reflected lottery practices utilized during the pandemic. All changes were minor and will ensure greater flexibility and inclusivity going forward. The Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign and the school board have reviewed the changes and the updated policy will be submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

Access and Equity: Discipline Data

The most recent, publicly available student discipline data is available at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ssdr/default.aspx?orgcode=04820000&orgtypecode=5&=04820000&>.

In 2019-2020, the most recent year for which there is publicly available student discipline data, there were no out-of-school or in-school suspensions, expulsions, or emergency removals.

2019-20 Student Discipline					
Student Group	Total # of Students	Students Disciplined	% of In-School Suspension	% of Out-of-School Suspension	% of Emergency Removal
All Students	292	4	Not applicable		
EL	0	0			
Economically Disadvantaged	24	1			
Students with Disabilities	50	0			
High Needs	68	1			
Female	163	1			
Male	128	3			
American Indian or Alaska Native	1				
Asian	8	0			
African American/Black	3				
Hispanic/Latino	14	0			
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	12	0			
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0				
White	254	4			

Behavioral Expectations & Disciplinary Responses

Generally, River Valley suspends very few students. Out-of-school suspensions are used in extremely limited circumstances such as those that would occur if a student were to engage in dangerous, assaultive, or illegal behavior. In-school suspensions are also used infrequently; occurring most often when behavioral infractions represent repeated occurrences of the same infraction. River Valley Charter School matches its disciplinary response to behavioral infractions using concepts of Restorative Justice and logical behavioral consequences.

The Habits of Learning curriculum, combined with Montessori's Grace and Courtesy lessons, serve as the backbone of behavioral expectations for River Valley Charter School students. Behavioral infractions are viewed as opportunities for learning, and natural consequences are utilized 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. As a small school, administration is aware of all major disciplinary actions and is able to monitor for disparities among subgroups.

This year we saw no behavioral issues necessitating disciplinary response. We may never know whether this was a result of small cohorts, regular, consistent, in-person learning, gratitude for returning to school, fear of the pandemic, or something else. Overall, we found that aside from social-emotional challenges among some of our middle school-aged students, River Valley Charter School students in many instances referred to this year as "the best year of their academic careers."

Dissemination Efforts

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Mission and Program/Pedagogical Design	Online panel discussion at Newburyport Documentary Film Festival	School Director	Local community members including a large number of educators locally and nationally.	The school director presented to and then participated in a national online panel discussion following a documentary about progressive schooling. RVCS was invited to share its practices verbally during the discussion. Information about the RVCS pedagogy and program was shared.
Mission and Program, Response to COVID	Award Ceremony at event center followed by news publications	School Director	Local for profit and not-for-profit organizations, the mayor, the Newburyport School Committee Chairperson, members of the Newburyport school district, as well as local legislatures.	The school director was awarded Educator of the Year by the local Chamber of Commerce for the school's innovative response to the pandemic.
Operational Expertise	Member of Newburyport Public School Re-entry Planning Committee	School Director	Newburyport Public School System	The school director attended all weekly re-entry planning meetings and served on a subcommittee to support the development of the Newburyport Public School district's COVID re-entry plan. Best practices for reopening were shared with the Committee.
Community Service Programming	Online program development meetings	School Director	Essex County Community Foundation (ECCF)	The school shared its community service program design with the ECC Foundation which in turn shared it with MA schools with whom the Foundation works. The Foundation's goal is to develop philanthropy in children that will result in continued philanthropy in adulthood. RVCS' community service design is a model for other schools.

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Collaboration/ COVID Response Practices	Planning Meetings	School Nurse and School Director	Newburyport Public School system, the Immaculate Conception School, and the Governor's Academy to investigate the creation of a shared vaccination program.	River Valley's COVID response practices were shared with the Newburyport Public School Nurse. At the last minute, the local school district backed out of the arrangement.
Outdoor Education Curriculum	Presentation and Curriculum Materials	Outdoor Educator	The Gulf of Main Institute (GOMI) which works with multiple public and private schools located along the Merrimac River	Our outdoor educator presented and created curriculum used by GOMI in their work with public schools located along the Merrimac River.
Best Practices	Fellowship Site	Classroom teachers and the School Counselor	Salem State, Merrimack College and Hampshire College pre-service students	RVCS hosted three interns who shared information about the school with in-service peers and educators at their colleges.
Best Practices	Radio show broadcast on "The Morning Show" with Mary Jacobsen	School Director	General public via live radio broadcast	RVCS provided radio show listeners with information about RVCS' pandemic response plan.
Best Practices	Presentation	School Director	Tufts University pre-service education students	RVCS shared information about the Montessori pedagogy with pre-service education students.
Pooled Testing Practices	Communication and document sharing	School Nurse	Supported Hill View Montessori Charter Public School nurse	RVCS shared procedures and policies for pooled testing program with school nurse.
Expertise and Best Practices	Board of Trustees Meetings	School Director	Hill View Montessori Charter Public School Board of Trustees	RVCS shared best practices and policies in both oral and written form with the Hill View Board of Trustees.

[Additional Dissemination Activities are shared in the Attachment](#) section of this document.

Academic Program Success

Student Performance

The most recent, state-based, publicly available student performance data can be accessed at <https://reportcards.doe.mass.edu/2020/DistrictReportcard/04820000>.

Universal Screeners and Literacy

Beginning in 2018-2019 RVCS piloted a system of Universal Screeners across K-6 classrooms. During 2020-2021, Grade K-6 screening data was collected three times during the year. Data was used to monitor student progress, identify students for Response to Intervention and/or Title 1 services, track the potential need special education evaluation, and to inform the possibility of retention.

The Quick Phonics Screener provided faculty with pre-reading/reading skill data. Grade K-3 teachers, working in conjunction with a Literacy Interventionist, used the data to create online instructional groupings as well as to identify areas where teachers needed support with their instructional practices and students needed additional practice in reading. The groups continued to meet in-person when students returned to school full time in-person programming in the spring,

The following results indicate growth in the percentage of students meeting RVCS-developed benchmarks for phonics/reading. As indicated the overall percentage of students meeting our benchmark for grades K-2 were positive.

Percentage of Students meeting *Benchmark on the Quick Phonics Screener

	# Students	Fall	Spring
Kindergarten <i>EOY Benchmark = 82</i>	30	1%	77%
Firsts <i>EOY Benchmark = 142</i>	34	32%	94%
Seconds <i>EOY Benchmark = 202</i>	32	66%	94%

**The Quick Phonics Screener does not set normed benchmark scores. RVCS educators set benchmark scores based on expected outcomes for students at EOY (end of the year).*

The Acadience Math Screener was administered three times this year in all K-6 classrooms as well. Classroom, grade-level, and school-based reports were shared with teachers to begin conversations about curricular areas in which teachers may need additional materials or targeted professional development. We are looking into the creation of a system that would allow us to utilize the screening data to identify specific content areas of the curriculum where outcomes are the weakest. This would be followed up with professional development, material procurement, etc. The usefulness and correlation of the Acadience Math Screener is still being evaluated.

The SAEBRS screener, which stands for Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavioral Rating Scale, is a teacher observational tool and was not administered during 2020-2021. Recognizing that social, emotional, and academic behaviors would be impacted by the pandemic, we decided not to use the SAEBRS screener to identify student issues. Instead, we created a survey to use with students to gather direct input regarding their response to living during the pandemic. We also regularly

gathered input from parents and teachers to verify that students with social/emotional needs were getting support services from the school counselor, the counseling intern, and other student support personnel. The addition of a counseling intern in 2020-2021 allowed us to better meet the social/emotional needs of more students during this stressful year.

Screening data continues to be useful as part of our Response to Intervention program and will continue to support this process. We continue to see a better distribution of RtI resources, more consistency across classrooms, and most importantly, increased capacity within the general education classroom. RVCS hopes to create a dashboard for use by the Accountability Committee and the Board of Trustees to monitor aggregated student progress.

Academic Program

Curriculum and Instruction: The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method is about 100 years old and while it has consistently been evolving over those 100 years, River Valley Charter School works to stay true to the Montessori approach in all academic settings, whether in person, or remote for the few dozen of our students whose families selected the remote programming for their children during the pandemic.

Our in-school safety protocols included distancing, masking, sanitizing, and utilizing outdoor space as much as possible. We employed a day porter who continuously wiped down high-touch areas of the school and utilized an electrostatic sprayer in between cohort sessions. Air circulation filters were upgraded, doors and windows remained open, and stand-alone air filtration systems were put into every location that staff or students occupied. We conducted daily health screenings, installed hand-sanitizing stations throughout the school, implemented a no-visitor policy, created isolated cohorts, and implemented a weekly robust pooled testing surveillance program.

As a public school, River Valley has aligned the Montessori Scope and Sequence with the MA Curriculum Frameworks to create a robust curriculum. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, all levels continued to deliver curriculum based on both the Montessori pedagogy and the history, ecology and culture of the Merrimack River Valley as stated in our mission.

During 2020-2021, our grade K-3 programming generally mirrored every other year in the history of our school with exception that students attended school in-person for only three hours. Class sizes were smaller, movement within the classroom decreased, and material-handling was limited, yet students continued to be educated under the tenets of Montessori- multi-age, interdisciplinary, small group instruction, real-world applications, mastery learning, and the ability to advance studies or receive remediation as appropriate to the individual child. The majority of change occurred in the area of specials which were delivered remotely for grades K-3 and were delivered to a class or cohort of multi-aged students rather than single-aged.

For grades K-3, the core components of the curriculum including reading, writing, mathematics, and science, were delivered in-person. These lessons were more rigorous, more intentional, and delivered more traditionally than in previous years. One teacher described the three-hour instructional period as a time to “present, present, present”, Montessori terminology for providing small group lessons. This differs from our standard practices when children are provided opportunity to practice and make discoveries on their own within the classroom. Follow-up work

and specials occurred during the other half of the day, mornings for afternoon cohorts, afternoons for morning cohorts. In this way, in-person time was maximized with core curriculum lessons.

In-person learning for grades 4-6 was similar to past years in terms of curriculum and instruction with the exception of the science curriculum which was covered by outdoor educators in outdoor learning spaces. Grade 4-6 students did not have an in-person lab science class as in prior years though this will return next year.

Grade 4-6 students typically engage in long stretches of group work where they work on projects with partners. For much of the year, partner work was scaled back to ensure distancing between students. The history component of the curriculum was also less robust than in prior years because history and the social sciences are normally studied through hands-on, real world experiences such as visiting organizations, museums, and other places for learning.

Informal Assessment

To be successful in Montessori, educators must have a keen sense of observation and use this to continually adjust lessons for students. Montessori educators are continuously conducting informal formative assessment. There are also lots of opportunity for authentic assessment in a Montessori classroom where students often create projects, participate in oral presentations, write, perform, and document their learning. As students' ages increase, classrooms introduce more traditional types of assessment and especially by the time students enter middle school at River Valley.

Student Portfolios

The Habits of Learning, also called the Eight Cs for Curiosity, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Commitment, Communication, Citizenship, and Compassion, were identified as both expected and valued outcomes of the RVCS Peace Education Curriculum Map and represent Dr. Montessori's vision of education as a tool to promote peace. That remained true even during the pandemic.

Students in grades K-6 work on portfolios that, rather than reflect a collection of best practices, include work samples and reflections based on the Eight Cs. Grade eight students' Celebrations of Learning (COLs) reflect the Habits of Learning. This year's eighth grade students' COL presentations were presented remotely, like last year.

As a result of the pandemic closure, and in response to a long-held goal to document student work in an online format, River Valley is continuing to investigate and test the use of online portfolios for students. Grade 4-8 students were required to do this work and created personal websites that included examples of work from content areas as well as indications of their Habits of Learning. Faculty are continuing to train in the use of online portfolios for their ongoing application in future years.

Progress Reports/Parent-Teacher Conferences

We continued with our recently redesigned progress reports during 2020-2021 but slimmed down some of the comments to account for the limited amount of time teachers had for planning and preparation.

The reports feature a page for our Habits of Learning curriculum in addition to a page for each of the academic areas. The academic areas have fewer measures than our previous progress reports and include an engagement score to indicate a child's interest and commitment to working in that academic area. Of note, our progress reports are designed to keep parents aware of their children's progress toward appropriate grade level work rather than to rank them in comparison to other students. As such, our progress reports indicate whether a child is "on target" for typical academic achievement. This distinction from other school's report cards is an important one and something that we are continuing to refine and support families in understanding.

Through the technological integration of progress reports into our student information system, we continue to move our academic tracking practices toward more reliable, automated, and consistent processes.

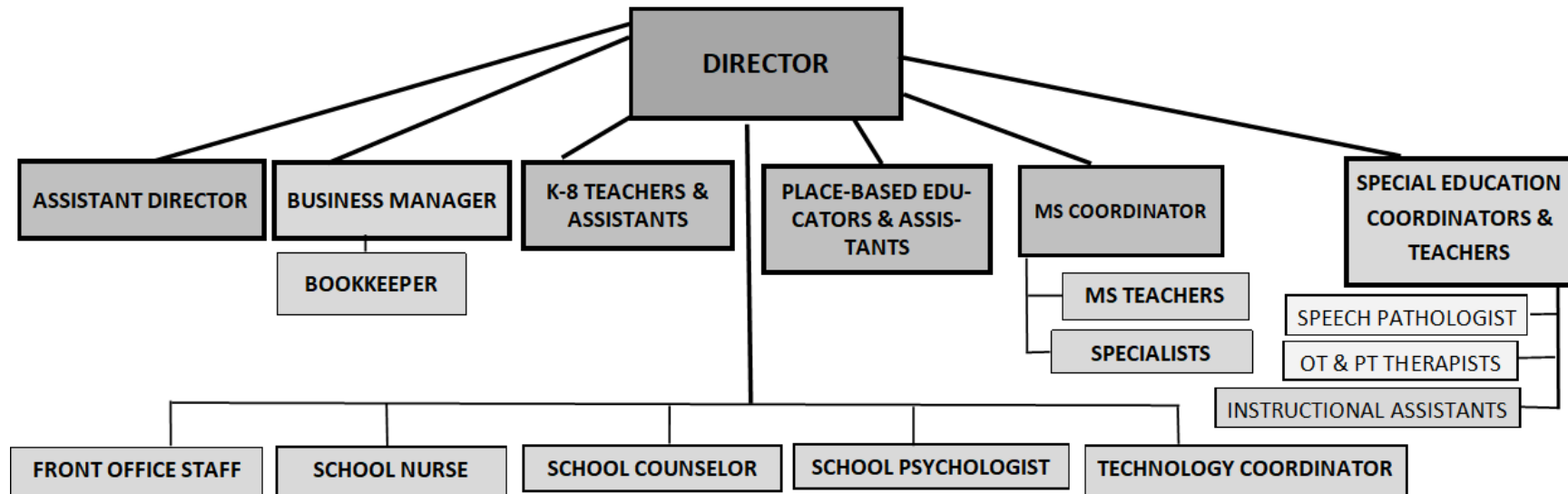
Without the ability to host in-person conferences, we utilized a few different approaches to conferences this year. In some instances, conferences were held via Zoom, in others, they were held outside in socially distanced spaces. Our end of the year conferences are typically portfolio conferences. K-3 held these in-person. Grades 4-6 conferences were held at the Outdoor sites to provide families with insight into the work that occurred while outdoors. Indoor teachers were also onsite to answer questions families may have had about their child(ren)'s progress.

Supports for All Learners

In total, there were five licensed special education teachers at River Valley during the 2020-2021 school year: one for K-3, two for 4-6, two for 7-8. We employed one instructional assistant for K-3, a literacy interventionist to serve students in grade 1-3, a 1:1 staff member and a speech and language pathologist. River Valley has a full-time school counselor and a part time school psychologist and subcontracts for occupational therapy and physical therapy.

Services for students were delivered in person to the fullest extent possible with the addition of additional services delivered online during the second half of a student's day, either in the morning or afternoon. Although providing services was more challenging under the circumstances, our educators were able to meet the needs of their caseloads. In some instances, this included driving to two different outdoor locations every day of the week, in order to provide services to grade 4-6 students.

Organizational Viability



Organizational Structure of the School During 2020-2021

There were minimal changes to the organizational structure in the 2020-2021 school year, the second year under the administrative leadership of Jonnie Lyn Evans and Dan Bouchard. The school maintains a small administrative staff consisting of the School Director, the Assistant Director, a Business Manager, and a number of coordinators including two Special Education Coordinators, a Middle School Coordinator, and a Technology Coordinator. In addition, the School Nurse and the School Counselor support the leadership team. The Front Office staff includes a Receptionist/Secretary and a Data Support Person/Special Projects Administrator. The Business Office has a full time Bookkeeper as well. All other staff are teaching personnel.

In 2020-2021, a number of staff members were reassigned in response to the pandemic. The outdoor program was born out of efforts to maximize in-person time for students, stay mission-focused, and maintain staff. We utilized veteran employees to staff the outdoor program by reassigning an E2 science teacher, a technology integration specialist, and a classroom instructional assistant, all who had environmental, outdoor, and/or science backgrounds. We hired one additional outdoor teacher as well. E2 assistant teachers became outdoor assistants for their classes and worked collaboratively with the E2 indoor and outdoor teachers. This provided consistency between weeks for our E2 students.

In 2020-2021, we continued with Level Coordinators. The Level Coordinators represent the various levels and areas of the school and meet regularly with administration. The purpose of the Coordination Team is to provide representation from staff about their perspective and needs, and to assure open and continuous communications between faculty and administration. Level Coordinators shared information about ongoing initiatives with their peers, facilitated level meetings, and provided support for some level-related administrative functions. During COVID, the Coordination Team did not meet formally, but instead was consulted or communicated with to gain input and share information during this continuously changing year. The level coordinator positions will continue into the 2021-2022 school year. The majority of individuals will continue serving in these roles. Weekly in-person meetings should resume.

Student Teachers

During the 2020-2021 school year, River Valley partnered with three colleges: Salem State College, Merrimac College, and Mt. Holyoke College. River Valley hosted the Salem State student teacher in kindergarten, a Merrimac College Counseling intern, and a Middle School master's mathematics intern from Mt. Holyoke. All three practicum students were welcomed and utilized as if they were regular staff members. They provided classroom support, participated in school duties, and received professional development alongside RVCS peers.

Going forward into next year, River Valley will host two pre-practicum students. One student is a Salem State Masters candidate who will work in our Elementary 1 program. The other is a Salem State Masters candidate who will work in our Elementary 2 classroom. Both individuals will support teachers and students during the 2021-2022 school year.

Organizational Changes in the Upcoming Year

River Valley will return to its previous classroom organizational structure with two single grade kindergarten classrooms, four multi-age Elementary 1, four multi-age Elementary 2 classrooms, and a multi-age middle school. All K-6 classrooms will be staffed by two adults: a lead and either an associate or assistant teacher, or co-leads. In addition, a new department will be added to allow for the continuation of outdoor programming. Adoption of permanent outdoor programming aligns with our core belief that children learn by doing and by having experiences in the natural environment. We are excited to pilot this program next year. The new program/department will include two place-based educators and an assistant place-based teacher. We will not be offering families a fully remote option.

Budget and Finance

FY21 Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Change in Net Assets (Unaudited)

OPERATING REVENUE		
Per-pupil tuition		\$ 4,504,319
In-kind MTRS pension		930,031
Government grants		214,724
Program specific private grants and contributions		63,038
In-kind transportation		9,204
Program Fees		5,622
	Total operating revenue	5,726,938
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Personnel and related		
Salaries and wages		3,226,455
In-kind MTRS pension		930,031
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits		473,092
Professional development		13,853
	Total personnel and related	4,643,431
Occupancy		
Building and grounds		204,801
Lease expnese		119,462
Utilities		53,219
Insurance		16,860
Taxes, sewer betterment		2,682
	Total occupancy	397,024
Direct student costs		
Instructional materials		59,968
Consultants and service contractors		53,872
Program expenses		52,622
Technology and equipment		42,001
Testing and assessment		2,526
	Total direct student costs	210,989
Other operating costs		
Insurance		46,653
Technology and equipment		45,332
Professional fees		39,696
General supplies		25,758
Dues and subscriptions		12,487
Minor equipment		6,638
Equipment leases		6,265
Telephone		4,890
Miscellaneous		3,390
Travel		2,895
Advertising and recruitment		1,865
Printing and postage		947
Bad debt expense		141
	Total other operating costs	196,957

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Depreciation		74,822
Amortization of right-to-use lease asset		137,553
	Total depreciation and amortization	212,375
	Total operating expenses	5,660,776
CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS		66,162
GENERAL REVENUE (EXPENSE)		
Contributions - general		980
Interest and other income		6,543
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset		(5,051)
	Total general revenue	2,472
CHANGES IN NET POSITION		68,634
NET POSITION:		
Beginning of year		1,932,132
End of Year		\$ 2,000,766

Statement of Net Assets (Unaudited) for Year Ended June 30, 2021

<u>ASSETS</u>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents		\$	1,629,844
Accounts and grants receivable			16,474
Prepaid expenses and other			9,923
Total current assets			1,656,241
RESTRICTED CASH			
			94,336
RIGHT TO USE LEASE ASSET, NET			
			3,026,176
CAPITAL ASSETS, NET			
			778,829
Total assets		\$	5,555,582
<u>LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION</u>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accrued payroll		\$	367,823
Lease liability, current portion			92,039
Accrued expenses			27,189
Accounts payable			23,779
Total current liabilities			510,830
LONG TERM LIABILITIES			
Lease liability, long term			3,043,986
Total liabilities			3,554,816
NET POSITION			
Unrestricted			1,331,788
Invested in capital			668,978
Total net position			2,000,766
Total liabilities and net position		\$	5,555,582

FY22 Approved School Budget**Operating Budget Approved by the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2021
for the Year Ending June 30, 2022**

		Budget FY 2021-2022
OPERATING REVENUE		
Per-pupil tuition		\$ 4,583,813
Program specific private grants and contributions		100,000
Government grants		105,000
Program Fees		-
	Total operating revenue	4,788,813
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Personnel and related		
Salaries and wages		3,311,625
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits		554,000
Professional development		33,000
	Total personnel and related	3,898,625
Occupancy		
Buildings and grounds		148,250
Lease liability interest expense		116,079
Utilities		53,700
Insurance		15,000
Taxes, sewer betterment		3,000
	Total occupancy	336,029
Direct student costs		
Consultants and service contractors		88,250
Instructional materials		65,750
Program expenses (RVCS)		39,000
Technology and equipment		18,500
Testing and assessment		3,000
	Total direct student costs	214,500
Other operating costs		
Insurance		60,223
Professional fees		56,700
Technology and equipment		47,200
General Supplies		23,200
Dues and subscriptions		15,500
Travel		14,000
Minor equipment		9,250
Miscellaneous		8,000
Equipment leases		6,800
Telephone		5,200
Printing and postage		3,500
Advertising and recruitment		2,350
	Total other operating costs	251,923
Depreciation and amortization		219,700
	Total operating expenses	4,920,777
OTHER REVENUE (EXPENSES)		
Community Building Expenses-PA		1,200
Contingency- Board of Trustees		1,197
	Total other revenue (expenses)	2,397
	Total expenses	4,923,174
CHANGES IN NET POSITION FROM OPERATIONS		(134,361)

(continued on next page)

GENERAL REVENUE		
Interest and other income		6,700
	Total general revenue	6,700
CHANGES IN NET POSITION		(127,661)
NET POSITION, BEGINNING OF YEAR		2,000,766
NET POSITION, END OF YEAR		\$ 1,873,105
Cash Basis		
Net Surplus (Deficit) from Operations		\$ (134,361)
Adjustment - Non-Cash Items		
Non-Operating Income		6,700
Amortization Expense		138,000
Depreciation Expense		81,700
Total Non-Cash Items		226,400
Capital expenditures: Non-Impact to Budget		
Capital reserve funds-deposited per vote by Board of Trustees		(40,000)
Capital reserve funds-withdrawal for capital expenditures voted by Board of Trustees		40,000
Lease Liability Principal Payments		(92,039)
Total Capital Outlay & Lease Liability Principal Pymt		(92,039)
Total Cash Used by Existing Resources		\$ -
*** The budget was presented to the Board of Trustees on June 22, 2021. This budget will be amended for any unforeseen material revenue and expense impact due to changes in Federal and State Funding.		

Additional Information

FY22 Enrollment Table

Number of students pre-enrolled via March 15, 2021 submission	288
Number of students upon which FY22 budget tuition line is based	288
Number of expected students for FY22 first day of school	288
Please explain any variances: N/A	

FY22 Capital Plan

The River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees has committed to funding a restricted Capital Reserve Fund for future infrastructure needs. The Trustees have allocated \$40,000 per year to this fund over the last nine years, and the fund balance as of June 30, 2021, is \$94,336. 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 2021-2022, RVCS plans the following capital and non-capital improvements:

- Interior Alterations and Renovations to return school to pre-COVID design and renovation of interior space to upgrade programs: Anticipated investment of \$15,000.
- Purchase and installation of a kiln: Anticipated investment of \$10,000.
- Thermostat system upgrade: Anticipated investment of \$15,000.
- Passenger van to support equitable access for student participation in offsite place-based programming: Anticipated investment of \$70,000. ESSER funding has been requested for this investment.
- The balance of capital reserve funds may be put towards HVAC system upgrades and roof improvements. The use of ESSER funding is being considered for some of these investments.

During FY 2020-2021, RVCS completed the following capital and non-capital improvements:

- Interior Alterations & Renovations due to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines: Investment of \$3,273.
- Installation of Security Access System and outside Security Cameras to provide greater security and protection of the building and grounds of the school: Investment of \$31,856.

Total expenditures on capital improvements for FY 2020-2021 were \$35,129. The school expended \$3,273 (of the \$35,129) on non-capital improvements. With the school's current Capital Reserve Fund approach, River Valley has a conservative and visionary approach to the future needs and financial stability of the school.

Accountability Plan Performance for 2020-2021 (Appendix A)

Faithfulness to Charter

Measures that were impacted due to implications of operating during the pandemic are indicated with an asterisk*.

Objective 1: River Valley Charter School will provide a Montessori learning environment that reflects best practices for public Montessori education.		
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<p>Measure 1A: River Valley will alternate between a self-assessment and an external audit of its Montessori program every year using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector's Essential Elements Rubric. Every year the audit will switch such that there are three external audits and two internal during this charter term.</p>		
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<p>Annually, River Valley will obtain at least a satisfactory rating in each of the five domains of the rubric (Adults, Montessori Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Leadership & Organizational Development, Assessment). The rating is based on a four-point rubric (unsatisfactory, needs improvement, satisfactory, exemplary), and will reflect the average score of all the standards within each of the five domains*.</p>		
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<p><i>*The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector recreated the Essential Elements document to more appropriately recognize the implementation of the Montessori Method in the public sector. Previously the Essential Elements, created by the American Montessori Society, contained 22 elements (of which two were excluded because they did not apply in a public-school environment); the new rubric, redesigned by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, contains 26 standards and a four-point rating scale of each element.</i></p>		
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<p>(Link to the Essential Elements Rubric.)</p>		
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	<p>Not Met*</p>	
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		<p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the adjustment of our programming in response to the pandemic, River Valley Charter School did not have either an internal or external audit of the school's Montessori program. Many of the standards identified as quintessential Montessori practices were not considered safe under pandemic safety protocols. Further, the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector was not conducting on-site auditing. Last, all movement within the building was restricted and visitors were not allowed in the school. The Essential Elements Rubric, which documents the components of the audit is included as an attachment. All five domains were impacted by programmatic changes due to the pandemic.</p>
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		<p>No results are reported for this measure.</p>
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<p>Measure 1B: Every year, all grade K-6 lead teachers will self-evaluate their Montessori classroom environment and practices using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector’s Teacher Reflective Practice Inventory. All lead teachers who have been asked to return to River Valley for employment the following year will score at least 80% on the instrument, which includes 22 indicators of Montessori best practices as defined by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.</p>	<p>Not Met*</p>	<p>Much of the classroom structure was changed in response to COVID restrictions, thus impacting our established Montessori environments and practices. Nonetheless, we asked teachers to self-evaluate.</p> <p>At least one adult from each of the eleven K-6 classrooms participated in self-evaluation of their classroom environment and practices with an eye toward Montessori best practices. Six of the 11 educators, 55%, scored 80% or above on the self-assessment. The range of scores was 56-95%. The lowest score was achieved by the newest teacher in a lead role.</p> <p>Interestingly, all the lead upper elementary teachers rated themselves below the 80% threshold. These teachers were among some of the most stretched this school year because they worked full days without assistants and had half of the in-person time with their students for the entire school year because students were outdoors the other half of the time. From an administrative vantage, the three lead returning upper elementary teachers are among some of the best in the school and a supervisor-based assessment would have scored all of them beyond the 80% threshold.</p> <p>A copy of the survey is included as an Attachment: Teacher Reflective Practices Inventory.</p>
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Objective 2: River Valley Charter School will provide educational experiences that connect student learning to the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. River		
<p>Measure 2A: Annually, every class will engage in a minimum of three place-based learning experiences related to the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</p>	<p>Met*</p>	<p>With COVID related restrictions in place for most of the year, classrooms were not able to fully engage in place-based learning experiences related to the history culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley outside of the school, with the exception of the middle school and the Elementary 2 level. Grade K-3 classrooms created learning experiences that connected student learning to the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley, though we limited offsite experiences to locations that were safe, outside, and could be reached by foot.</p>
<p>Measure 2B: All grade 5-8 students will participate in an annual survey to rate students' understanding of the connection of in-school learning with the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</p> <p>Ninety percent of the surveyed students will indicate that at least one of their out-of-classroom experiences connected in-class learning to the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</p> <p>In addition, on a 1-5 Likert scale (with 1 indicating the place-based experience was not relevant to classroom learning and 5 indicating that classroom learning was amplified through place-based experiences which tied learning to the real world), ninety percent of the surveyed students will rate their experiences at least 3.</p>	<p>Met*</p>	<p>All grade 5-8 students were administered the survey to rate their understanding of in-school learning with the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. We learned that the question design was misleading for some students. They understood, "Have you participated in an activity outside of school that connected something you learned in school to the history, culture, ecology of the Merrimack River Valley" to be a question about their activities outside of school hours. Sample responses included, "I participated in swimming and dance" or "I did not do any other stuff outside of school." The confusion likely occurred because of the school's ongoing messaging about extracurricular activities and their impact on the school's ability to remain open during the pandemic. As such, 84% indicated that at least one of their out-of-classroom experiences connected in-class learning.</p> <p>94% of grade 5-8 students rated the experience a three or above on the 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing "the experience wasn't relevant to anything I have learned at</p>

		<p>school” and 5 representing “I have learned things at school that are relevant in the real world”.</p> <p>Results from students who were in the Family Selected Remote program were not included in the survey.</p>
Objective 3: Learning experiences at River Valley Charter School will support students in the development of critical thinking and creative problem solving.		
Measure 3A: Annually, with at least a 50% response rate of River Valley Charter School caregivers, 80% or more respondents will agree or strongly agree in separate questions that River Valley Charter School provides opportunities for their child(ren) to develop critical thinking skills and creative problem-solving skills.	Met	<p>The annual family survey was administered in the spring of 2021. There were 156 respondents, representing at least a 50% response rate. Of the respondents, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that River Valley provides opportunities for their child(ren) to develop critical thinking skills. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that River valley provides opportunities for their child(ren) to develop creative problem-solving skills.</p>
Measure 3B: Each year, the overall percentage of grade K-6 students, including River Valley’s primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), whose progress report scores show that they usually or consistently demonstrate critical thinking skills (defined as making connections and challenging assumptions, supplying evidence for arguments, and using reflections/feedback as a tool for growth) will increase from the fall to the spring grading period.	Met	<p>The first term (fall) progress report data indicated that 94% of students overall consistently or usually demonstrated critical thinking skills. Third term (spring) progress report data showed improvement, 99% of students had consistently or usually demonstrated critical thinking skills. An analysis of River Valley’s primary subgroups (high needs, students with disabilities) revealed similar results. In fact, none of the students in either subgroup decreased.</p>

Measure 3C: All graduating students will participate in a River Valley Celebration of Learning (COL)* event, and 90%, including River Valley’s primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), will earn an average final score of 3.0 or better (out of a 1-4 scale), on a rubric that assesses content and presentation. The presentation is a culminating experience that integrates the River Valley Charter School academic curriculum as well as River Valley’s Habits of Learning curriculum, thereby representing application of critical thinking and creative problem solving.	Met	All 29 graduating eighth grade students participated in a Celebration of Learning presentation, and all received an average final score of 3.0 or better on the rubric assessing content and presentation. Average final scores ranged from 3.4 to 4.0. A copy of the COL Feedback Form is included as an Attachment.
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Dissemination

Objective 4: RVCS will share its Montessori curriculum with other public schools in Massachusetts over the course of its charter term.		
<p>Measure 4A: By the end of the charter term, RVCS staff will deliver at least five mission-related presentations to five different MA public school audiences to disseminate best practices in public Montessori education.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<p>2019-2020 RVCS hosted its third 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. (Presentation information is on file at the school.)</p> <p>2020-2021 Despite the pandemic, RVCS delivered mission-related presentations to various educators from MA public schools. The Newburyport Film Festival included local public-school educators who came to hear about project-based learning.</p> <p>RVCS also disseminated information about its place-based programming. One of the four outdoor educators with strong connections to the Gulf of Maine Institute, presented to other Massachusetts school educators who participated in professional development programming offered by the Gulf of Maine Institute.</p> <p>Total presentations during this charter term is three.</p>

Recruitment and Retention Plan (Appendix B)

Recruitment Plan

2021-2022

School Name: **RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL**

2020-2021 Implementation Summary:

River Valley Charter School implemented its recruitment strategies as laid out in the 2020-2021 Recruitment plan and actively engaged in attracting new students through multiple modalities in order to broaden our variety of student populations.

In general, RVCS is in an area of the state with limited racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity making it challenging to attract a wide and diverse population of students. One way we (by chance) addressed this during 2020-2021 was by partnering with local non-profits to offer programming offsite during the pandemic. From our daily appearances at these public sites, we established new relationships and more engagement with local populations. In at least two of our four offsite locations, community members repeatedly inquired about the presence of River Valley children and learned about our public-school option.

We received 213 applications for the 2021-2022 year, representing a lower number than last year but successful recruitment efforts for the school given the uncertainty due to COVID-19. 72 of the new applications were for Kinderhaus, where most spots are available. This compares to 88 for kindergarten last year. 141 applications were for grades 1-8; the same number of applicants as in the 2020 enrollment lottery for grades 1-8.

The Kinderhaus roster of 30 students who began attending River Valley Charter School in the 2020-2021 school year included one student who was identified in need of financial assistance after enrollment. Additionally, one Kinderhaus student was on an Individual Education Programs (IEPs) by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

As is the case each year, a number of open Kinderhaus spots are taken by siblings of currently enrolled students. For the 2021-2022 school year, 16 of the spots will be filled with siblings. Given this influence, our incoming class of Kinderhaus students will likely not significantly alter our enrollment statistics despite our recruitment efforts, i.e., we will not meet the comparison index or gap narrowing targets for English language learners. As River Valley does not participate in the Federal Free and Reduced lunch program, families self-identify as low income. We typically see this happen when the school asks for funds for fieldtrips and activities (all communications indicate families can receive support from the school). River Valley would welcome a conversation with the Department to discuss alternative methods of better qualifying students and families as low income.

General Recruitment Activities for 2021-2022

Due to COVID 19, River Valley eliminated all in-person recruitment activities during the 2020-2021 school year. For general recruitment activities, we disseminated information via news, social media, and the local libraries in all of the towns and cities of our sending districts. We added a second membership with a local Chamber of Commerce and both Chambers advertised our school to local businesses and families.

We conducted three public ZOOM information sessions for families. We also advertised in literature distributed by with Newburyport Youth Services (NYS) and the Merrimack Valley Boys and Girls Club.

General recruitment activities include advertising efforts via:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Local newspaper advertisements in English and Spanish
- Advertisements in the local libraries and local preschools.
- Signage in public spaces in our local sending districts.
- Public service announcements on the local cable television network
- General publicity through partnerships with Newburyport Council on Aging where our students communicated with elders and those who were shut in during the pandemic.
- ZOOM Enrollment Information Sessions (offered at night and on weekdays)
- Website posts on our school website
- We purchased Radio advertisements in January and February 2021 on 104.9FM, which ran 2x per day. The ad had parent and teacher testimonials and relayed information about the enrollment lottery. This station is heard from Lynn to Haverhill, appealing to a wide range of socio-economically diverse families.
- A WCVB “EyeOpener” advertising RVCS featuring 2nd and 3rd students on local network news morning program to promote school and the enrollment lottery
- Article from Massachusetts Charter Public School Association highlighting River Valley’s successful plan to have in person education throughout the school year, with the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.
- Distributed RVCS tagged “coffee sleeves” to local cafes in our sending districts to distribute to customers
- Local residents observed our students at our Outdoor, Place-Based Education sites resulting in ongoing dissemination to the community. Multiple news stories were also published during the school year.

Recruitment Plan – 2021-2022 Strategies	
Special Education Students/Students with Disabilities	
<p>CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 16%</p> <p>GNT percentage: NA%</p> <p>CI percentage: 14.8%</p> <p>The school is <u>above</u> CI percentages</p>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Met GNT/CI: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute informational flyers to the special education departments of each of our sending districts. Continue enhanced SEPAC communications efforts through social media platforms and with local school SEPACs.

Limited English-proficient Students/English Learners	
<p>CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 0%</p> <p>GNT percentage: .3%</p> <p>CI percentage: .4%</p> <p>The school is <u>below</u> both GNT and CI percentages</p>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute informational flyers to ELL coordinators of each of our sending districts. Publish enrollment materials with a banner/footer indicating that translation and interpreter services are available if needed. Make the Montessori Enrollment Session video available to all attendees in Spanish. Have bilingual (Spanish-speaking) parents available at Enrollment Sessions. Ask Spanish-speaking parents to share enrollment information in their multicultural communities. Distribute flyers to local Rec Departments where there may be increased incidence of minority populations. Maintain a Spanish version of the enrollment application on the school's website. Place a sticker advertisement in Spanish in the local newspaper. The sticker adheres to the front page, top of the fold, and is visible to all readers, as well as to customers in any retail establishment that sells newspapers regardless of whether the paper is purchased. Connect with the Newburyport Human Rights Commission, and individuals working on Sanctuary City status, to establish relationships with organizations who work with immigrants. Advertise in North Shore Kid, an online resource for parents, visited by 300,000 individuals/month. This is a "go-to" resource for local families looking for events, schools, and other child-related information. Enhance our efforts to disseminate information about our program to EL populations in our area by reaching out to local multicultural organizations including the Racial Justice Committee of the YWCA and Amesbury

	<p>Community Services Center to broaden RVCS' reach to more diverse populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a message in Spanish during an Eye Opener video providing information about the lottery and enrollment; aired during morning WCVB news programming. • Work with local Chambers of Commerce to share recruitment information with agencies that support diverse communities. RVCS will ask to be included in events these agencies hold where there is a population of non-English speaking families and local resources being presented.
	<p style="text-align: center;">2021-2022 Additional Strategy(ies):</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Did not meet GNT/CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</i></p> <p>New strategies to recruit Limited English-proficient students/English learners in 2021-2022 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a land acknowledgment at the property entrance as physical demonstration of the school's continued commitment to inclusion. • Add a foreign language in middle school programming. <p>All strategies will be implemented annually. RVCS anticipates 1-2 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (Low Income/Economically Disadvantaged)	
<p style="text-align: center;">CHART data</p> <p>School percentage: 8.0%</p> <p>GNT percentage: 10%</p> <p>CI percentage: 14.5%</p> <p>The school is <u>below</u> GNT and CI percentages</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers to community service agencies (Head Start, Hugh Doyle Resource Center, Salvation Army, Pettengill House, SNAP, WIC) • Distribute flyers to the low-income housing developments in our sending towns/speak at low-income housing development events. • Provide economically disadvantaged students reduced rates or free access to before and after school childcare for working parents/guardians. • Continue collaborative relationships with Nourishing the North Shore to bridge connections with low-income families in the area. • Post enrollment information at local soup kitchens (Salvation Army, Among Friends, Our Neighbor's Table) and food pantry with whom the school has a collaborative relationship. • Conspicuously post a banner advertising free, full day kindergarten. • Work with Suzanne Dubus, CEO of the Jeanne Geiger Center, to identify and connect with clients served by this agency. • Conduct a fall outreach and a secondary outreach closer to the time of the lottery at low-income residential areas in our region. • Working through the Director of the Newburyport Learning Enrichment Center, invite the tenant leadership group to visit RVCS so that they can reinforce flyer information we share with residents of the park. • Amplify the relationship with Our Neighbors' Table, a food pantry that serves 3,500 guests/year, to include presence at their events.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with all of the Tenant Leadership Councils at each of our sending district's low-income housing areas to provide marketing information about our public-school programming. • Partner with Newburyport Youth Services to increase after school opportunities for older students (grades 6-8) by providing transportation to their after-school facility. • Host summer Camp Invention program for the greater Newburyport area. The camp is staffed by RVCS Montessori teachers and includes a limited number of scholarships for free attendance. Follow up after the camp ends with information about the school. • Enhance partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Lower Merrimack Valley in Salisbury to access another stream of diverse family populations. • Actively foster communication with local low-income housing authorities, especially those in Amesbury, to educate families about our program.
	<p>2021-2022 Additional Strategy(ies):</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Did not meet GNT/CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies below:</i></p> <p>New Strategies to implement in the 2021-2022 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join local chapter to the Rotary Club to further access populations of families that may not be aware of RVCS. • Partner with the Boys and Girls Club to provide convenient and cost-efficient afterschool programming to RVCS families. <p>All strategies will be implemented annually. RVCS anticipates 1-2 years to see GNT/CI changes.</p>
<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute flyers to local tutoring agencies including Fun Way Learning Center, Math Port, ClubZ Tutoring, T Cubed, Simms Tutoring, Successful Solutions. • Provide the local Boys and Girls Club with paper applications and flyers about River Valley Charter School • Advertise that River Valley has small class sizes in middle school math (by employing double the number of math teachers as in the other middle school content areas).
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVCS' summer school programming and drop-in sessions for middle school students are attractive to families who may have students at risk of dropping out of school.
<u>Students who have dropped out of school</u>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <p>NA</p>

Retention Plan

2021-2022

2020-2021 Implementation Summary

Our attrition rate for the 2020-2021 school year dropped from the previous year to 6.9%, from 13.5%. As such, River Valley met the 90% goal. The school's retention rate was 93.1%.

Withdrawals during the 2020-2021 school year were impacted by the pandemic. Multiple families re-evaluated or were forced to alter their living arrangements in response to the pandemic. An analysis of the 2020-2021 withdrawals/transfers provided the following information:

- 2 siblings moved to the Western part of the state.
- 1 student's family transitioned to homeschool to travel the country during the pandemic.
- 1 student moved out of state with grandparents.
- 1 student's family moved out of state.
- 2 students returned to district schools.

We continue to identify ways to increase our retention rates by educating our families about our Montessori programming, by fostering greater social connections between classrooms and age levels, offering additional enrichment experiences, and by continuously improving our programming. One goal is to ensure families select RVCS for its educational programming rather than for other reasons (such as free full day kindergarten). Of note is the vast difference in the number of male and female students we have at various grade levels. One of our grades is populated with four times as many female students as male. It has been reported by some families that this influences their decision to continue enrollment at River Valley.

Overall Student Retention Goal

Overall Student Retention Goal	
Annual goal for student retention (percentage):	91%

Retention Plan – 2021-2022 Strategies	
Special Education Students/Students with Disabilities	
<p><u>CHART data</u></p> <p>School percentage: 4.4%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 13.5%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is below third quartile percentages.</p>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a strong special education program staffed by qualified professionals. • Offer summer sessions to qualifying students. • Maintain a Response to Intervention program/Student Support Team. • Offer afterschool enrichment programs where less emphasis is placed on academics. • Offer additional support services before and after school to middle school students. • Continue to train additional staff in Crisis Prevention and nonviolent crisis intervention. • Maintain the school's Student Support Team protocol and improve classroom teachers' ability to support students with diverse learning needs. • Provide SEPAC presence on school social media sites. • Find new ways to make Team meetings for special education more accessible and productive for parents with the use of technology and remote meeting platforms. • Enhance efforts to involve more parents in SEPAC to promote the school and family collaboration for students with learning needs. • Identify Crisis Interventionist to oversee crisis intervention team, providing ongoing professional development

Limited English-proficient Students/English Learners	
<p><u>CHART data</u></p> <p>School percentage: NA%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 10.6%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is neither above nor below third quartile percentages.</p>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a relationship with an ELL service provider. • Ensure adequate number of teaching staff are SEI-endorsed. • Maintain SEI endorsement of at least one member of the administrative team and increasing numbers of the teaching staff. • Provide extra services (by an ELL service provider) to students who are not qualified ESL learners but whose backgrounds suggest that they are struggling due to English language learning (e.g., parents speak non-English at home, etc.) • Ensure current families are aware that RVCS offers ELL services. Offer all families an afterschool foreign language program to allow Spanish-speaking families opportunities to share their culture within the community.
	<p>2020-2021 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>No ELs were enrolled during the 2020-2021 school year. No retention strategies needed.</i></p>

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch (low income/economically disadvantaged)	
<p><u>CHART data</u></p> <p>School percentage: 5.9%</p> <p>Third Quartile: 14.7%</p> <p>The school's attrition rate is below third quartile percentages.</p>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to school-based counselor to identify additional services available in the area. • Provide a high quality free or reduced-price lunch program to qualifying students. • Provide reduced cost before and after care program to qualifying students. • Provide reduced cost enrichment programming to qualifying students. • Increase connections with families at risk of financial needs particularly in the current economic downturn due to Covid-19. • Update and enhance the resources for financial and meal assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic with monthly refreshes of information.

<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	<p>Continue 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide summer sessions to qualifying students. • Provide Homework Help for grades 4-8 • Provide students with computer-based programming to reinforce/practice math skills. • Reduced cohort sizes in grades K-6 to ensure students receive additional 1:1/small group instruction.
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	<p>Continue 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide drop-in summer sessions for Middle School student
<u>Students who have dropped out of school</u>	<p>Continued 2020-2021 Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA

School and Student Data Tables (Appendix C)

River Valley Charter School's student demographic enrollment data can be found on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website at

<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=04820000&orgtypecode=5&>

STUDENT RACE AND ETHNICITY AND SELECTED POPULATIONS	
Race/Ethnicity	% of School
African-American	.3
Asian	1.4
Hispanic	5.2
Native American	.3
White	88.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	4.5
Selected Populations	% of School
First Language not English	.7
English Language Learner	0
Students with Disabilities	16
High Needs	22.2
Economically Disadvantaged	8.0

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR			
Name, Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date
Jonnie Lyn Evans School Director	Serves as the organization's Chief Executive Officer providing organizational and academic leadership. Supervises all K-8 faculty.	07/01/2019*	NA
Dan Bouchard Assistant Director	Serves as the organization's assistant to the director.	07/01/2019	NA
Lisa Kelley & Patricia Innes Special Education Co-Coordination	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

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR			
Deb McCrevan Business Manager	Provides financial and facility management.	01/01/2000	NA
<i>* date represents the member's start date for this position; member was previously RVCS employee</i>			

TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR				
	Number as of the last day of the 2020-2021 school year	Departures during the 2020-2021 school year	Departures at the end of the school year	Reason(s) for Departure
Teachers	42	0	9	All employees chose to end employment
Other Staff	16	0	0	NA

The majority of teaching departures reflect increased staffing that was adopted to address the pandemic. Most of the departing educators had been hired for temporary employment. Teacher retention of veteran teachers continues to be strong at River Valley Charter School. Looking ahead, the school will be creating a succession plan to address future potential concerns for retiring veteran teachers.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE INFORMATION	
Number of commissioner-approved board members as of August 1, 2021	16
Minimum number of board members in approved by-laws	11
Maximum number of board members in approved by-laws	20

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2020-2021 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
Pam Brockmeier Armstrong	Board Officer Committee Officer	Executive Finance	First term completed, extending into second term	2017-2020 2020-2023
Erin Bradley Irose	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term in progress	2020-2023
Mark Bishop	Board Officer	Executive	First term in progress	2019-2022

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR				
	Committee Officer	Finance		
Nancy Durkee	Committee Co-Officer	Accountability	First term in progress	2019-2022
Jonnie Lyn Evans	Ex-Officio Trustee	Executive Accountability Finance	First term in progress	2019-2022
Amber Hewett	Board Officer Committee Officer	Executive* Committee on Trustees	First term completed, extending into second term	2017-2020 2020-2023
Nina Keery	Board Officer* Committee Officer*	Executive* Committee on Trustees	First term completed, extending into second term	2017-2020 2020-2023
Alfred Link	Committee Co-Officer	Accountability Finance	Completed first term, extending into second term (returning board member)	2017-2020 2020-2023
Catherine Martin	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term completed, extending into second term	2018-2021 2021-2024
Karina Moltz	Officer	Executive	First term completed	2018-2021
Greg Noyes	Trustee	Finance Development	Ended first term early	2020-2021
Erin Seaton	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term in progress	2019-2022
Albert Ting	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2020-2023
Rebecca Schwer	Staff Representative	NA	Completed one-year term	2020-2021
Anna Wetmore	Trustee	Accountability	First term in progress	2020-2023

**Part of the year*

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR	
Date/Time	Location
August 10, 2021 - 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
September 14, 2021 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
October 19, 2021 - 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
November 16, 2021 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
January 11, 2022 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
February 8, 2022 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
March 8, 2022 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom
April 12, 2022 – 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom

May 10, 2022 – 7:00pm	TBD
June 21, 2022 - 7:00pm	TBD

COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULES FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR		
Name of Committee	Date/Time	Location
Executive Committee	2021: 8/5, 9/7, 10/12, 11/9 2022: 1/4, 2/1, 3/1, 4/12, 5/3, 6/14 All meet at 7:00pm	Remote – via Zoom through April TBD after April 2022
Accountability Committee	2021: 9/13, 10/18, 11/15, 2022: 1/10, 2/7, 3/7, 4/11, 5/9, 6/13 All meet at 6:00pm	Remote – via Zoom through April TBD after April 2022
Development Committee	2021: 9/8, 10/13, 11/10, 2022: 1/5, 2/2, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4, 6/8 All meet at 6:00pm	Remote – via Zoom through April TBD after April 2022
Finance Committee	2021: 9/7, 10/12, 11/9 2022: 1/4, 2/1, 3/1, 4/12, 5/3, 6/14 All meet at 6:00pm	Remote – via Zoom through April TBD after April 2022
Committee on Trustees	2021: 8/5, 9/9, 10/14, 11/10 2022: 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, 6/9 All meet at 6:00pm	Remote – via Zoom through April TBD after April 2022

Additional Required Information (Appendix D)

Key Leadership Changes

Position	Name	Email Address	No Change/ New/Open Position
Board of Trustees Chairperson	Pam Brockmeier Armstrong	rvcsbot@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
Charter School Leader	Jonnie Lyn Evans	jlevans@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
Assistant Charter School Leader	Dan Bouchard	dbouchard@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
Special Education Directors	Patricia Innes and Lisa Kelley	pinnes@rivervalleycharter.org lkelley@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
MCAS Test Coordinator	Jonnie Lyn Evans	jlevans@rivervalleycharter.org	New (returning)
SIMS Coordinator	Jonnie Lyn Evans	jlevans@rivervalleycharter.org	New (returning)
English Learner Program Director	Dan Bouchard	dbouchard@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
School Business Official	Deb McCrevan	dmccrean@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
SIMS Contact	Patricia O'Leary	poleary@rivervalleycharter.org	No change
Admissions and Enrollment Coordinator	Jonnie Lyn Evans	jlevans@rivervalleycharter.org	

Enrollment

Action	2021-2022 School Year Date(s)
Student Application Deadline	Tuesday, February 11, 2022
Lottery	Thursday, February 17, 2022

Conditions

Not applicable

Complaints

Not applicable

Attachments

Additional Dissemination Activities

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Mission and Program, Response to COVID	Online meeting with four state legislatures and families from multiple charter schools (RVCS was 1 of 3 schools invited.)	Eleven River Valley parents and the School Director	The MA Charter Public School Association organized this event so that schools could share best practices with legislatures and other charter schools throughout Massachusetts.	The event provided other MA charter schools with insight into RVCS programming.
Collaboration	Volunteerism at local vaccine clinics	School Nurse, Kimberly Putney and RVCS teachers	The entire local community	The school nurse and a number of RVCS teachers provided nursing and/or support services at a local vaccination site on multiple days. Some days were reserved specifically for local educators of all local school districts.
Best Practices Outdoor Programming	MCPSA Newsletter	School Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans	Circulation to 23,000 readers	The published article described RVCS COVID response, and more specifically the Elementary 2 outdoor program.
Outdoor Education Programming	Presentation	Two Elementary 2 Students	The Newburyport Rotary Club	Two students presented information about the work they were doing in outdoor school. As a result, funds were donated to the students/school to facilitate beach cleanups. Rotary members participated in the cleanups as well.

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Anti-Racism Practices	Case Study (online meeting)	School Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans	Multiple MA public charter schools participating in a white ally leadership group	Shared practices RVCS used to address anti-racism teaching and communications
Best Practices	Online meetings	School Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans	Northeast regional charter schools	Shared policies and practices with multiple charter schools in the northeast region through collaborative efforts with MA Charter Public School Association
Best Practices	Weekly participation in convening of new leaders	School Director, Jonnie Lyn Evans	MA Charter Public School Association, Hill View Montessori School, Advanced Math and Science Academy, Marblehead Charter School, Community Charter School of Cambridge, Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School, Libertas Academy, Bridge Boston Charter School	Documents, policies, and protocols shared with leaders.

Essential Elements Rubric (Accountability Measure 1A)

Domain 1—Adults

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
Teachers have Montessori credentials, from a MACTE or AMI accredited training program, for the age group they teach, in addition to any required licenses or credentials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers are fully trained at the appropriate level and hold required licenses or credentials. • All auxiliary staff (special education, PE) are Montessori trained or oriented. • Montessori principles are evident in the actions of all adults. Key actions include: speaking softly, clearly, and respectfully to children and adults, refraining from offering unnecessary help, inviting as opposed to commanding, and student engagement in meaningful work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of teachers are fully trained at the appropriate level, with the remainder in the process of earning an appropriate Montessori credential. • Auxiliary staff have been oriented in Montessori theory and practice. • Montessori principles are evident in many, but not all adults' actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of all teachers are fully trained at the appropriate level, with the remainder in the process of earning an appropriate Montessori credential. • Montessori principles are evident in some adults' actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 85% of all teachers are fully trained at the appropriate level. • Absence of robust knowledge of Montessori theory and practice is evident in the actions of adults; key actions include: interrupting students who are concentrating, using a loud, intrusive voice, attempting to control rather than model respectful behavior.
Each teacher is supported by a paraprofessional/ assistant given Montessori-specific orientation for that role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classrooms are staffed with an assistant who has completed a Montessori Assistant's course. • The school provides an orientation workshop for all assistants. • All assistants play an integral role in the culture of the classroom, providing support in the care of the environment, modeling positive behavior, assisting the teacher when students need redirection, and other duties as assigned by the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of all classrooms are staffed with an assistant who has completed a Montessori Assistant's course. • The school provides an orientation workshop for all assistants. • Many assistants play an integral role in the culture of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of all classrooms are staffed with an assistant who has completed a Montessori Assistant's course. • Some assistants play an integral role in the culture of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 75% of all classrooms are staffed with an assistant who has completed a Montessori Assistant's course • Assistants, when they are present, are disengaged from the work of the room or function solely as disciplinarians.
All adults, Montessori trained or not, embrace core Montessori principles, respecting the process of human development and supporting children's independence, freedom, responsibility, and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adults interact with children in ways that are deeply respectful and support their development as appropriate to the children's age and level of independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults sometimes set developmentally inappropriate expectations for children, expecting too little or too much independence and responsibility. • Adults sometimes interact disrespectfully with children (e.g., interrupting, ordering, teasing, contradicting, controlling...) • Montessori trained staff interact appropriately, but untrained staff are poorly supported in appropriate interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults often set developmentally inappropriate expectations for children, expecting too little or too much independence and responsibility. • Adults often interact disrespectfully with children (e.g., interrupting, ordering, teasing, contradicting...). • Untrained staff show no awareness of appropriate interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult interactions with children are not guided by Montessori principles, and are developmentally inappropriate and disrespectful (controlling, interrupting, shouting, shaming, blaming, etc.).

Domain 2—Montessori Learning Environment

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
Children are grouped according to Montessori age groupings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5-6 • 6-9 • 9-12 • 12-15 • 15-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All learning environments reflect Montessori age groupings. • Classroom communities serve at least 24 students supervised by no more than two adults. • The primary point of entry to the program is age 3. • For students who enter after age 4, the school has a well-elaborated orientation and induction program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All learning environments reflect Montessori age groupings. • Classroom communities feature at least 24 students supervised by no more than two adults. • Significant numbers of 5-year-olds may enter without prior Montessori experience, but these new students are carefully oriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-age environments exist, but children are segregated by age, gender or ability. • There is a stand-alone “kindergarten” program for 5 year-olds, but is working toward a full 3-6 program, and has a reliable method for orienting these children. • Students age out of the school before the end of a 3-year cycle (e.g., after 1st, 2nd, 4th, or 5th grades, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are grouped in single-grade or two-year classrooms. • There is a stand-alone “kindergarten” program for 5 year-olds with no reliable method for orienting these children. • Children are segregated by age, gender or ability.
Learning environments provide uninterrupted 3-hour work periods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classrooms provide 3-hour morning work periods. • Classrooms for older children provide 2-hour work periods, with limited interruption for specials and other programmed activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classrooms provide 2.5-hour morning work periods. • Classrooms for older children provide 2-hour work periods, with limited interruption for specials and other programmed activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classrooms provide 2.5-hour morning work periods. • Classrooms for older children provide 2-hour work periods, but 2-3 times a week, those periods are taken up with specials and other programmed activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work periods are divided into small portions (e.g.: Readers or Writers Workshop, Literacy Block) with limited opportunity for children to concentrate on self-chosen work.
Specialty programs such as music, art, and second languages are integrated into the three-hour work cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Montessori teachers confidently deliver Montessori music, using bells, tone bars and other materials integral to this part of the program. • Materials for making and viewing art are visible on shelves, and students have access to them at all times. • Bilingual staff support an immersion approach to second-language instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty programs (music, art, second language) are offered as separate classes, but do not interrupt extended work periods. • Students have free access to Montessori music materials—bells, tone bars, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty programs (music art, second language) are offered as separate classes, usually during afternoon work periods. • Students have limited access to Montessori music materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty programs such as music, art, and second languages are delivered by non-Montessori specialists during work periods. • There are separate morning and afternoon classes. • Students have no access to Montessori music materials.
The environment supports a high degree of student choice in what to work on, where to work, and how long to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can choose to work at tables, on rugs on the floor, or outside. • Students have ongoing access to all materials, and are allowed to choose their work freely during extended work periods. • Almost all instruction takes place in small groups (Elementary & Secondary) or one-on-one (Early Childhood). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can choose to work at tables, on rugs on the floor, or outside. • Students have ongoing access to all materials, and are allowed to choose their work for the majority of work periods. • 80% of instruction takes place in small groups (Elementary & Secondary) or one-on-one (Early Childhood). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have choice regarding where and what to work on for part of the day. • Students may be assigned work but may choose where and in what order they will do their work. • Whole or large-group instruction is used almost as much as individual and small group instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student movement is restricted. • Most students work at tables. • Most learning is directed by adults. • Most instruction takes place in whole-group formats. • Teaching and learning are expected to follow a pacing set by the teacher.

continued

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
The full complement of Montessori materials is available in every area, representing the majority of materials on all shelves. Additional materials conform to Montessori standards of order, beauty, and simplicity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full complement of Montessori materials is available in every area. Montessori materials are meticulously cared for and displayed in an orderly and inviting manner, representing the majority of work available to students. Materials are in constant use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full complement of Montessori materials is available in every area. Montessori materials are displayed in an orderly and inviting manner, representing the majority of work available to students. Materials are in good repair and ready for use. Materials are in regular use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is less than a full complement of Montessori materials. Montessori materials are visible, but not organized in a way that invites robust engagement and concentration. Montessori materials are liberally supplemented with other curricular approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montessori materials may be visible, but the majority of work involves other materials and resources, such as worksheets, text books, or computers. The environment is cluttered, with little attention to order, beauty and simplicity.
The learning environment offers ongoing access to real-world materials and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have ample opportunities to engage in care of the classroom, food preparation, dining and meal cleanup, and plant and animal care, and these activities are a regular part of children's activity. Tools and materials for practical activities are functional and child-sized. Appropriate cutlery, glassware and dishes are used daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have some opportunities to engage in care of the classroom, food preparation, dining and meal cleanup, and plant and animal care, and are at times engaged with them. Functional child-sized tools and materials are available, but the supply is limited or some are not appropriate for children's use. Appropriate cutlery, glassware and dishes are used daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some real world activities are available, but children do not spontaneously engage in them. Tools and materials are very limited, or mostly inappropriate for children's use. Care of the classroom, food preparation, dining and cleanup, and plant and animal care are handled mostly by adults. Children eat with disposable cutlery, plates, and cups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No real world activities are available. Care of the classroom, food preparation, dining and cleanup, and plant and animal care are handled by adults. Children eat with disposable cutlery, plates, and cups.
The learning environment offers appropriate access to a prepared outdoor environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have free access, within appropriate limits, to a well-prepared outdoor learning environment. The outdoor environment is in regular use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have some access to a well-prepared outdoor learning environment. The outdoor environment is in occasional use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the outdoor environment is tightly restricted by adults. The outdoor environment is not well prepared or appropriate for children's use. The outdoor environment is infrequently in use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the outdoors is only available during "recess", as a free play activity. The outdoor environment is not well prepared or appropriate for children's use.
SPED students are fully included and supported within the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montessori teachers are dual certified as SPED teachers and able address all but most significant learning issues through the Montessori program. SPED and Resource Teachers are Montessori trained or oriented and work in collaboration with Montessori teachers to provide special services within the prepared environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPED students are pulled out for small portions of the day, or specialists come in the classroom but work with the SPED students apart from the rest of the group and primarily through non-Montessori materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPED students are pulled out of the Montessori classroom for large portions of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPED students have a separate program for most or all of the day.
ELL students are fully included and supported within the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montessori teachers are dual certified as ELL teachers. ELL Resource Teachers are Montessori trained or oriented and work in collaboration with Montessori teachers to provide special services within the prepared environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL students are pulled out for small portions of the day, or specialists come in the classroom but work with the ELL students apart from the rest of the group and primarily through non-Montessori materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL students are pulled out of the Montessori classroom for large portions of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL students have a separate program for most or all of the day.

Domain 3—Family Engagement

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
A strong partnership between home and school is evident in all formal and informal communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-developed Family Handbook elaborates mutual expectations in clear, accessible language. • Robust, two-way communication begins prior to enrollment and is visible in a website, newsletters, letters home, and processes for parent-teacher conferences. • All relevant documents are translated into languages reflecting the school's population • The school's Parent Engagement plan may include home-visits. • Faculty and staff reflect the ethnic, linguistic and racial makeup of the student-body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-developed Family Handbook elaborates mutual expectations in clear, accessible language. • The school maintains an active website. • Most classrooms distribute newsletters and other regular communications such as websites, blogs, or Google groups. • Highest priority documents are translated into the languages reflecting the school's population. • Efforts are made to hire faculty and staff that reflect the ethnic, linguistic and racial makeup of the student- body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Family Handbook exists, but is out-of-date and not widely distributed. • Communication between home and school is limited to informing families of events, deadlines, and other administrative matters. • Some classrooms distribute newsletters and other regular communications, but there is no coordinated system for ensuring that all members of the community are informed. • Translation services are limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Family Handbook may exist, but is out-of-date and not widely distributed. • Communication between home and school is sporadic, and usually in the form of announcements from the administration. • Translations are sporadic or non-existent.
The school provides ongoing opportunities for family education, including information sessions, discussion groups, observation of classrooms, and parent-teacher-student conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enrollment process features multiple opportunities for parents to learn about Montessori and the family commitment expected by the school. These events are well planned and executed, and attended by large numbers of prospective families. • A robust family induction process, includes open houses, orientation evenings, and networking with experienced families. • Family education opportunities are offered monthly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enrollment process features some opportunities for parents to learn about Montessori and the family commitment expected by the school. • The school offers an orientation evening for new families. • Family education opportunities are offered quarterly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enrollment process may feature events such as open houses, but they are poorly advertised and sparsely attended. • The school offers an annual Open House. • Family education opportunities are offered sporadically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enrollment process includes no opportunities for families to learn about the school, and any families enroll without any knowledge of Montessori education. • No family education opportunities are offered.

continued

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
The school cultivates a strong school-home association, in which parents have authentic opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the school's mission and communicate with school leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school maintains a designated space for adults to gather, which includes a resource library filled with material related to Montessori, child development, parenting, and other topics of interest. • The school employs a Community Engagement specialist, who supports the family community by partnering with parent leaders, assisting in the coordination of volunteer opportunities. • There is an active school board and/or governance council with significant family representation. • Minutes of all meetings are shared with the entire community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's School-Home or Family Association is active, with parent/adult leaders visible in the school. • Minutes of all meetings are shared with the entire community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a School- Home Association, but it is not active. • The school's Board or governance council may have family representation, but families do not regularly attend meetings. • Minutes of meetings are not regularly shared with the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no formal structures through which families can participate in the school.

Domain 4—Leadership and Organizational Development

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
An experienced Montessori educator guides the implementation of the Montessori program, as Principal, Program Director, Curriculum Coordinator or Instructional Coach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Montessori trained school leader communicates and advocates effectively for full Montessori implementation. At least one instructional coach, with Montessori training for at least one program level, supports full Montessori implementation as a primary responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leader is not Montessori trained, but is enthusiastically engaged in ongoing Montessori professional development. A trained Program Director or Montessori Coach supports the untrained school leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leader is not Montessori trained, and has engaged in minimal Montessori professional development. The school does not employ a Montessori Program Director or Coach, but does rely on the expertise of experienced teachers or consultants in making program decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school leader is unwilling to engage in Montessori professional development The school leader regards Montessori as an aspect of the school program rather than the essence of the school program. The school leader engages in teacher evaluation and program development systems that are in conflict with Montessori principles and practice.
The school has a clear vision for how it delivers Montessori education, and has an active cycle of reflection and self-review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a current and active strategic/school improvement plan, which is grounded in Montessori principles, informed by multiple constituents, and widely understood and embraced by the school community. The school regularly employs Montessori consultants to provide internal and external audits of program quality, and incorporates consultant feedback into an ongoing strategic planning process. The school has a well-articulated and transparent process for inducting, mentoring and evaluating teachers. Teachers are evaluated based on a protocol designed to support fully implemented Montessori practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a living strategic/school improvement plan, which is grounded in Montessori principles, informed by multiple constituents, and made available to the school community. The school has employed a Montessori consultant within the past three years to provide internal support for strategic planning and instructional improvement. Teachers are evaluated based on a protocol that is friendly to Montessori pedagogical principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is in the process of developing a strategic/school improvement plan, which includes goals for improving Montessori practice. The school does not look to outside resources for Montessori support. Teachers are evaluated in part or whole based on a protocol that does not reflect Montessori practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's strategic/school improvement plan includes no goals for improving Montessori practice. Teachers are evaluated based on a protocol that has no relationship to Montessori pedagogical practice.
The school maintains membership in one or more Montessori professional organizations, and seeks accreditation to ensure consistent quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is accredited or recognized by at least one major Montessori professional organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school maintains membership in at least one major Montessori professional organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is not be a full member (due to costs or other constraints), but leaders and staff attend at least one major Montessori professional organization's conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has no connections with any Montessori professional organization.

continued

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
The school has a pipeline for recruiting, training, hiring, and retaining high quality Montessori teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school sponsors two or more teachers for Montessori training annually. The school provides a robust annual Assistant's/Fundamentals Course. The school has a strong relationship with a MACTE accredited or AMI Montessori training center. The school recruits broadly and provides a substantive interview and induction process for all prospective and new hires. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's budget supports sponsorship for Montessori training for at least one new teacher a year. The school offers orientation and professional development designed to support classroom assistants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's operating budget does not support annual sponsorships, but efforts are made to raise funds for the specific purpose of supporting the talent pipeline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has no systems in place to ensure a reliable pipeline of high quality Montessori teachers.
All adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 – 90% of adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some, but fewer than half, of adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults do not engage in ongoing Montessori professional development.
Adults treat one another with respect and model grace and courtesy in their interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All adult interactions are respectful, gracious, and courteous. Respect, grace, and courtesy characterize formal and informal school activities. Respect, grace, and courtesy characterize interactions with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most adult interactions are respectful, gracious, and courteous. Respect, grace, and courtesy characterize most formal and informal school activities. Respect, grace, and courtesy characterize most interactions with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults are sometimes disrespectful, preemptory or dismissive with one another. There are notable status divisions among trained teachers, support staff, and administrative staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults are generally disrespectful, preemptory or dismissive with one another. Non-teaching staff are blatantly disrespected or delegitimized.
Montessori practice is supported by a clearly defined Montessori scope and sequence, integrated with (but not driven by) state standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff understand and can explain the Montessori approach and how it meets state standards. A Montessori scope and sequence aligned with state standards is shared widely in the school and available to families, district staff, and other stakeholders. Teachers lead with their Montessori training and refer back to state standards as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most faculty and staff understand and can explain the Montessori approach and how it meets state standards. An alignment of the Montessori scope and sequence with state standards is in process. The Montessori scope and sequence is part of internal and external communications. Teachers mostly lead with their Montessori training and refer back to state standards as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many faculty and staff members are unclear on the Montessori approach and how it meets state standards. No alignment of the Montessori scope and sequence with state standards is in use. The Montessori scope and sequence is available but not part of community understanding or regular practice. Teachers mostly lead with state standards and use some Montessori materials and lessons to teach them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty and staff are following a scope and sequence that conflicts with Montessori pedagogy. Teaching is entirely driven by state standards.

Domain 5—Assessment

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
Assessment protocols integrate measures of academic achievement with measures of executive functions such as self-regulation, initiation, and cognitive flexibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school tracks multiple indicators of success through means such as alumni, parent, and receiving teacher surveys. The school uses cognitive measures such as the Flanker Inhibitory Control Task, or the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), to document wide-scope developmental outcomes. The school maintains profiles of all students based on narrative appraisal and work sampling, as well as performance on standardized academic measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is in the process of developing a protocol that allows the documentation of social and emotional and executive function outcomes. The school maintains profiles of all students based on narrative appraisal and work sampling, as well as performance on standardized academic measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school includes narrative appraisals of social and emotional development as part of its assessment and reporting protocols, but has no larger system for tracking wide-scope student outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only form of assessment is state-mandated tests. Results are reported without context. Minimal standards of proficiency drive instruction.
Ongoing, personalized qualitative assessment, in the form of observation and documentation, drives all instructional decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular, recorded observation is the basis of planning and assessment. The school uses an on-line record-keeping system to ensure that data are collected and managed effectively. Teachers make time daily to record observed activity within the environment. An observer's chair is visible in the environment. Teachers meet weekly as teams to discuss student progress, reflect collectively on challenges, and share potential solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular, recorded observation is the basis of planning and assessment. Some teachers use an on-line record-keeping system to ensure that data are collected and managed effectively. Teachers make time daily to record observed activity within the environment. An observer's chair is visible in the environment. Teachers meet occasionally as teams to discuss student progress, reflect collectively on challenges, and share potential solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some teachers make time daily to record observed activity with the environment, but there is no link to a larger system of data management. Some classrooms have an observer's chair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no evidence of ongoing, recorded observation. Teachers do not meet to reflect on student progress.
Assessments are delivered in the least obtrusive manner possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative and summative assessments are delivered to individual students during work periods. Tests are treated as Practical Life activities, with minimal emphasis or work disruption. Test preparation is limited to practice experiences designed to familiarize students with format and language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summative assessments are delivered during testing windows. Total test preparation constitutes no more than one week of student work time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative and summative assessments are delivered to the whole school/whole class during prescribed testing windows. Test preparation constitutes more than two weeks of student work time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing windows take over the entire school day, with work periods suspended, students grouped in grade-level cohorts, and assessments proctored by unfamiliar teachers. Preparing for tests drives the school's program.

continued

STANDARD	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY
As students mature, they are increasingly involved in monitoring their own progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning in the elementary level, students keep daily journals of their work. Teachers regularly confer with students to assist in the development of personal learning goals and to reflect on progress. Beginning in the elementary, students regularly participate in parent-teacher discussions of student progress. 	<p>Students keep work journals, but they are not regularly employed in the self-assessment process.</p> <p>Teachers sometimes confer with students to assist in the development of personal learning goals and to reflect on progress.</p>	<p>Students are given assigned "work plans" which they have little input in developing or reflecting on.</p> <p>Work plans require the teacher to "check-off" completed work rather than allowing students to manage their time and productivity.</p>	Students are disconnected from the assessment process, except to receive grades.

Teacher Reflective Practices Inventory (Accountability Plan Measure 1B)

K-6 Teacher Reflective Practice Inventory

Self-reflection provides an opportunity for you to think about the many parts of your Montessori practice, including your role as the guide, the prepared environment, and your instructional practices.

Using the Likert scale below, please select the number that best represents where you are in your Montessori practice.

*** Required**

1. Email address *

2. 1. Every object in my environment is chosen with regard to development of the child: there is nothing extraneous. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

It's not my strength yet. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ It's my Superpower!

3. 2. The environment is impeccably clean and tidy, and all materials are displayed in sequence from simple to complex. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

It's not my strength yet. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ It's my Superpower!

4. 3. Furniture is arranged to nurture concentration and to provide smooth flow. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

5. 4. There is a variety in shapes, colors, textures and materials in the objects in the environment--trays, containers, rugs, and a variety of arts and crafts on the walls and integrated in various areas of the classroom. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

6. 5. The children in my environment understand that the classroom belongs to them; they are fully oriented to the environment and show strong trust for one another and the adults. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

7. 6. There is an attitude of learning from mistakes and an acceptance that errors are a part of the learning process. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

8. 7. There are routines for cleaning and ordering the classroom, introducing more complex materials based on student interest and need, rotating language materials to enrich vocabulary development, and refreshing pictures/art on the walls and in culture folders. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

9. 8. I am direct, specific, and consistent in communicating expectations with regard to social interactions, care of the environment , and purposeful work. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

10. 9. I consistently use the environment, and the materials to provide the first level of support for children's development and I intervene directly only when this support is insufficient. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

11. 10. I am confident in my repertoire of lessons, and I consistently provide presentations with fluency, clarity and economy of movement. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

12. 11. My lesson planning is based on ongoing observation of the children; I take time every day to sit and observe students in the environment. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

13. 12. While engaging with individual children, I am aware of the general classroom and the children's activity. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

14. 13. I consistently identify student learning challenges early, and make necessary adaptations to my environment and/or presentations to meet the unique needs of individual students. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

15. 14. I have a reliable system for documenting ongoing observation of student work, and use that system to monitor student development as well as to communicate progress with parents, support staff, and, when needed, school/district officials. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

16. 15. I am highly sensitive to cultural differences and always appropriately respectful in communications with families. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

17. 16. I am proactive with respect to sharing student concerns and/or challenges with families. I make myself available for e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face conferences with families. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

18. 17. I approach each family with a spirit of empathetic inquiry, with the acceptance that parents want the best for their child. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

19. 18. I consider myself a child development expert, and am up-to-date on the latest research on the subject, including new insights on neuroscience and cognition and their relationship to Montessori theory and practice. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

20. 19. I strive to be fully present in every interaction--whether the other is a child, an adult or the environment. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

21. 20. I understand Maria Montessori's Cosmic vision and regard daily work with children and families as a contribution to the larger cosmic effort. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
It's not my strength yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's my Superpower!

22. 21. I continually strive to realize my own human potential, and I look toward the child for inspiration. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

It's not my strength yet. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ It's my Superpower!

23. 22. I am intentional about caring for my physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

It's not my strength yet. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ It's my Superpower!

Celebration of Learning Feedback Form (Accountability Plan Measure 3C)

COL Feedback Form

Please provide feedback on the presenter's Story of Self. Did it have a logical flow, meaningful insights and the student's voice present throughout?

- ☐ 1 = Story not ordered or fully developed
- ☐ 2 = Story needs improvement in organization and development; lacks student's voice
- ☐ 3 = Story has logical flow, is unique to the student; personal voice is evident
- ☐ 4 = Story is easy to follow; includes meaningful and complex insights, is infused with student's distinct voice throughout

Please provide feedback on the student's response to questions throughout the presentation.

- ☐ 1 = Does not respond or responds with "I don't know"
- ☐ 2 = Student makes an attempt at answering the questions but does not fully address the questions
- ☐ 3 = Student responds to questions with understanding and gives well reasoned answers
- ☐ 4 = Student engages with audience; displays openness; gives carefully thought out answers

Please provide feedback on the students Evidence of Learning. Were the examples of work integrated well into the story and did they make a strong connection to the Habits of Learning?

- ☐ 1 = No evidence of examples
- ☐ 2 = Examples are weak or do not strongly connect to story and/or Habits of Learning
- ☐ 3 = Examples are clearly developed and make strong connections to the story and/or Habits of Learning
- ☐ 4 = At least 5 examples are shared and discussed and make connections to story and/or Habits of Learning are complex and robust and

Please provide feedback on the student's comfort, poise, grace and eye contact with the audience

- ☐ 1 = Student's body language detracts from presentation (paces, fidgets, plays with paper/notes)
- ☐ 2 = Student appears comfortable at times but displays some distracting body language
- ☐ 3 = Student is comfortable before the audience and gestures when appropriate
- ☐ 4 = Student exudes confidence throughout the entire presentation and gestures enhance the presentation. Strong eye contact helps presenter connect to audience

Please provide feedback on the student's volume, cadence, tone, inflection

- ☐ 1 = Student speaks too quietly for audience to hear; student mumbles
- ☐ 2 = Student's voice is low and does not project to entire audience
- ☐ 3 = Student's voice is clear; audience members can hear presentation
- ☐ 4 = Student projects and uses variations of voice in a way that engages the audience