

Executive Summary

The mission of The Montessori School of Camden is to engage students to become peaceful citizens of the global community using the Montessori approach to nurture in them an enthusiasm for learning, resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility for their actions, and respect for themselves, others, and their environment.

With this mission statement, MSC is committed to the purpose and intent of the SC Charter Schools Act (Section 59-40-20). The Montessori Method encourages children to assume responsibility for their own education and choose their own work. Because of this they tend to engage in meaningful work with enthusiasm, thereby increasing their learning opportunities beyond those presented to them by directive teachers as requirements. Learning improves beyond that of traditional methods because students take individual responsibility for and become committed to their work. Montessori teachers learn in their training to be adaptable to a variety of learning styles, to observe children closely, and to develop original lessons to meet the needs of individual children, improving student learning.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Montessori Method was developed for at-risk children. While it evolved in the United States as private education for the economically-advantaged, it retains advantages for at-risk children because the classroom environment is such a stark and rich contrast from their homes, in comparison to their more economically-advantaged classmates. Recent research confirms that the Montessori Method narrows achievement gaps. (see, in particular, Lillard, Angeline et al., “Montessori Preschool Elevates and Equalizes Child Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study.”)

The Board, faculty, and concerned parents wanted to grow the school and open access to more families. After a failed attempt at obtaining a charter in 2015, the group recommitted itself to the project in the fall of 2017. Subcommittees were formed to study required aspects of the charter and chairs of each committee were selected or volunteered according to their talents. The faculty at the school has been instrumental in developing the charter application. One lead teacher is a member of the Charter Committee and has consulted his colleagues in the development of the academic program, the annual calendar, methods of assessment and recordkeeping, as well as professional aspects of being a member of a charter school community.

MSC is committed to developing not just the academic aspects of its students but also their character, and has created new methods to measure that growth. Montessori education can close existing achievement gaps between students in South Carolina and assist the predicted five-county catchment area school districts to reach a higher level of academic excellence.

The Montessori Method is both innovative and proven. While it is often seen as “different,” it has addressed the needs of all children—including those for whom traditional educational methods do not produce results—for over a century. Ironically, the methods Dr. Montessori employed conform uncannily to neurological discoveries made over the last twenty years. Her method is characterized by independent selection of work, uninterrupted periods of study, and multi-aged classrooms which allow children to follow their interests, to collaborate, and to share knowledge with their classmates. While offering a full academic curriculum, the true intent of a Montessori education is to encourage children to become highly motivated, independent, self-confident and self-disciplined, ensuring each child has the optimal opportunity to reach his or her full potential (see “Graphical Depictions of Montessori” in Appendix G, section 6), thus going far beyond the more strictly academic mission of area schools.

Educating the whole child has always been the foundation of the experience at the Montessori School of Camden (MSC). As a public charter school we will be able to offer the Montessori Method not to the privileged few, but to all children. MSC has existed since 1979, first as the early-childhood component of Joseph Kershaw Academy and since 1986 as an independent private 501(c)(3) corporation. While it has admirably served the children of families of means, it has never been able to serve the entire local community. This challenge has involved a long-term effort for the school with only limited success. As part of this effort over many years MSC has been an ABC provider and has offered need-based scholarships.

MSC will offer 3K through grade 6 in the 2018-19 school year, and add a Middle School program beginning in 2019. MSC will add a third Primary (3K to 5K) classroom in 2018 and add classrooms in 3-year age groups until the school consists of four Primary classes, four Lower Elementary (grades 1-3), four Upper Elementary (grades 4-6) classes and two Middle School classes. Beginning with 100 children, at full capacity the school will serve 280 children, with two teachers per class and average student-to-faculty ratio of 12 to one. As depicted in Appendix V, the growth of the school will be measured over the first nine years. Growth will be 44 percent in the first year, slowing to 29 percent or less in years 2-5, after which it will not exceed 11 percent. This growth plan permits the school to capitalize on the experience of older children in each classroom, encouraging not only their leadership skills but also giving newly accessed children the role models of experienced Montessori veterans. This is essential to maintaining an authentic Montessori environment during the conversion and growth years. It will also allow new teachers to have the same benefit of a mature, experienced and certified faculty to guide them.

MSC will operate a year-round calendar, consisting of four equal quarters with optional-for-fee “intersessions” of varying lengths in between. These intersessions will follow the Montessori philosophy of education but emphasize a variety of themes according to student needs, parent interest, and faculty expertise. This schedule also shortens the gaps between academic periods (the traditional long summer), increasing the degree of retention between school sessions.

Two teachers per classroom permits a bilingual environment. Currently the private establishment offers bilingual English-Spanish classrooms. With expansion the school will add an English-Mandarin track, which parents can request upon admission of their child.

The Montessori Method does not rely exclusively on the indoor classroom, but encourages the exploration of the outdoor environment as well. Older students will experience a Land Laboratory as well as a nearby horse farm—a reflection of the culture in our community.

Our target area consists of five Midlands counties with no public Montessori programs. While we anticipate that most children will come from Kershaw County, we have always educated children from the six surrounding counties as well. Of these, only Richland County offers a Montessori curriculum to the public, and we anticipate some interest, particularly from Lee County and Sumter County, which are ranked #62 and #79—near the bottom—of the 82 school districts in the state (based on test scores supplied by SCDE). As a result, we have expanded our media efforts to all surrounding counties. As shown in Appendix E, MSC currently meets the required racial balance described in Title 59, paragraph 40-210.

Children from the 5-county area clearly will benefit from access to a Montessori program. Many who wish it for their children cannot afford it. Of the post-visit surveys of prospective parents ninety percent indicate that they would enroll their child if they could have afforded it. Through numerous media we have determined that we will be unable to meet the demand from the very beginning; to date, parents of 65 children have indicated they would like to apply for the 31 spaces available (See Appendix C).

Paragraph I-1. Evidence of Need and Community Support

Support for charter - In preparation for charter status we have worked to determine the demand for a public Montessori option. Currently no public Montessori or other differentiated instruction options are available in Kershaw County; and no Montessori (public or private) options exist in surrounding Lee, Sumter, Fairfield, or Chesterfield Counties. Since 2009 MSC has conducted a telephone survey of every parent who toured the school. Of these, 97 percent described the school in highly favorable terms, but only 23 percent enrolled; of the remainder, 10 percent did not enroll because of situational changes, 29 percent specifically stated they could not afford the tuition, and the remainder (35 percent) can be assumed to have had financial or other obstacles. This gave us an early indicator of a need we were unable to fill. For the previous MSC charter application we received letters from community parents for 101 children for 57 projected spaces. A recent survey of current MSC families resulted in 91% indicating intent to enroll their children at MSC. Additionally, 65 families have expressed interest in the 31 available spaces for the 1st school year (2018-19). See Appendix C for a table documenting interest by grade level for the 2018-19 year of operation. These data speak to a need in the community.

Recruitment and Marketing – Charter Committee members have been active in the community gaining support for the charter initiative. Outreach includes feature articles in two newspapers (including a large front-page article in the *Camden Chronicle-Independent*), two radio interviews, three public speeches, information packets at local businesses, and information booths at the public library. Flyers, business cards and a tri-fold information document have been placed at local businesses, libraries, community free clinic, Jackson Teen Center, post offices, ministerial alliances extending to all catchment area counties, MOPS, Shaw AFB (Sumter County), Ft. Jackson (Richland County), etc. In addition, MSC will remain a participant in the

ABC program. This targeted approach will ensure the news of and an understanding of the charter Montessori school reaches the diverse groups that live in our area. In addition, a press release has been distributed to all local newspapers. MSC also has a Facebook page devoted to the MSC Charter Initiative with 340 likes. Recent posts include research studies documenting how Montessori levels the playing field for all socio-economic levels

(<http://bigthink.com/design-for-good/this-education-strategy-may-break-the-cycle-of-poverty>) and Montessori closes the Achievement Gap (https://www.montessoripublic.org/2017/11/new-study-public-montessori-raises-achievement-closes-gaps/?ct=t%28RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29This).

The largest recent event that highlighted MSC in the community was the 1st annual Irish Fest Camden held on Saturday, March 4, 2017. This was a community event created by MSC primarily for the purpose of raising monies to be used for scholarships awarded to students that would not otherwise be able to attend MSC for the 2017-18 school year. Admission was only \$10 to enable all populations to attend. Over 1600 persons attended, from across the Midlands raising \$18,000 for MSC scholarships. The event was promoted through business and organizational sponsorships, flyers, a Facebook page devoted to the Irish Fest, press releases, banners and a billboard along Two Notch Road in the Columbia-Sparkleberry area. At the festival MSC featured a Montessori information tent. Plans are underway for a larger event to be held on Saturday, March 3, 2018. The MSC tent will provide visitors a sample view into a Montessori classroom with student registration applications for the 2018-19 school year.

Marketing plans also include additional press releases and presentations at the 3 largest employers in Kershaw County, United Way, Kershaw County Health Department, churches and

other community organizations. These presentations will focus on the Montessori education model and MSC availability as a public charter school.

It is our expectation that with this plan we will reach almost everyone in the community and surrounding areas to ensure a diverse student body.

Student population outreach – The current student families have been informed about the charter application with a flyer sent home with the students, a blog on the MSC website, a committee organizational meeting and a Q&A session prior to the MSC Campus Crawl evening event. These activities resulted in many Charter Committee assignments. An email with a survey regarding registration and questions was also sent to all MSC families. 91% of the families have indicated intent to enroll their children at the MSC Montessori charter school.

Community members – Kershaw County officials are indicating overwhelming support of MSC as a charter school. MSC has received letters of support from many area leaders, including Kershaw County Council Chairman Julian Burns, Camden Mayor Alfred Mae Drakeford, Elgin Mayor Melissa Emmons, and Superintendent of Kershaw County Schools Dr. Frank Morgan. In addition, we have received letters of support from two of the 3 largest employers in Kershaw County – Kershaw Health (general medical & surgical facility) and the Kershaw County School District while the third employer has a no-endorsement policy. Officials at KershawHealth, the public library and other industries are assisting the committee in arranging on-site presentation and employee newsletter articles about the Montessori model and MSC as a charter public school.

Build community demand – MSC has previously applied to be a public charter school. Each of the previous applications documented support for a public-school choice for the community.

Currently there is no public school choice within Kershaw County. Families have and are enrolling their children in schools outside of Kershaw County in order to have a choice in education. For the 2015 application MSC received letters from community parents for 101 children for 57 projected spaces. Currently 65 families have expressed interest in enrolling their children for the 31 available spaces. The climate in the community remains the same.

Parent engagement – Parent involvement and support for the Montessori Method has always been an important component to MSC. A weekly blog on the MSC website is written by members of the staff, parents and the headmaster to continue to educate families regarding the benefits of the Montessori Method. Additionally, monthly parent workshops are held which inform parents about the Montessori learning materials. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) was founded in 1998. PAC has played an important role in planning and hosting many events throughout the school year, including fundraising events, potluck picnics, spirit nights at local restaurants, campus clean-up days, Continent Festival days, International Day, Grandparents' Day, Campus Crawl, book fair and teacher appreciation week. It serves as a vehicle for communication between Classroom Directors and the PAC Representative for each classroom, and for the PAC President with the Headmaster. Some of these activities are social functions while others are associated with learning activities. It is expected that the monthly PAC meetings, weekly blog, parent workshops, email, website calendar postings and student take-home flyer communications will continue as they currently function.

During the 2017 summer program weeks parents and other community members engaged with the students in art, cooking and construction activities.

In addition parents provide transportation and chaperone for classroom field trips. The current qualification process for parents filling these roles will be enhanced to comply with the SC Department of Education guidelines.

Community Organization Partnerships – MSC partners with the Kershaw County Recreation Department to provide swim activities at the community pool. MSC hosts internships and work-study with ATEC (Applied Technology Education Campus of Kershaw County Schools) and the Early Childhood Program at Central Carolina Technical College, allowing students choosing the Early Childhood Education classes to have a window on the Montessori educational method and consider it as a career path.

The MSC Upper Elementary classroom has also partnered with the United Way of Kershaw County with participation in the annual Chili Cook-off community awareness event.

Paragraph I-2. Curriculum and Instructional Model

Montessori is a presence in over 500 U.S. public schools, including neighborhood, magnet, and charter schools. Recent opening of charter Montessori schools on the coast, the conversion of five elementary schools in Charleston County to Montessori, and the addition of a Montessori middle school program in Richland County give evidence of significant growing interest in South Carolina. Montessori is approved as a method of education by the South Carolina Department of Education and its outcomes meet or exceed the state standards. In addition to being an approved method of education by the South Carolina Department of Education, the Montessori Method already works to instill each of the skills included in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. The South Carolina Department of Education recognizes a teaching certificate from an institution accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), which is empowered by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit Montessori teacher education programs.

A growing body of well-designed research comparing Montessori students to those in traditional schools suggests that in academic subjects Montessori students perform as well as or better than their non-Montessori peers. Numerous studies have correlated Montessori lessons to national standards, and MSC will have processes and procedures in place to align with SC state adopted standards. Transparent Classroom, online Montessori Recordkeeping software that MSC will adopt as a charter school, has the ability to correlate Montessori lessons at all levels to State Standards as one of its many features. In addition to the existing research, The Riley Institute at Furman University has just completed a five-year study in 2017 that provides even further clarity to the effectiveness of the Montessori Method. The results of the study conclude that students in public school Montessori classrooms across the state of South Carolina are faring well, as

compared to similar non-Montessori public school students. The study examined academic, behavioral, and affective outcomes.

These studies support the assertion that Montessori lessons meet or exceed the standards. The Montessori teacher development courses emphasize development of personalized Montessori-style lessons to meet the needs of any child. *This training makes it possible for teachers to fill in small gaps that exist between existing materials and South Carolina State Standards, and to adapt automatically when these standards are updated.* These data and studies can be reviewed in the bibliography at Section 1 of Appendix G.

Upon opening as a charter school, MSC will offer grades 3K through 6, with 100 students. In year two it will add 7th grade and year three 8th grade, and at full build out will have 280 students grouped into four classes each of Primary (3K-5K, 96 students), Lower Elementary (grades 1-3, 88 students), and Upper Elementary (grades 4-6, 64 students), as well as two classes of Middle School students (grades 7 and 8, 32 students). (see Appendix V).

MSC will adopt a year-round school model (see Appendix F) consisting of four 9-week quarters separated by four “Intersessions.” The total number of school days will be 180. The fee-based Intersessions will offer special-focus subjects according to the interests of students while maintaining the traditional Montessori Method. This calendar eliminates the long summer that results in loss of knowledge, as well as allowing students who have fallen behind an opportunity to continue their studies. Although the school will charge a weekly fee for Intersession, parents of limited financial means whose children have been identified as needing additional work will not be charged.

Subjects of Instruction for Lower and Upper Elementary: Students will achieve mastery in the following areas of instruction: language (includes reading, writing, poetry, spelling, creative

writing, grammar, research, memory games, word study, sentence analysis, and library skills); science (includes biology, botany, astronomy, physical science, ecology, geology, zoology, anatomy, and earth science); mathematics (includes systems of numeration, algebra, fractions, geometry, memorization of facts, decimal systems, basic operations, measurement, and problem solving); and cultural studies (includes geography, history, sciences, music, art, art history, and drama). Additionally, a Spanish or Mandarin enrichment component will be included in all classrooms. Either the assistant teachers or lead teachers will be native speakers in Spanish or Mandarin, and will speak primarily their mother tongue to the students. “Going out” also plays an important role in the Elementary Program, where the children themselves plan field trips based on their interests.

Transparent Classroom Display – Math Lessons

15:12

transparentclassroom.com

The Montessori School of Camden

Classroom Placement Applications Sessions **Standards** Elementary Lessons 4th Grade

CCSS Math

DOWNLOAD

This page shows the standards for CCSS Math, and the lessons they map to within Transparent Classroom.

Make sure you're looking at the correct lesson set on the top right corner and then you can adjust the mappings.

Operations & Algebraic Thinking

Use the four operations with whole numbers to solve problems.

4.OA.A.1 Interpret a multiplication equation as a comparison, e.g., interpret $35 = 5 \times 7$ as a statement that 35 is 5 times as many as 7 and 7 times as many as 5. Represent verbal statements of multiplicative comparisons as multiplication equations.

- Large bead frame: Reading numbers
- Chequer board: Reading numbers – single to multi-digit
- Large bead frame: Short multiplication
- Bank game: Multiplication by 1-digit multiplier
- Further investigation of multiples using the bead bars
- Concept and language of multiple/common multiple with short chains
- Further investigation with multiples-of-numbers paper
- Further investigation of multiples using tables A & B
- Concept, language and investigation of common multiple

4.OA.A.2 Multiply or divide to solve word problems involving multiplicative comparison, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem, distinguishing multiplicative comparison from additive comparison.¹

- Word problems: Solving for distance (sensorial, arithmetic, algebraic)
- Word problems: Solving for interest (sensorial, arithmetic, algebraic)
- Distributive law: Multiplication of a sum by a sum
- Word problems: Solving for time (sensorial, arithmetic, algebraic)
- Commutative law

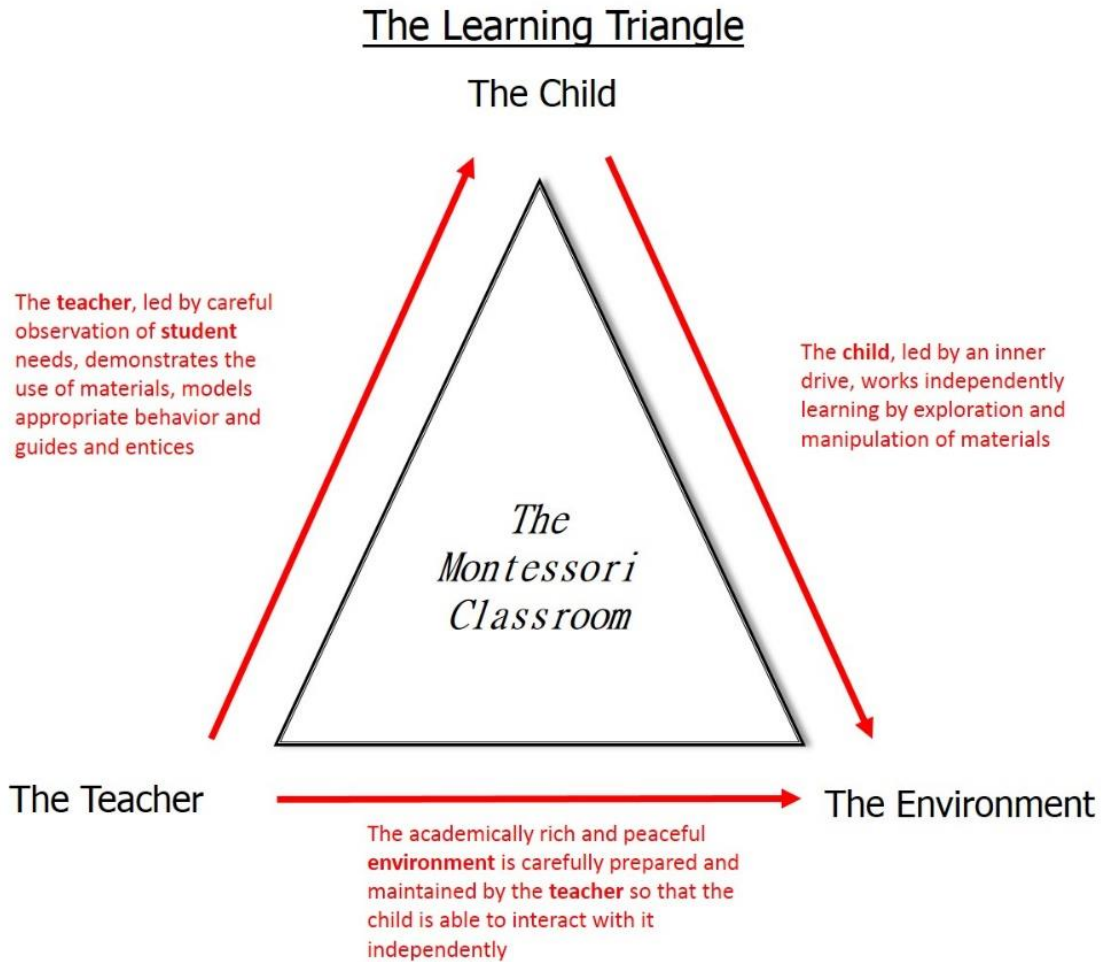
(see also Transparent Classroom Display – Math Lessons in Appendix G)

Key components of MSC's Educational Program:

The academic curriculum supports the mission statement of the school. The environment is especially conducive to developing the character we wish to see in children: enthusiasm for learning, resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility for their actions, and respect for themselves, others, and their environment to help them become peaceful citizens of the global community. The classroom structure and routine support the environment, and the materials—all of which address South Carolina State Standards—are the vehicle by which children develop their own character.

The Environment:

- a. Mixed-aged classrooms are essential. These promote collaboration as opposed to competition, and allow children to move through the curriculum at their own pace.
- b. Each MSC classroom features a meticulously-prepared environment, with classroom materials organized in such a way that children can choose their work freely. A wide variety of work is made available to match an equally wide variety of interest and ability levels among students in each class. Classroom set up invites inquiry and discovery. Classrooms at MSC continuously change to meet students' needs. (See Appendix G for illustrations of Montessori materials.)
- c. Montessori materials are carefully designed to lead a student through sequences of lessons in each academic discipline, with each step serving as preparatory for the next lesson. (See graphic depiction "The 3-6 Program" in Appendix G.)
- d. Children, not teachers, are the focus at MSC. Montessori teachers are especially capable of "following the child," adjusting strategies and timetables according to the needs of individual students. Children receive lessons based on their readiness for the lesson, not on their age. Each child follows his or her educational path based on individual interest and ability level, in the context of South Carolina State Standards.
- e. MSC features a warm and relaxed classroom atmosphere. The Montessori environment is meant to feel more like home than school. Significant attention is paid to creating a safe, secure, orderly environment where children feel in control of their own daily routines, are free to work alone or together, and work in partnership with their teachers who are more like mentors or coaches than authority figures.



- f. Daily schedules at MSC are flexible (See Appendix F). In collaboration with the teacher, students develop their weekly work plans, which they will complete by the end of the week. While the school day begins at 8 AM and ends at 3 PM for all levels, the duration of the “work cycle” and other work in core subjects varies. Primary students devote 6 hours to core subjects per day (30 hours per week). Lower Elementary devote 5 hours and 40 minutes to core subjects per day (28 hours and 20 minutes per week). Upper Elementary devote 5 and ½ hours to core subjects per day (27 ½ hours per week). Middle School devote 5 ¼ hours to core subjects per day (26 ¼ hours per week). Students are expected to schedule their own work each day, which instills time management skills and accountability early in their

development. This method teaches that education is enjoyable, fosters a love for life-long learning and produces responsible, independent adults.

- g. Continuous and careful observation and evaluation of the students' progress allows MSC teachers to address the needs of struggling students consistently.
- h. Children and adults at MSC work together as a cooperative group. Much like in a family, everyone works together to help meet the collective needs of the group. Older students in a Montessori classroom help with the care of the physical environment as well as the care of the younger children. Through modeling and teaching what they have learned, knowledge and good social skills are reinforced in the older children.

Character Development:

- i. Interactions among students at MSC are cooperative and collaborative, rather than competitive. Montessori teachers are trained not to compare students and the working relationship among classmates is collegial and collaborative. It is not unusual for children in a class to celebrate when a peer "gets" a work for the first time or masters a new material.
- j. Individual development and progress is a constant focus in the classroom. While each student is an important part of the community of learners, each student is treated as a unique person. MSC teachers carefully monitor and track each student's development, and gently guide each student to take the next step as he or she demonstrates readiness.
- k. Students gain self-confidence in their abilities. Teachers at MSC break lessons down into logical segments. Each new task is presented with precise direction and clear demonstrations. Tasks are typically presented in a logical sequence, so that each new task builds on a task children have already mastered. As a result of clear, simple instructions and logically

sequenced activities, student confusion and uncertainty are minimized, and students' confidence in their abilities to learn continuously increase.

- l. Students learn to be good stewards of the environment and to accept individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.
- m. Universal values are taught. Beyond teaching children polite behavior, MSC instills in each child basic universal values including self-respect, acceptance of the uniqueness and dignity of each person, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, honor, individual responsibility, and courage to speak from the heart. Because most children will have enrolled at age 3, Montessori schools are highly successful in this work.
- n. Social responsibility is developed through community outreach programs allowing children and adults to make meaningful differences in the lives of others.

Academic Materials:

- o. Learning activities are hands-on. Maria Montessori stated, "Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment." Whenever possible, MSC students have direct, personal hands-on contact with either real things under study or with concrete models.
- p. Learning activities at MSC are self-correcting. The specially designed materials with which they work have control of error built in. Students receive immediate feedback on their progress.
- q. Learning activities are spontaneous. Learning activities at MSC involve the most freedom possible within reasonable and safe limits.
- r. The curriculum is international in heritage, focus, and perspective. Students representing diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds are enthusiastically welcomed at MSC.

The curriculum consciously promotes a global perspective. The current teaching faculty of 13 includes teachers from 5 foreign countries (Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, and Guyana), and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

- s. The majority of Montessori lessons are presented within the framework of the three-period lesson as described by Maria Montessori. The first period involves the teacher showing the material to the student or demonstrating an activity. In the second period, the child repeats the demonstration and in the third, the child demonstrates understanding of the concept. As this model is used for all age groupings, the way in which the child demonstrates understanding varies; however, across all levels, this method of presenting material and observing the child provide essential feedback to the teacher regarding student ability. This method of instruction combined with separate and deliberate observation serve as the primary formative assessment strategies.

Adaptations to Meet the Needs of All Students:

MSC is dedicated to meeting the needs of all students, including those above or below grade level, ELLs, Gifted and Talented students, students with special needs, and at-risk students. MSC will use the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach shown in Attachment 10 of Appendix G, providing high quality instruction, guidance, and assessments for all students that measure growth as well as compares scores to grade level norms. As they are identified as not making adequate progress and enter the second tier of the RTI process, teachers will work with struggling students in class employing a variety of intervention strategies to help students work to their potential, including the time-honored approach of using alternative materials already available in the classroom or creating individual lessons to meet the learning style of each child.

MSC will employ a Special Education Coordination who will assist in the process and offer intervention assistance. When families and schools work together, student outcomes are enhanced; therefore, as students enter the second tier or the RTI process, parents will be notified and invited to engage in the process. If more intensive and specialized instruction is needed, students will enter Tier 3. If at any point during the RTI process a teacher or parent refers a student for assessment, the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will meet for assessment and, if necessary, develop an IEP. The MDT will follow the IEP process and provide students with appropriate services as defined by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA). All students in grade 2 will be given the Iowa Assessment (IA) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in order to identify and provide appropriate services to gifted and talented students. The Montessori Method already allows for multi-age environments and differentiated instruction to respond to individual needs; however, all elementary and middle school teachers will acquire the gifted and talented teaching credential at the level required as established by the SCDE within the first year. As MSC is a bilingual environment and most children will be age 3 upon admission, we do not envision special classes for ELLs will be necessary, but will follow all state, federal, and charter laws regarding ELL services. MSC will have at least one teacher certified in ELL instruction by July 2018 and will contract with a translation organization, as necessary.

Guidelines for Montessori in the Public School Sector:

In addition to incorporating each of these essential elements identified as part and parcel of any authentic Montessori program, MSC will also align its curricular and administrative strategies with a standards document designed for public Montessori schools. Aptly called

“Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public School Sector,” this document has been agreed upon by the major Montessori organizations in the United States, namely: American Montessori International - United States (AMI/USA), American Montessori Society (AMS), the North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA) and Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI, of which MSC is a member). It provides guidelines for Montessori teachers, administration, recruitment and parent education, curriculum/environment, assessment, and professional development (see Bibliography at Appendix G).

Middle School Educational Program:

Adolescents operate at a crucial stage in developing the social skills necessary to acquire a true capacity for compassion, empathy and understanding – the foundation for peaceful dialogue and cooperation that is the vision of Montessori. Nonetheless, very few Montessori secondary programs exist—let alone public programs. No secondary Montessori program exists within Kershaw County; the nearest is W. G. Sanders Middle School in Richland County, 30 miles from Camden—which operates several Montessori classrooms in an otherwise traditional school environment.

The Montessori School of Camden Middle School Program represents an integration of South Carolina State Standards and educational requirements, the most current research on the developmental needs of adolescents, the Montessori approach to education, research-based learning theory and teaching methods, and the predictions of the skills needed to lead a productive life of continuous learning and cooperation. MSC seeks to provide the environment and experience that allows student to flourish academically to the point of exceeding state

standards of academic achievement; however, **our overarching goal as educators is to help our students develop into independent, responsible, critical, and compassionate individuals.**

This coincides with Maria Montessori’s vision for education as a system that allows students to access the world physically, and in turn, to develop into charitable stewards of their environment and community.

MSC “Land Lab” will be a large community garden run by Middle School students. This will serve as a laboratory where all MSC students can conduct scientific research on the natural world. Students will learn organic farming techniques and will practice recycling organic waste, water and power in order to create a self-sustaining source of food for their community. All food produced can be enjoyed by the entire school community in the form of a school picnic, sold as a product in a class business, or donated to a local food shelter.

The MSC Middle School Curriculum must be understood as a multi-dimensional system of education that takes into account the essential nature of the adolescent student, the integrated nature of knowledge, and the student’s evolution over the two-year course of study. The course is based upon existing, successful Montessori middle school programs. To account for the special nature of the adolescent, MSC envisions a series of projects spanning the school year. Each project will repeat a cycle of preparation, execution, and reflection. The execution phase will usually take place off campus.

Adolescents demand to know the relevance of anything expected of them. An integrated curriculum permits linking any subject the adolescent finds interesting to all other subjects. Since history is the recorded story of man, history is the most logical subject to serve as the hub for the array of knowledge. Everything from the typical focus of history—economic, political, military, art, or science—to a much broader net including sports, literature, fashion design, or engineering

(just to name a few) can link mathematics to art or music, architecture to astronomy, or biology to philosophy. Each project will include an array of components designed not only to increase the knowledge of the student, but also to demonstrate the connectedness of all knowledge. In the MSC middle school curriculum, the projects across each school year will be organized sequentially, beginning with earliest times in the fall and ending with the modern era in the spring.

The curriculum is designed to span two school years without repeating information. To accomplish this, the students will design three projects per cycle under staff supervision, using a different historical scenario for each. The staff will ensure that each of the projects cross-reference State Standards. While the students embark on an investigation using a different scenario from the previous or following school year, the basic lessons will be the same. Since the age, experience, and intellectual preparation of the students vary widely in a two-year age span of students in the same class, the tasks required during each project must be echeloned accordingly. While the whole group will work on a single project, components of it must be applicable to and challenging for typical seventh or eighth grade students as well as those academically advanced. Curricula variations would, naturally, be dependent upon the staff members hired and the classroom chemistry.

As a result, the cycles within each school year address the same topics found in traditional schools: Math (pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and pre-calculus); Natural World (the study of science and the natural universe); Social World (the nature and history of human civilization); South Carolina State History; Language (grammar, literature, poetry, study of conventions); as well as either Spanish or Mandarin.

The curriculum highlights segments of study that focus on a particular period in history relating all disciplines in proportion to their importance for a particular segment. Physical education, foreign language, team sports, and music will run uninterrupted throughout the year. Service projects and Land Lab occur on a schedule independent of other activities. The Middle School students will run a class business, bringing academic subjects into play in a practical way as they use their knowledge of currency, economy, marketing, and human incentive to earn support for a cause of their choice.

Additionally, MSC Middle School teachers will create a pool of course electives based on background education and experience, and students will vote for the electives that should be available. Students will also be offered a daily period of reading or journal writing, as well as “Community Meeting” time, a highly-organized, student-run meeting which may involve physical exercise, mental challenges, music listening and study, as well as collaborating with teachers to establish community rules and boundaries. See Appendix F for Middle School Daily Schedule and Academic Calendar.

Parent Education

Parent education is vital in a school that offers a curriculum much different from the one their parents experienced, both for recruitment and retention. Parents of new students receive a pre-enrollment orientation. Upon enrollment, MSC provides parents with a copy of Aline Wolf’s, “A Parent’s Guide to the Montessori Classroom,” and at the beginning of the second year they receive Deede Stephenson’s, “The Pink What?” The Headmaster holds Parent Education Workshops for parents and prospective parents to learn about the Montessori education their children are receiving. These texts and workshops are the basis for providing parents an

understanding of the elements essential to a Montessori program. Since the workshops began in 2008, 123 parents have taken at least one workshop and 50 parents have completed the workshop series (either the 4-workshop series prior to 2013 or the 6-workshop series since then). These parents also received an IGS (Institute for Guided Studies) certificate attesting to their participation. Some parents have continued to attend additional workshops even after they received their certificates. Weekly blogs written by all lead teachers and the Headmaster connect activities of the children to Montessori theory to assist parent understanding of their children's experience. The full parent education program from MSC's Policy and Procedure Manual can be found in Section 7 of Appendix G.

Parental involvement has always been an important component to MSC. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) was founded in 1998. Since then it has played an important role in planning and hosting many special events throughout the school year, including the fundraising Irish Fest Camden (co-sponsored by the City of Camden), potluck picnics, continent festivals, spirit nights at local restaurants, campus clean-up, International Day, Grandparents' Day, Campus Crawl, book fair, and teacher appreciation week. Our students also participate in the school play and talent show.

Professional Development

Professional development has been an integral component of the history of MSC. The oldest Montessori teacher education program in South Carolina (the Institute for Guided Studies—IGS) has operated at MSC since March of 1979. While it is independent of the school, we have kept a close relationship with it precisely because Montessori teachers must be trained properly in order to offer a high-fidelity Montessori environment. Every teacher at MSC is trained at the

correct level. We owe our recognition as the only Montessori program in South Carolina—public or private—that has been accredited by a professional Montessori society, to this effort.

In addition to the essential basic Montessori preparation, our faculty is required to accumulate 20 hours of professional development each year. Classroom Directors attend at least one Montessori conference every year (hosted by our professional society, Montessori Educational Programs International—MEPI, earning approximately 12 hours credit). This conference is listed on the school calendar, in February during an Intersession, and funded in the budget. It provides refresher workshops as well as new instructional methods in all curriculum areas. Having analyzed data from academic assessments and faculty-developed measurement tools so as to identify trends or areas of concern, the Director of Education guides faculty choices during this and other conferences. She will use the information obtained from student outcomes to select professional development and training opportunities appropriate to the needs of the faculty and the students. MSC faculty members participate in monthly “Support Meetings” during which the Director of Education can address any needs or concerns of the faculty that arise. At the beginning of each school year the faculty also holds 4 hours of in-service training for assistant teachers and substitutes and conducts health and safety training for all faculty as required. Classroom Directors are relieved weekly for planning periods either by an administrator or another staff member. This year we have also budgeted a floater who may assist.

Several members of the faculty have become certified (among fewer than 100 world-wide) to use the “Developmental Environmental Rating Scale,” (DERS) a classroom assessment tool that evaluates in great detail the developmental appropriateness of the classroom during a one-hour observation. The results include a narrative assessing the adults, children, and the classroom environment and give the Classroom Director and Director of Education important feedback

upon which to develop professional development plans. The floater will take the place of our certified DERS evaluators frequently during the year.

Overseeing the professional development needs of the faculty is the Director of Education. She not only organizes the attendance at major conferences, and basic teacher preparation, she oversees in-service training and works with teachers who have additional training needs in all areas to get the qualifications they need.

We intend to hire additional teachers in the first year and enroll them in the IGS Secondary I course, so that when the Middle School Program begins in year 2 they will have completed their coursework and have only their internship remaining to receive their certification (to be completed by May 2020).

We have identified a PowerSchool person and will be interviewing Special Needs Coordinators in the coming weeks. Special training for these positions will be provided by the Charter Institute at Erskine.

Paragraph I-3. Serving Students with Special Needs

As mandated by federal and state laws MSC must adhere to policies and procedures for providing instructional and support services for students within the general education setting and students who require special education services. MSC will follow a tiered approach to support students experiencing difficulty in the academic setting. MSC is responsible for ensuring that all children with exceptionalities are receiving a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in their least restrictive environment (LRE). The Charter Institute at Erskine will monitor and supervise the Charter School's compliance with IDEA and other special education procedures and regulations based on guidelines from the state and federal regulations.

MSC will not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. Our special needs students will be given access to a free and appropriate public education and related educational services. The school has never and does not anticipate offering any non-academic extracurricular activities that would exclude students with disabilities.

Federal Public Law 108-446 (2004) and Chapter 33 of Code of Law of South Carolina 1976: Title 59 (Sections 59-33-10 through 59-33-110) will govern. Students who qualify will have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will specify any special circumstances (equipment, supervision, vehicle type, etc.) that are needed to meet the student's needs.

MSC anticipates serving approximately a 10-15% population of students with disabilities. The school will initially employ one part-time Special Education Coordinator. Interviews for this position will begin in January 2018. The school will contract a school psychologist through an outside agency, as needed, for psychological testing. The school based Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) will consist of parents, special education teacher, regular education teacher appropriate

for the child's educational level, school psychologist, speech language pathologist, as needed, and related services representatives, as defined by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004 (IDEA).

This tiered process will begin once the concerns about the student have been addressed by the MDT as outlined above. For initial intervention meetings and strategies, a school psychologist is not required for the multidisciplinary team. Intervention strategies should be implemented in the classroom setting and revisited to provide opportunity for improvement on the part of the child before it is determined that testing for special education services is needed. At the time that it is determined that special education testing is needed, each professional is responsible for their area of knowledge with regards to the assessment of special education services as well as the development and implementation of IEPs in accordance with state and federal guidelines as referenced in IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and or Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as warranted. Students who qualify for an IEP or 504 will be provided appropriate accommodations such as extended time, frequent breaks, and alternative methods of inputting responses, as necessary, for all assessments. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed against alternative achievement standards as they are unable to participate in the general assessment program even with appropriate accommodations will be assessed using statewide alternative assessments including South Carolina Alternative Assessment (SC-Alt) and South Carolina National Center and State Collaborative (SC-NCSC).

MSC supports an inclusion model of Special Education services. Montessori philosophy allows for each child to work and develop according to his/her own pattern of development, and multi-age classrooms allow for an environment inherently suited for diverse learners. As students

exhibit the need for academic support beyond all that is provided within the regular classroom, the multidisciplinary team will convene and determine if testing for special education services is warranted. Should the LRE of a student not permit attendance in a Montessori classroom, arrangements may be made for that child at the school.

The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting will be organized based on an initial report from the teacher. A request for evaluation made by a parent supersedes the intervention process and an evaluation for special education services must be conducted. Otherwise, an initial assessment will be made by the Special Education Coordinator. The MDT will meet to discuss the results of this assessment, teacher input, and develop intervention strategies in the identified areas of deficits to be implemented over a specific length of time. This Response to Intervention (RTI) is mandated by IDEA to allow the child the opportunity to receive and respond to academic interventions developed by their MDT prior to testing for special education services or labeling the student as disabled. The MDT will meet after the allotted time for use of the interventions has expired to determine if the child has made more progress and needs more time with the interventions. If the child has made no progress or has continued to regress, assessment for the need of special education services should be conducted.

At this time, the MDT will identify and understand the need for testing and the eligibility for Special Education services as well as to ensure no misidentification due to students qualifying for ELL services or other existing conditions previously unidentified such as a new medical diagnosis or environmental change. Once testing has been completed, an Individualized Education Plan meeting will be held to determine eligibility for special education services, and if needed, create specific, measurable annual goals based on a child's present levels of performance. These goals remain a point of focus throughout the school year as the Special

Education team works with the regular education teachers, related arts teachers, resource teachers, student and parents, as well as the headmaster, to help each child not only realize IEP goals but also to be a successful member within their classroom community. IEPs will be evaluated and updated annually, with parents, student, general education teachers, and special education teachers present to provide input, or more often, as necessary. MSC will contract with a Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, and Physical Therapist to provide necessary services identified during the initial IEP meeting. Arrangements may be made for additional conditions pursuant to Section 504. Parents will be notified of annual meetings at least ten days prior, and the Special Education Coordinator will review the IEP with classroom teachers to ensure compliance.

As previously stated, to address students' needs in the classroom without entering the child into the special education program, a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach may be more appropriate. The MSC RTI emphasizes:

- *High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction.*
- *Ongoing student assessment.*
- *Multi-tiered instruction.*
- *Parent involvement.*

These elements are integral to an authentic Montessori environment. In addition, every Montessori classroom features a Peace Corner that encourages students to resolve conflicts or simply to have "personal space" and the Peace Curriculum used by the school assists students with behavioral issues to become more fully integrated into their classroom community.

Qualifying students with medical, behavioral, and or and attention issues may have access to a 504 plan as established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, outlining how a child's specific needs will be met with accommodations, modifications and other services. 504 Plans do not provide the same provisions as an IEP and are often used for medical diagnoses and conditions, i.e., the need for an oxygen tank at school for respiratory issues, the use of an elevator because of an orthopedic issue, and other conditions which are not academic related although some of the provisions provided might affect the classroom setting. Special education testing is not necessary for the development of a 504 plan.

MSC does not envision the need for special classes for ELL students. The bulk of children will be age 3 upon admission, they will have two years of exposure to an English immersion environment prior to the beginning and during their kindergarten year (when ELL accommodations will need to be made). These are ages that Dr. Montessori referred to as a "sensitive period" for language. Should an ELL child be admitted by lottery after the kindergarten age (5), the Special Education Coordinator will follow all state, federal, and charter laws to assess the student and determine the Performance Level in order to apply the appropriate adjustments to the student's learning environment. MSC will select at least one teacher to become certified in ELL before July 2018. Children who have both a learning disability and have limited English mastery because a different language is spoken at home will not be coded "ELL Mainstream," or "Exited," until they meet the same criteria for these codes as all other LEP students.

The choice of a year-round model will limit the loss of language. Instead of a long summer in an environment that may be limited in exposure to English, children will have shorter "intersession" periods. MSC is already a bilingual environment with native speakers of Spanish

at the Primary (ages 3-6) level and Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) level. Children coming from the most prominent foreign language group will find adaptation to English much easier than if no one in the classroom spoke their native tongue.

Every three years MSC will request parental consent to conduct a three-year reevaluation or, to avoid over-testing, the MDT may recommend that the evaluation information is sufficient to determine if the child continues to be eligible for special education services and the current information is sufficient to write an appropriate IEP. In that case, the MDT may recommend that no additional information gathering is necessary. If a student has mastered all goals on the IEP and the re-evaluation testing indicates that the student no longer qualifies for special education services, the student will transition out of special education services. The student's progress will be continually monitored to ensure continued success in the classroom. However, if deemed necessary, the need for classroom accommodations through another model to help the child meet their educational needs may be considered.

Current students at MSC that have service plans, will have these plans converted to an IEP that is in compliant with the guidelines of IDEA and all other state and federal regulations. The MDT will accept and adopt the IEP of any new student enrolling in MSC from a public school or other academic institution with a current IEP. MSC will have thirty days to assess the student and develop an IEP for the student.

The first IEP to be in effect when the child turns thirteen, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, will include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments, related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills.

Throughout the enrollment of a student with an IEP, MSC Special Education staff members will assist parents with planning for transition to adulthood. Should MSC have a student with an IEP who reaches the age of 17 it will notify parents that full authority for education decisions will reside with the student upon reaching the age of 18 years, at which time MSC will seek permission of the student to continue services.

Many MSC students may qualify as gifted and talented. Customarily half of the Upper Elementary class is recognized by the Duke University “Talented and Gifted Program.” The self-paced curriculum allows these students to progress at their best pace. All students in grade 2 will receive the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Assessment (IA) to identify students who qualify for gifted and talented services. To ensure the needs of qualified students are met, all Classroom Directors will earn the GT Teacher Endorsement during the first year of their employment in that capacity at the school. The Montessori classroom inherently adapts itself to the needs of gifted and talented students, including those with behavioral issues. Our classrooms always have students working several grade levels above their age.

The entire MSC community, including students with special needs, benefits from the inclusive Montessori approach that consists of diversity, respect, creativity and peace in all academic and non-academic areas.

Paragraph I-4. Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan

In accordance with the South Carolina Charter School Act of 2005, MSC will use the innovative approach of the Montessori Method to target several key areas of learning which are particularly important to student success. Specifically, MSC aspires to become an educational asset to Kershaw County and the surrounding counties by maintaining high academic

achievement, maintaining organizational viability and a faithfulness to the charter school providing an innovative educational experience for students.

As stated in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the Elementary Schools Education Act (ESEA), the school must make adequate, yearly progress toward the established goals of all public schools. Specifically, the South Carolina Department of Education will use multiple factors beyond ELA and math to determine a letter grade for each school and district to recognize progress schools and districts make towards proficiency. In accordance with state and federal requirements, including any waiver that SCDE has regarding ESEA, MSC will use South Carolina-approved testing, establishing a base line in the fall of 2018 by administering the MAP to all students, and adjusting to increase performance each year thereafter until it reaches 95 percent or better success rates.

The table below outlines the school goals, measures by which the school will assess success, and strategies to achieve them. MSC expects at least 75 percent of students to achieve mastery of material at the end of the first year, the aggregate result to serve as a benchmark for each successive year. Each year thereafter MSC will measure progressive success levels. By the end of year five MSC expects to achieve at least 90 percent mastery of lessons by all students who have been at the school for at least two years.

The MSC Charter Committee has developed the following goals and objectives to inform the work of the teachers, administrators, and the Board of Directors, and to chart their progress in advancing the mission of the school: *to engage students to become peaceful citizens of the global community using the Montessori approach to nurture in them enthusiasm for learning, resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility for their actions, and respect for themselves, others, and their environment.*

As a charter, The Montessori School of Camden will administer diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments including state-mandated assessments. The Head of School will be responsible for analyzing and interpreting academic data using Microsoft Office Software and communicating student achievement data to the board, Director of Education, and Power School Coordinator who will then make these data available to the Charter Institute. The Director of Education will monitor progress of goals and objectives quarterly and will give a report to teaching staff at monthly staff meetings and will work with the faculty to redirect instruction when necessary. The Director of Education will work closely with the Special Education Coordinator to ensure that students are receiving the most informed instruction possible. The Director of Education will also use these data regarding academic achievement and progress toward annual and long-term goals to provide appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers in order to support individual student learning and help close the achievement gap. Classroom teachers will communicate student achievement data to parents during their four scheduled conferences and during any Multi-Disciplinary team meetings.

Goal 1. To support individual student learning and close academic achievement gaps.

- Objective 1.1 Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, at least 50 percent of students will demonstrate individual academic growth by reaching individual goals in math, ELA, and reading as documented through benchmarked formative assessment using MAP (Measures of Academic Progress Grades K-12) to assess students.
- Objective 1.2 Students will meet or exceed percentile benchmarks on MAP for their grade level in ELA at a rate consistent with or higher than that of the highest scoring LEA of our catchment area.

- Objective 1.3 Students will meet or exceed percentile benchmarks on MAP for their grade level in math at a rate consistent with or higher than that of the highest scoring LEA of our catchment area.
- Objective 1.4 85 percent of 3rd year Primary students (kindergarten) who have spent at least 2 years at the school will demonstrate grade-level appropriate phonological awareness (the ability to hear sounds that make up words such as rhymes, and beginning and ending sounds) and reading as a minimum competency at the end of the school year.
- Objective 1.5 Starting in year 3 of operation, at least 85 percent of students who have been enrolled at the school for at least 3 years who had initial benchmarked data below grade level in Reading or Math will demonstrate developmentally appropriate academic growth towards working to grade level as measured by MAP.
- Objective 1.6 On-time graduation rate from High School for MSC students who attended for at least four consecutive years from 3-K through Middle School will be over 90 percent. Students will be tracked using the South Carolina longitudinal study. (Kershaw County School District graduated 84 percent of its students on time.)
- Mastery levels for special populations (i.e., ELLs and students with IEPs) will be determined by an IEP or adapted learning plan.

Strategies - Related strategies to accomplish Goal 1 include:

- Use of the full array of specifically designed, concrete, discovery driven Montessori materials to internalize concepts on a concrete level before progressing to an abstract level. Provide individualized instruction meeting the academic needs of each student in all subject areas; for example, a teacher



has designed a Language lesson made with Legos for a child who loves to construct. As another example, one teacher designed a lesson resembling a pizza pie to help a child understand quantity.

- Currently student progress on all Montessori lessons is recorded and tracked, showing when they are practicing and when they master each lesson. Moving



forward as a charter school, progress will be measured by the teacher at the completion of each lesson and will be recorded using Transparent Classroom, a web based student record keeping tool to track student lessons and progress in the classroom, which correlates Montessori lessons with state standards. It also records more complex data as the student level increases. Teachers use formative assessment

strategies when giving lessons to children using the Montessori three-period lesson.

All observational notes are uploaded to Transparent Classroom and are available alongside the student’s list of lessons he has received. MSC also administers the MAP and all statewide assessments (see table below). All records will be accessible to administration and the Charter Institute at Erskine, and parents will attend four scheduled conferences to review records.

- External Assessments provided at MSC:

	MAP Growth	KRA	SCPASS	SCREADY	CogAT & IA
GRADE LEVELS	K-8	K5	All students grades 4-8 who do not qualify for the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt).	All students in grades 3–8 except those students who qualify for the South Carolina National Center and State Collaborative (SC-NCSC) alternate assessment.	Grade 2

<p>REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>To precisely measure growth and performance over time to inform instruction and intervention</p>	<p>The KRA is a statewide assessment that measures a child's school readiness across multiple domains.</p>	<p>SCPASS is a statewide assessment administered to students in grades four, six, and eight for science and grades five and seven for social studies</p>	<p>SC READY are statewide assessments in ELA and mathematics that will meet all of the requirements of Acts 155 and 200, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and the</p>	<p>To evaluate each student for the purpose of placement into a gifted and talented program.</p>
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				Assessments Peer Review guidance.	
PLANS TO ADMINISTER	Three times a year (Winter, Spring, Fall)	Teachers who have received training and certification in the use of the KRA materials will administer the assessment at the beginning of the school year.	The SCPASS will be administered during the last 20 days of school as determined by the ClaE instructional calendar.	The SCREADY will be administered during the last twenty days of school as determined by the ClaE instructional calendar.	During the statewide testing window (Oct/Nov).

HOW RESULTS WILL INFORM INSTRUCTION	Results will be interpreted and analyzed in order to pinpoint weaknesses that individual or groups of students may have. Teachers will use this information to plan for future instruction.	Results will help kindergarten teachers best meet the child's needs and inform teachers on how best to support young children as they enter the K-12 environment.	Scores will help inform teachers of how their instruction is meeting state standards and indicators and will allow them to make adjustments if necessary.	Scores will help inform teachers of how their instruction is meeting state standards and indicators and will allow them to make adjustments if necessary.	Results will identify students for the Gifted and Talented programs. Teachers can also use the results to examine their instructional practices and help them identify teaching strategies for all students.

- As a Charter, students will be assessed using MAP, a computerized interim assessment that measures student growth, adapted to each student's learning level and

measures progress and growth for each student. This assessment will help pinpoint students that are struggling in a timely manner, allowing MSC to plan how to intervene with students who need help and provide a curriculum to challenge students who are at a higher level. MAP will group student's instructions and identify concepts that the students are ready to learn. This assessment will provide the quick information needed to guide everyday classroom decisions as well as providing instructional resources that will help students' master specific skills they need in order to succeed. MAP will not only measure Math and Reading but also measure student growth over time. It will initially be used three times per year (Winter, Spring, and Fall) in order to provide MSC with the best assessment tool. We will use MAP while we investigate other tools such as Mastery Connect.

- Students who still do not meet mastery can attend intersessions incorporated into our year-round school calendar. While for some students the intersessions are remedial, for others they serve as extensions of the curriculum. MSC will seek funding to support this if parents cannot afford the fees. See Appendix F (school calendar and daily schedules for the academic year) and Appendix T (Draft Discipline Policy) for RTI procedures.
- Special population students' mastery level will be determined by an IEP or adapted learning plan.

Goal 2. To help MSC students develop into independent, responsible, critical, and compassionate individuals.

- Objective 2.1 At least 50 percent of first year students at the Primary, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary levels will routinely choose their own work as documented in teacher observations and individual student goals.
- Objective 2.2 At least 90 percent of students who have at least 2 years of experience at MSC will routinely choose their own work as documented in teacher observations and individual student goals.
- Objective 2.3 Using critical thinking skills, at least 90 percent of Middle School students will routinely develop and select their own group projects within the time allotted as documented in teacher observations and individual student goals.
- Objective 2.4 At least 85 percent of 3rd year students who have been at MSC for at least two years will routinely and spontaneously come to the assistance of younger students allotted as documented in teacher observations using the “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form.”
- Objective 2.5 At least 80% of all students ages 3-9 who have been at MSC for at least one year will meet or exceed national norms for executive function skills as measured by the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS).
- The Montessori Method has been in use successfully for over 110 years. Recent research investigates why it is so successful. Results relating to this goal can be found in the Bibliography at Appendix G, in particular, Lillard, Angeline S. *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius*.
- Related strategies to accomplish Goal 2 include:
 - Observation skills are essential to the success of teachers. Teacher preparation manuals developed by the Institute for Guided Studies (IGS) serves as the primary

- source for credentialing of MSC faculty) require all teachers in training to observe children of the appropriate age group for 30 hours, to observe an individual child for a minimum of 10 hours and complete one child study during the course of their training. MSC teachers' observations in their own classrooms guide them to prepare the environment to meet the interest the child manifests. For professional development, MSC teachers observe at other Montessori and traditional schools at least once each year. Most recently (September, 2016) Primary teachers visited a public Montessori program in Richland County and the elementary teachers visited a private Montessori program in North Carolina.
- The faculty will use the "Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form" to capture success rates of individual students and groups to measure independence of work, assumption of responsibility, and leadership (see Section 8 of Appendix G). When students do not understand a specific lesson they tend to get frustrated, want to quit doing the lesson, or lose interest. Teachers are trained to know when and how to intervene, when a lesson should be re-presented or when and how to create a new lesson all together. Transparent Classroom is used to record when a student should move on to the next lesson.
 - Observations also helps to determine how students learn and process information; it takes into account cognitive and social development. Various types of records can be used during these observations. MSC will use the "Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form" to record observations of each individual student. These observations will be summarized and the data will be compiled on a spread sheet on a quarterly basis by the Director of Education and reported to the Head Master. It will

- be used to look at trends per pupil and per class, as an indicator for special intervention, and will be available to the Charter Institute upon request.
- Anecdotal record is an assessment practice used by MSC to record students' development in language, social attitudes, strengths, weaknesses, needs, progress, learning styles, strategies and every day occurrences in the classroom. This information is used for assessing students for goal setting conferences with parents.
 - Portfolios gather selected works showing development of students' learning over time. This may include students' writing, journals, drawings, paintings, math work, reports, projects, etc. These portfolios are used primarily as examples shared during parent conferences, but they also help children grasp the magnitude of their own accomplishments.
 - Students use predesigned self-assessments at the end of each completed lesson to encourage a variety of responses and also test understanding of the subject. Primary age students use record keeping sheets to record their own understanding of subjects in Math and Language. Lower Elementary students use spelling reviews and math fact speed drills in order for them to begin self-assessing their speed and accuracy. Upper Elementary students reflect on their effort and success weekly during their individual conferences with the teacher and perform a thorough self-assessment before quarterly conferences.
 - All observations are placed in students' records along with a portfolio of student work and can be accessed by administration, parents and Charter Institute upon request.
 - MSC will use the MEFS with students ages 3-9 to assess their growth in Executive Function skills. Executive function is the key set of skills required for impulse control

in young children, as well as academic life and success. With the MEFS, MSC will be able to produce longitudinal reports on individual student's executive function growth and measure the effectiveness of teaching methods, curricula, and interventions.

Using the MEFS, MSC will also be able to compare individual and group student scores with local and national norms.

- Faculty seminars at school level will focus on the importance of and techniques for modeling desired behaviors and encouraging them in the students.
- Teachers use the "Interval Observation System" to assess concentration and self-direction (see Section 8 of Appendix G for graphed measurement of student concentration). This excellent method was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori and described in the chapter, "My Contributions to Experimental Science" in *The Advanced Montessori Method* (See bibliography at Appendix G). Students with consistently below average concentration will be evaluated for additional support by the Special Needs staff (see I-3). The "Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form" will be used to measure frequency of re-direction, with assessment of need for additional support for those showing below average age-appropriate self-mastery.

Goal 3. To inspire students to respect themselves, others, and the environment.

- Objective 3.1 At least 90 percent of students who have been at the school at least 2 years will demonstrate self-respect by showing pride in their work as measured by teacher observations using the "Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form" and student portfolio work.

- Objective 3.2 At least 90 percent of students who have been at the school at least 1 year will routinely demonstrate respectful behaviors to others as documented in teacher observations using the “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form.”
- Objective 3.3 Each year at least 90 percent of students who have been at the school at least 2 years will demonstrate their ability to make connections between their actions and the world in which they live through developmentally appropriate cross-curricular service learning projects as documented in teacher observations using the “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form.”
- The Montessori Method has been in use successfully for over 110 years. Recent research investigates why it is so successful. Results relating to this goal can be found in the Bibliography at Appendix G, in particular, Lillard, Angeline S. *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius*.
- Related strategies to accomplish Goal 3 include:
 - Faculty-developed measurement tools will be used to assess each student’s self-confidence, self-respect, and respect for others. The measurements from these tools will be added to progress reports and shared with parents. As well as academic observations, MSC teachers keep observation records on each student’s behavior (see “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form” in Section 8 “Record-Keeping Methods” in Appendix G). Weekly forms will be used as background material and historical records for parent conferences. These observations are kept in students’ records and will be available to Administration, Parents and Charter Institute upon request. Aggregate versions of the form will be used to measure success as a class and progress of each student over time.

- Incident Reports will be maintained to alert teachers and administrative staff to trends and allow for early intervention as necessary. Reported incidents during the first year will be used as a baseline, with annual improvements used to gauge methods employed.
- Staff and faculty will model behavior we want to instill in the students and allow them to practice those behaviors, and activities will be designed to allow students to practice the three domains of respect. Samples:
 - MSC holds campus clean-up events in order to beautify the campus, bake-sales to raise funds, canned goods collections to help the needy. Students and parents participate.
 - Primary students visit the elderly at Springdale Nursing Home to entertain and bring craft items they have made as gifts.
 - Lower Elementary students select campus-wide responsibilities as community projects.
 - Elementary and Middle School students develop off-campus projects, plan and execute them with faculty support.
- Faculty uses “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form” to measure participation of students and the “Community Service Voucher (MSC Form 3- 63) for parents, with the first year serving as a baseline and each succeeding year measured against it, adjusting methods as necessary. The quality of the activities will be evaluated by student and parent surveys. Student participation will be reported at parent-teacher conferences. Aggregate parent participation will be reported at Board

meetings and strategies developed to increase participation from the base line measured in year 1.

- The Director of Education will oversee modification and implementation of these tools.

* The Director of Education will analyze data from academic assessments and faculty developed measurement tools so as to identify trends or areas of concern. She will use this information obtained from student outcomes to select professional development and training opportunities appropriate to the needs of the faculty and the students. The Director of Education will stay informed of current professional development opportunities and will provide the staff with a number of diverse experiences including Montessori conferences, academic conferences, internal and external workshops and instructional training, seminars, on-site consultation, off-site observation, online training exercises, staff support meetings and more.

Paragraph II-1. Governing Board

MSC is committed to effective and efficient governance implementing a modified policy governance model based on national best practices of public charter schools. The initial charter committee and the board, once elected and appointed, will adopt policies that guide the school, ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, and create transparent fiscal controls. The board will empower the headmaster to run the day to day operations of the school and the board will hold that person accountable for the success of the students and the long-term viability of the school. As such, the Board is charged with aligning the mission to the policies of the school, leaving operational matters to the Headmaster. The Board of Directors will operate under the Bylaws adopted by the Charter Committee, effective January 2, 2018. The board will be comprised of 11 members, 6 elected and 5 appointed.

MSC's Commitment to Effective Governance

The MSC board will work collaboratively to ensure the charter is implemented with fidelity and the school fulfills its mission. To guide their work as a public charter school they will receive training in Charter Board Partner's National Standards for Effective Governance that the PCSASC has adopted and on which bases their training. The six standards are:

- *Focus Relentlessly on Student Achievement*
- *Ensure Exceptional School Leadership*
- *Commit to Exemplary Governance*
- *Act Strategically*
- *Raise and Use Resources Wisely*
- *Maintain Legal and Regulatory Compliance*

The charter committee and headmaster already have plans to begin training on these standards at the Annual Public Charter School Conference in 2018 where a national governance expert will lead a training on all six standards and hold a mock board meeting with participants.

To fully implement the standards at MSC the charter committee and board will participate in ongoing in person and online trainings. They will reflect on how each one of the standards and related indicators can best be met at MSC each year and understand the importance of ongoing learning and onboarding new board members. As the following chart illustrates, the standards provide a clear pathway to effective governance of a public charter school and the training will support MSC's efforts to govern through policy and empower their school leader:

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNANCE From Charter Board Partners and the PCSASC	
STANDARD ONE: Focus Relentlessly on Student Achievement	
Govern to Fulfill the Mission of the School and the Promises of the Charter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Believe in the mission of the school ▪ Assume ultimate responsibility for school and student success ▪ Use student data to inform board decisions 	
Know Whether Students are on Track for High-level Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree on the definition of academic excellence ▪ Understand how student achievement is measured at the school 	

- Review indicators of student success regularly to measure progress toward school goals

STANDARD TWO: Ensure Exceptional School Leadership

Hire and Support a Strong School Leader

- Hire the right leader who can manage the school to achieve its goals
- Cultivate a trusting, candid relationship with the school leader, addressing challenges proactively
- Build an effective partnership between the school leader and board chair
- Champion the school leader
- Maintain an up-to-date school leader succession plan

Evaluate and Hold the School Leader Accountable

- Collaborate with the school leader each year to establish his/her annual goals
- Evaluate the leader each year using a formal and transparent process, and hold him/her accountable for achieving concrete results
- Invest in ongoing professional development to support the leader's progress toward his/her goals

STANDARD THREE: Commit to Exemplary Governance

Build and Maintain a High-Functioning and Engaged Board

- Recruit and maintain a full slate of excellent board members who bring diverse skills, experience, and perspectives
- Elect a board chair who can successfully lead the board and engage all members
- Remove disengaged members from the board

- Invest in the board’s development, providing orientation and ongoing training

Implement Best Governance Practices

- Adopt job descriptions for the officers, committees, and board members
- Require that each board member sign an annual agreement, committing to fulfill his/her responsibilities
- Hold well-run, regularly scheduled, strategic meetings
- Employ a robust committee structure to accomplish board work strategically and efficiently
- Assess board performance annually, holding the board accountable for achieving its goals and governing effectively

STANDARD FOUR: Act Strategically

Determine the Strategic Direction for the School

- Oversee the development of a clear strategic plan that reflects the board’s vision and priorities for the school’s future
- Set annual goals for the school, board, and each board committee
- Organize the board, its committees, and all meetings to advance the aims of the school’s annual goals and strategic plan

Respect the Balance Between Oversight and Management

- Define and build board-wide understanding of the oversight role of the board and the management role of the school leader
- Give the school leader the autonomy and authority to manage the school while maintaining strong and close oversight

STANDARD FIVE: Raise and Use Resources Wisely

Manage Resources Responsibly

- Ensure that all members understand the school’s finances, and provide necessary training
- Review financial data regularly and carefully, using it to make sound decisions that protect the school’s short- and long-term sustainability
- Approve a budget each year that allocates resources strategically and aligns with the student performance goals of the school

Expand Awareness and Raise Funds

- Set and meet realistic fundraising goals to provide additional resources the school needs
- Require that each board member make the school a top personal philanthropic priority each year
- Raise the school’s profile and engage donors
- Understand the political context of public charter schools and advocate for policies that promote and support the charter sector

STANDARD SIX: Maintain Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Minimize Risks

- Adhere faithfully to the legal and ethical duties of loyalty, obedience, and care
- Oversee the development, board approval, and regular review of all school and board policies
- Maintain the highest standards of transparency by accurately documenting meeting proceedings and board decisions

- Apply sound business judgment by avoiding conflicts of interest, observing tax requirements, and maintaining liability insurance

Meet Expectations

- Confirm that the school is proactively adhering to the legal requirements set forth by the sponsor, the federal and local governments, and the Internal Revenue Service
- Operate in accordance with bylaws and review them at least every three years
- Comply with open meeting laws of the state of South Carolina

Organization of the Charter Committee

In September of 2014 the Board of Directors began consideration of applying for a charter. After meeting with a representative of the SC Public Charter School District, the Board asked Dr. John Moncure, the Headmaster, to present the case to the parents. Later that month MSC held a Town Hall meeting for parents and faculty presenting the option of converting to a public charter school. Parents and faculty in attendance unanimously voted in favor of pursuing the public charter route. Following an unsuccessful application for the charter the Board again asked Dr. Moncure to investigate the possibilities and form another committee. Surveys of both parents and faculty confirmed the initial decision to apply to the Charter Institute at Erskine, and parents registered support during a town hall meeting in December 2017.

Parents asked, “What can we do to help?” Dr. Moncure invited them to join the committee to assist in developing the charter school. For several weeks following that meeting the school announced in its newsletter and on a Charter Initiative Facebook page, asking for parents and interested community members to volunteer. Over forty parents and community members joined

the Charter Committee and a former parent, Mr. Eric Faz, agreed to chair the committee. Having found the Charter Institute at Erskine's approach to vetting and supporting schools compatible with Montessori philosophy, Dr. Moncure recommended to the Committee that it should apply through the Institute.

During this period of re-forming the Committee Mr. Faz's committee leaders outlined possible committee tasks, and invited all parents and community supporters to work together to form a Charter Committee, and asked them to list the subcommittees on which they wished to work. From the members of this list, they gathered a temporary steering group consisting of likely leaders from each group of volunteers to help form the Subcommittee structure. After an initial meeting of the steering group its members called their volunteers together, and each one—now a subcommittee—chose its own chair according to members' areas of expertise. In every case but two the steering group leaders became Subcommittee Chairs. The resulting Subcommittees and their Chairs are:

- James Choice, Chair, Facilities Sub-committee. Project Superintendent/Manager for numerous construction projects in the Midlands.
- Eric Faz, Chair, MCS Charter Committee. Holds an MA from Columbia International University in Bible Exposition and serves as pastor at the River Church in Camden.
- Joseph Folsom, Chair, Finance Sub-committee. Holds a Master of Accountancy from USC, is a CPA and is the principal at his accounting firm.
- Teresa L'Heureux, Chair, Outreach Sub-committee. Holds a BSN from Jacksonville University and is a Charge Nurse of a Surgical Unit at KershawHealth.

- Joan McCulley, Chair, Marketing Sub-committee. Studied Sociology at South Dakota State University and Elementary and Early Childhood Education at the University of North Dakota. She is retired from Siemens Medical Solutions.
- John Moncure, Ph.D., Co-chair, Governance Sub-committee. Holds a Ph.D. in history from Cornell University, retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel, and has been a Montessori school administrator in Camden, SC and Beijing, China since 1998.
- Christen Pierre, Chair, Volunteer Committee. Infant Classroom Director at MSC.
- Meryssa Piper, Co-chair Governance Sub-committee. Holds an MS in Chemical Oceanography, 8th grade science teacher at Dent Middle School.
- Robert Smith, Chair, Planning Sub-committee. Holds a BS in Biology from USC and is a Senior Business Testing Analyst.
- Jamie Strickland, Chair, Education Sub-committee. Holds an MA from Lander University in Montessori education and serves as the Upper Elementary teacher at the school.
- Camisha Williams, Ph.D., Chair, Special Needs Subcommittee, Holds a Ph.D. from Walden University in Psychology, Research, and Evaluation.

(see Appendix K for complete résumés of Charter Committee members.)

Subcommittee chairs held several meetings to coordinate the activities of their volunteers, and met together on five occasions and even more often informally to coordinate the activities of sub-committees. The chairs of each individual Subcommittee form the Charter School Committee. These chairs each contributed to the development of the plan to prepare to become a charter school as well as to draft the charter application.

Since the proposed charter school is already in existence, planning focused on adaptation of proven Montessori methods to public charter school requirements and gaining community support, as well as to determine the desirability of such innovative methods as year-round school, the addition of a Montessori Middle School, and partnering with the equine community.

MCS Governance Plans and Structure

The MSC Charter Committee understands the strategic importance of having a clear governance plan for the school and the critical developmental stages in the transition from the charter committee to an elected and appointed board. The Charter Committee and Headmaster are happy for the support of the Charter Institute at Erskine, including technical assistance, training, and resources. Peers from other schools, including the existing public charter Montessori schools, will provide mentoring relationships and support throughout the planning and first two years of operation as a public charter school as part of the incubator.

MSC Charter Committee and the Transition to the Governing Board

Per the SCCA, the Charter Committee serves as the Governing Board until the first election. Prior to the assumption of governing responsibilities of the charter school Board of Directors, the Charter Committee will serve governance functions as a Board. Both the Charter Committee and Board of Directors of MSC will use policy governance as its model.

By law, the charter committee has the authority to develop policies, make decisions, and execute each of the following responsibilities which begin during the pre-charter and pre-operating years:

- Submitting this charter application.

- Adopting the attached bylaws (Appendix L).
- Approval of policies including policies from the PCSASC Model Policy Manual.
- Employing teachers and nonteaching employees.
- Ensuring that all certified personnel, teachers, and noncertified teachers undergo background checks and other investigations before they are employed in the school.
- Contracting for other services including, but not limited to, transportation, accounting, and legal.
- Developing pay scales, performance criteria, and discharging policies for its employees, including the school's administrator.
- Deciding all other matters related to the school's operation, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures.
- Ensuring that the school will adhere to the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements applicable to all public schools operating in the same school district.
- Hiring the headmaster and transitioning the above management functions to him or her while maintaining governing oversight and responsibilities.

Once the school is open and operating, the board will continue with the oversight of all of the above. Additionally, they will:

- Ensure the school is financially viable through financial oversight and resource allocation in the budget.
- Communicate clear performance expectations for the headmaster in writing, perform annual evaluations, and maintain a viable succession plan.

- Implement the charter with fidelity by ensuring the school follows authentic Montessori instructional design and curriculum and meets SC Academic Standards at the equivalent grade levels.

Governance Structure

The Board of Directors will consist of eleven members, six elected and five appointed, with 2-year staggered terms. All will be residents of the state of South Carolina and at least six of whom will have backgrounds in business or education.

Key Governance, Election, and Leadership Transition Timeline Steps

Once the charter is approved, MSC will continue to be governed by the Charter Committee until elections are held. The following plan is in place to ensure a smooth transition in governance:

January 2018	Once the charter has been granted the Charter Committee appoints an Interim Headmaster and begin the search process for a permanent Headmaster. The Governance Committee Chair appoints an ad hoc Search Committee to oversee Headmaster search process, posts position in PCSASC website, Cerra (the Dept. of Ed.) job portal and Montessori publications nationwide, including the websites of MEPI, AMS, and the Montessori Foundation.
January – December 2018	All charter committee members complete state required board orientation.

March-April 2018 (or until completion)	Headmaster Applications are vetted by the Charter Committee
April-May 2018	Headmaster candidates are interviewed by Charter Committee and Permanent Headmaster hired.
June 30, 2018	Interim Headmaster relinquishes responsibilities and Headmaster begins the following day.
No later than September 2018	The Charter Committee announces elections. Members of the Committee may accept nominations (or self-nominations) to run for election. Call for Nominations shall be sent by the Nominating Committee to families and distributed in the community.
October 2018	Board Nominations Accepted. The Nominating Committee compiles a list not to exceed twenty candidates. The committee is charged with recruiting diverse nominees to include persons with backgrounds in business or education.
November 2018	The Vice President presents the nominees to the Board. No spouse of a nominee for Board membership shall be eligible for appointment or election to the Board. The school elections and appointments will be held in accordance with the SCCA and the By-Laws (see Appendix L). Voting will be by paper or electronic ballot. Parents and legal guardians with students enrolled at the time of the election will be permitted one vote for each child. Employees of MSC will receive one vote. The Charter Committee will oversee the election of 6 Board members (3 for 2 years, 3 for 1

	year) and appoint 5 (2 for 2 years, 2 for one year). The PAC elects a PAC president who becomes 11 th member, as an annual appointed seat.
December 2018	The incoming Board of Directors holds its first meeting and the Charter Committee dissolves itself officially effective at the time of that meeting. Upon completion of the elections the Charter Committee meets with the newly-elected Board of Directors. In a general session attended by all, each member of the Charter Committee gives the Board-member counterpart a detailed summary of decision-making and action steps leading to the Charter. All notes and minutes of meetings will be transferred at this time. In this way, institutional memory will be transferred from the Committee to the Charter Board.
September – November of 2019	The Board Nominating Committee oversees election of 3 Board members (for 2 years) and appoints 2 (for 2 years). The PAC elects a PAC president who becomes an appointed member.
Future board elections	Future elections follow the 2019 pattern unless the Board of Directors adjusts its schedule.

Duties of the Board Officers

The officers of the corporation shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, and these officers shall be elected from among the membership of the Board of Directors. The term of office for all officers shall be one year, and all officers shall be elected for their

representative terms at the Board of Directors' meeting. These constitute the Executive Committee.

- President: The President shall be the chief executive officer of this corporation; he shall preside at all meetings of the members and the Directors; he shall have general and active management of the business of this corporation; he shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried out; and he shall be ex-officio member of all committees and shall have the powers and duties of management usually vested in the office of President of a corporation.
- Vice-President: The Vice President shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence of the latter, and shall have such other duties as may, from time to time, be determined by the Board of Directors. In the event that the President shall be absent at any meeting, the Vice-President shall preside. The Vice President will also be responsible for creating the Nominating Committee at the start of each calendar year.
- Secretary: The Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall act as a clerk thereof; he shall record all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose; he shall send notices of all meetings to the members of the corporation and of the Board of Directors as directed by the President; and he shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors, and shall be the custodian of the corporate seal and all of the books and records of the corporation except as may otherwise be provided.
- Treasurer: The Treasurer shall work with the Administrator in preparation of a periodic review and an annual budget, which shall follow a fiscal year that runs July 1 through

June 30. He shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors, including facilitating an annual audit.

Board Meeting Operations and Open Meeting Laws

The MSC board will only conduct business when all requirements of SC's Freedom of Information Act and SCCA have been met including:

- ✓ Notifying the sponsor of the meeting at least 48 hours ahead of time
- ✓ Posting of the meeting location and time
- ✓ Posting of the agenda 24 hours ahead of time
- ✓ Amending action items on the agenda with at least 2/3s vote of the board and documenting as required
- ✓ Having a quorum present
- ✓ Legal reasons for entering into executive session
- ✓ Posting of board approved minutes

As stated in the by-laws, the board will hold regular meetings at least monthly. Committee meetings will be held as needed, but will also follow all SC Freedom of Information Act laws as required.

Should a member be unable for any reason to fulfill the duties of his office, the President of the board shall, after consulting the remaining members of the Board, appoint a person to serve until the end of the ex-Board member's office and fill the vacancy.

Relationship between the MSC Board and Charter Institute at Erskine Board

The MSC charter committee chose to apply for charter sponsorship with the Charter Institute at Erskine. The board will be responsive to requests from the Board and staff of the Charter Institute at Erskine. MSC understands the responsibilities of a sponsor per the SCCA including the sponsor's role as an LEA, monitoring and oversight, and the legal reasons for revocation. The Board will participate in any required meetings with the sponsor and is committed to maintaining a professional and respectful relationship. The school is committed to helping to advance the mission of the Charter Institute at Erskine. At the same time, the school recognizes the limits of this relationship as set forth in the Liability and Indemnification section, below.

Balancing the Relationship between the MSC Board and School Leader

The MSC Governing Board will empower the Headmaster to manage the day to day operations of the school. With modified policy governance, the board will adopt policies that provide clear expectations of the leader in terms of performance and compliance. The Headmaster is hired by the board. The Board only conducts business when it has meet all of the requirements of a public meeting in the state of South Carolina including having a quorum and being posted publicly. No individual Board member will unilaterally give directives to the Headmaster.

Board members work with the Headmaster to develop board meeting agendas which maintain the balance between governance and management of the school. The Board will not include items that are clearly issues for management to handle. The Headmaster will not request items to be included on the agenda as a way to avoid making tough management decisions.

The headmaster will provide information in board packets that document:

- Budgets with month to day and year to date financials.

- Enrollment, application, and waitlist data.
- Student achievement data on attainment of state standards and progress implementing Montessori methods with authentic assessments.
- Compliance assurances and reports based on an annual calendar of reporting deadlines including, but not limited to special education compliance, certified teacher status, and categorical and federal funding requirements.
- Any other information requested by the Board as a whole.

The Headmaster will adapt the existing dashboard (see illustration in Appendix G) to public school use and the needs of the sitting Board of Directors. By this means the Board can rapidly make itself fully cognizant of the most sensitive aspects of the school.

Each year the Board will conduct an evaluation of the Headmaster, based on clear expectations set forth at the beginning of the year. They will adopt best practices of both public charter schools and public Montessori schools. There will be components for self-evaluation and goals, anonymous feedback from staff and parents, and Board assessments of the Headmaster. The evaluation will be aligned with the mission of the school.

Family Involvement in the Governance and Success of MSC

As outlined in the preceding sections, parents of students at MSC will have the opportunity to run for the Board, be appointed to the Board, vote in Board elections, and serve on Board committees. The existing school has a very active parent group and names on the ballot traditionally exceed the number of spaces available. The existing culture being active, the charter school Board will be able to maintain that community interest by publication of minutes in the school newsletter and on the web site.

The parent body will be directly connected to the Board of Directors in the person of the President of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), who is elected by classroom parent representatives and serves as an appointed voting member of the Board of Directors. Just as the classroom parent serves as a conduit for information between the classroom teacher and the parents, so the PAC President serves the same liaison function with the Headmaster. These two-way communications facilitate clear and mutual understanding between faculty and parents. Additionally, while parents as Board members often have difficulty separating the benefit to the school from the benefit to their child, the PAC president leads the parent group to take the larger view. PAC take a direct role in organizing all volunteer activities, such as field trips, spring clean-up day, continent festivals, etc., at both classroom and school level.

MSC Plan for Ongoing Board Training and Capacity Building

The charter committee and future elected and appointed governing board will adopt and budget for an annual plan for the board's professional development and capacity building. Each year at the same time that the school leader evaluation takes place the board will also perform a board evaluation based on best national practices in governance.

The Board Professional Development Plan includes a PowerPoint presentation (adapted from the private school's orientation) that addresses:

- Expectations of Board members
- Alignment with the mission of the school
- Feedback from staff and parents on the culture and climate of the school.

Newly elected or appointed board members complete the state required board orientation (Section 59-40-155) within 3 months of taking office (the law requires within a year). This training will be offered by the SC Department of Education.

Board members will participate in governance training and strategic planning sessions at the school, at public charter school conferences and trainings in South Carolina and nationally, at Montessori related training opportunities regionally and nationally, and/or other not for profit board governance trainings.

Liability and Indemnification

The Montessori School of Camden Board of Directors assumes liability for the activities of the charter school and agrees to hold harmless the Charter Institute at Erskine, its servants, agents, and employees from any and all liability, damage, expense, causes of action, suits, claims, or judgments arising from injury to persons or property or otherwise that arises out of the act, failure to act, or negligence of the charter school, its agents and employees, in connection with or arising out of the activity of the charter school.

In the appendices, please reference following information:

L. Bylaws

M. Articles of Incorporation and signed Certificate of Incorporation

N. Organizational Chart

Paragraph II-2. Education/Charter Management Organization Contract (EMO/CMO)

The Montessori School of Camden does not anticipate using an EMO/CMO.

Paragraph II-3. Administrative Structure and Building Leadership

The administrative structure of Montessori School of Camden is described graphically at Appendix N. With the exception of the role of the authorizing body, this structure currently exists at the private school. The Board of Directors hires the head of school and oversees policy and financial matters, leaving the day-to-day running of the school to its head. The Board evaluates the Headmaster using a state-approved leadership assessment model. The faculty is currently and will under the charter be organized in “divisions” to facilitate decision making and communications. The divisions will initially be Primary (three classrooms) and Elementary (two classrooms). When we add the Middle School, it will become its own division. Leaders in each division are the more experienced members of the faculty.

The faculty operates and coordinates at three levels: The head of school holds monthly meetings with Classroom Directors (lead teachers), with division leaders speaking for building and level (Infant/Toddler, Primary, and Elementary) matters. Quarterly the entire faculty meets with a focus on issues that pertain to the whole faculty. Both of these meetings are recorded by a secretary. In addition, each division faculty meets monthly to discuss items that are of interest to that level, and the division secretary sends minutes to the head of school (who does not attend).

This structure is illustrative of the “distributed leadership” approach taken at the school. Divisional leadership and the (currently additional-duty) position as Director of Education are examples of formal distribution of leadership. Additionally, the head of school often creates ad hoc subcommittees to study questions of particular interest to the faculty, and the chairs of these committees are usually the faculty members most engaged on the subject, allowing for emerging leaders to exercise and develop their skills. The intent of these formal and informal measures is

not only to ensure a deep bench when leaders are needed but also to ensure that, in the extended absence of formal leaders the school will suffer no loss of efficiency.

The Parent Advisory Council consists of veteran parents who not only serve the functions described in Section II-1 but also mentor newer parents who are still learning how the Montessori Method works.

The Headmaster is the creator and course director for a course in Montessori Administration offered by the Institute for Guided Studies (the accredited teacher-education program located on our campus). In the case of the eventual departure of the current head of school he is available to guide a successor through that course to ensure continuity of leadership and administrative function at the school.

Paragraph II-4. Employees

MSC maintains an effective recruitment program designed to attract, secure, and maintain the most qualified persons for all positions.

The school has a unique teaching faculty all chosen for their talents and contributions to the educational goals of the school and its mission. As charter schools are, by statute, public schools, employees of charter schools are public employees. MSC employees have access to the medical and other benefits as approved by the MSC Board of Directors. MSC employees have access to other benefits available to other public-school employees in the state of South Carolina as defined and expressly granted in the statute. MSC will continue to work within the expectations of the evaluation program for teachers and principals that meet the requirements of the SCDE's ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

The Headmaster constructs and implements procedures for attracting and employing teachers and other MSC employees. The existing faculty provides a solid base as role models and mentors for faculty development. Initially, the school will hire teaching staff for an additional Primary (ages 3-6) classroom. In 2019 Middle School teachers and additional elementary teachers will be hired in a process that will continue through the growth period of the school. The school currently uses the MSC website, online media avenues (such as the web sites of MEPI, the Montessori Foundation, and the American Montessori Society), sponsorships at the Montessori conferences held in South Carolina in October (the state Montessori Alliance) and February (MEPI), job boards at colleges offering Montessori teacher preparation (such as Lander University in Greenwood, South Carolina and Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio) and other available means for the advertising of available positions. This national approach will produce an attractive array of candidates. Selection procedures consist of a five-part assessment, including:

- Headmaster reviews curriculum vitae.
- Headmaster conducts initial telephone interview guided by an MSC-developed checklist.
- Applicant attends personal interview with Headmaster and Director of Education or designee, guided by an MSC-developed checklist.
- Applicant presents an activity to the students of the age group for which recruited.
- Headmaster calls referees provided by the applicant.

In addition, the Director of Education will observe and assess the potential of existing non-certified faculty to become Classroom Directors, and recommend those with promise for fellowships to complete their certification through the Institute for Guided Studies.

The school hires all employees at will. The provisions of Article 5, Chapter 25, Title 59 will not apply to the employment and dismissal of teachers at MSC. The school will maintain reasonable grievance and termination procedures, including notice and a hearing before the governing body of the charter school. For hiring the Headmaster, see Paragraph II-1 (Governing Body).

The MSC Charter Committee recognizes that the implementation of policies designed to provide quality educational programs is highly dependent upon the full and effective utilization of qualified individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, marital status, national origin, creed, political affiliation, ancestry, sex or age; except where sex or age is a bona fide occupational qualification. A criminal record history check on all new employees will continue to be conducted through the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) as well as Raptor National registry checks or comparable vendor upon their recommendations for employment.

Newly-hired employees are required to submit to a federal and local background check, submit the results of a TB test, attendance at the school orientation, benefits sign up, submission of picture ID, submission of biography for the website, written sample required for employment in addition to paperwork as determined by the Headmaster.

MSC recognizes that much of the success of a charter school hinges on the flexibility in administrative decisions. The MSC Charter Committee also recognizes that the South Carolina System for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) is the most widely used method of teacher evaluation at this time; however, charter school law provides flexibility in utilizing an evaluation system. Initially, MSC plans use ADEPT.

Teaching staff members will be evaluated using systems currently approved by SCDOE, including ADEPT and EVAAS. The Headmaster will be evaluated using the “Principal Evaluation Instrument” (adapted to charter). This instrument will be further developed to provide an appropriate assessment for admin staff, following SC Code 59-24-40.

Charter law also allows the hiring of noncertified teachers, not to exceed 25 percent of the faculty. Teachers of a core academic area (English/language arts, mathematics, science, music, art, or social studies) will be certified in that area or will hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree in that subject and meet the Highly Qualified requirements of ESEA. A noncertified teacher must be highly qualified for the subject matter taught, will have completed at least one year of study at an accredited college or university, and will meet the qualifications outlined in S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-115. Elementary certified teachers may teach in any academic area and in any grades allowable by the status of their certification.

MSC lead teachers will hold or be working toward an appropriate certificate from a MACTE-accredited Teacher Education Program, and will submit passing scores on appropriate Praxis

examinations and baccalaureate diplomas to the SC Department of Education for licensure purposes. One such Teacher Education Program, the Institute for Guided Studies, is a tenant on the MSC campus, assuring simplified access to professional development opportunities and Montessori certification courses.

The MSC Charter Committee (and subsequently, the Board of Directors) approves the Manual of Policies and Procedures (employee handbook). The manual is given to all employees and is revised at least annually. Employees sign a statement indicating their receipt and willful acceptance of the Policy Manual and the policies and procedures it contains. All policies and procedures in the Policy Manual comply with South Carolina and US federal laws.

The MSC Board of Directors recognizes the need to provide an orderly means for the expeditious resolution of disputes concerning differences among employees and between employees and administrators. A grievance is defined as “a disagreement involving the work situation in which an individual or group of individuals believes that an injustice has been done, an unfair policy, or the misapplication or misinterpretation of policy. Issues related to salary, benefits and insurance are not grievances and are not covered by this procedure.” The MSC Board of Directors encourages employees to discuss their concerns or complaints informally with their supervisor(s) or other designee. If, at any time, an employee feels that a formal mechanism for raising a concern or problem is needed, the employee should follow the procedure outlined in the Manual of Policies and Procedures. The guidance includes step-by-step procedures for both grievances and termination. These procedures comply with SC Code 59-25, guided by principles of transparency and fairness.

The school’s structure of staffing differs from that found in most school settings. The Headmaster (or CEO) of the organization should hold a certificate as a Montessori teacher or

administrator. The incumbent holds a certificate as a Montessori administrator. The principal of a South Carolina charter school must be certified or have a least one year of experience in administration. The projected Headmaster has 16 years of experience in that position. The Headmaster facilitates all layers of business practices including tracking revenue streams and all financial practices, development practices, HR functions of hiring, evaluating and termination, instructional leadership and professional development, assessment and accountability, planning with Board of Directors and Parent Advisory Council, plant and facility operations, as well as coordinating events and activities. The Headmaster delegates the day-to-day operations of those activities to other administrators, teachers, the financial director and out-sourced vendors. The HR duties of the charter leader continue to be the most time-consuming and complicated parts of the position. Ultimately, the Headmaster is responsible for HR practices and policies at all levels of the school with the Board of Directors as oversight of the Headmaster. Requirements for the position are listed in the Job Description (see Appendix P).

Initially, the school does not envision hiring an Assistant Head of School. Rather, a Director of Education and Professional Development will fill that role as needed. In addition, the Director of Education will serve to monitor and coach less experienced teachers in perfecting their practice of Montessori, orchestrate professional development opportunities—both certification and continuing education—and in general serve as the compass for the school.

For the past several decades, MSC has partially funded the professional education of new Montessori teachers as well as professional development through gifted and talented conferences, Montessori conferences for all faculty and staff members. Since the oldest Montessori teacher education program in South Carolina (the Institute for Guided Studies—IGS) is located on the campus, MSC has easy access to facilities and expertise to ensure newly-

selected faculty members can receive high-quality teacher preparation, resulting in a certificate as a Montessori teacher at the appropriate level. IGS is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), which is authorized to accredit teacher preparation by the U.S. Department of Education.

Qualifications for special education teachers and the special education coordinator will also follow the South Carolina Certification requirements. These are aligned with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), and changes to IDEA requiring that special education teachers meet the “highly qualified” standards. Therefore, MSC teachers of exceptional children must meet the following minimum criteria: (1) minimum of a Bachelor’s degree; (2) content knowledge demonstrated by achieving a passing score on state approved certification examinations, and (3) valid South Carolina Teaching Certificate in the area of disability with no waivers of any requirements. Special education teachers needing additional certification will be given one year to take coursework necessary to gain this certification. While they are becoming certified in necessary areas, MSC will contract with other agencies in order to provide the full range of necessary services for any and all children with special needs.

Montessori Lead Teachers and Teacher Assistants are hired in accordance with Montessori principles and state guidelines. MSC requires lead teachers to submit their credentials to the South Carolina Department of Education for state certification in Montessori. This includes a Montessori certificate at the level they teach, a bachelor’s degree, passing scores on two Praxis examinations. In addition, MSC may employ teachers holding traditional certification as well. MSC intends to have all teachers earn an endorsement for Gifted and Talented on their state certificate. Primary teachers are certified in Early Childhood. Lower Elementary Teachers holding a certificate in Montessori Lower Elementary (EL I). Upper Elementary Teachers are

Montessori certified at the Upper Elementary levels (EL II) and generally at the Lower Elementary level as well. Middle school teachers are certified in the two core content areas as well as Montessori certified at the Adolescent (12-15) level. Job Descriptions for each position are located in Appendix P.

The school may also contract with educational service providers to meet some instructional needs from time to time. This would be on a contractual basis and the individuals provided by the outside entities would not be considered employees of the school, would not be eligible for benefits, and would not be part of the grievance and termination procedures.

Paragraph II-5. Enrollment

Eligibility

Admission to the school is open to all eligible students age 3 through 8th grade who are residents of South Carolina. The targeted population for MSC is Kershaw, Lee, Sumter, and Fairfield counties, where public Montessori education is not available. The admission policies and procedures provide that, subject to space limitations, the charter school will admit all children who are eligible. MSC will not discriminate against pupils on the basis of gender, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, prior academic achievements, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap in its educational programs or activities, including the recruiting and admitting process.

Student Recruitment

Racial and cultural differences are celebrated in a Montessori classroom. As demonstrated in Appendix E, the racial diversity of the 2017-2018 student body is very close to that of Kershaw County Schools. In addition, the racial diversity at MSC more closely matches that of Kershaw County Schools than one-third of the public schools in the district. With an African-American presence at 26.3 percent, MSC has a better racial diversity than over 60 percent of the 57 public schools in our major recruiting area of Fairfield, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter Counties (see Appendix E). This demonstrates the commitment of the school to socio-economic diversity and the acceptance of the school as a warm, welcoming educational institution over a 38-year period.

To ensure that the student body maintains appropriate levels of racial diversity, outreach and recruitment activities MSC will design activities to reach all segments of the community and surrounding areas. The outreach campaign will recruit a diverse student body using a broad-based and balanced strategy to ensure that all populations are included. Additional recruitment efforts will target groups that might otherwise have limited opportunities to attend the charter school. The outreach efforts will include at-risk neighborhoods, including historically black and Hispanic neighborhoods. MSC will coordinate with black leaders to hold informational meetings for parents and guardians of children within these areas.

The school will provide copies of its promotional material and announcements in English and Spanish to community organizations to make sure hard-to-reach families such as single parent families and low socio-economic households are aware of the school and their eligibility to apply for enrollment. The school is committed to reaching everyone in the county and surrounding areas. The promotional plan to publicize the school will be designed to reach the entire community and, accordingly, all racial/ethnic groups within it. The school's community awareness plan is designed to attract students from throughout the region to achieve a diversity that is representative of the community and is consistent with the historic emphasis on diversity of the school. In addition to recruitment methods described above, additional information about the school will be disseminated in the following ways:

1. Informational meetings will be held at community centers and churches from the beginning of January through the end of the lottery period. The first of these that is confirmed is 25 January at the Kershaw County Library.
2. Tours will be conducted for students and parents interested in the school.

3. Social media, including Facebook, and Instagram will be utilized to connect parents to additional information regarding the initiative.
4. The school's webmaster has added a page for charter information including a tab for FAQ and a lottery page (once chartered, we will add a lottery application to the page).
5. Promotional media campaigns will be conducted through local radio and newspapers.
6. Print media will include brochures, application packets, newsletters, informational letters, posters, flyers, etc. To date, flyers have been distributed at 25 locations in the catchment area.
7. Other methods of communication will include direct phone contact and in-person promotional activities such as outreach at local community events and farmers markets.

Application

MSC will accept applications upon approval of the charter until the end of February in anticipation of a public lottery to begin in March.

Once approved as a charter school, MSC will widely inform the community of its public-school status. The community and surrounding areas will receive information about the new charter school, enrollment deadlines, and upcoming lottery through the school's website, local newspapers, radio announcements, flyers, and information bulletin in town. Media advertisements will clearly state where applications are available, how to apply and the deadlines for submittal. In subsequent years, MSC will accept applications for at least three (3) months for the following school year. The process will be submitted to the sponsor 60 days prior to the commencement, as required by the S.C. Charter Schools Act. Applicants can receive an application through the mail by requesting one via phone or email or download the form from the

school website. Applications will also be available in the school office for pick-up as needed.

The completed application can be submitted in the following ways:

1. Postal mail: Applications for enrollment may be mailed to the existing Montessori School of Camden. MSC office staff will collect postal applications and date them according to postmark.
2. E-mail: Applications for enrollment may be emailed to MSC at admissions@montessori-camden.com. MSC Director of Admissions will print a copy of emailed applications and date them according to date sent. The email system tracks date and time of submission.
3. On-line: An online application will be available at www.montessori-camden.com. MSC admissions staff will print a copy of online applications and date them according to date submitted. The online system will track date and time of submission.
4. In person-on-site: MSC will also accept applications onsite. The Director of Admissions will collect applications delivered by hand and time/date them according to date of submission. The application form will include the student's name, the address where he/she currently resides, the school he/she currently attends (if applicable), the last grade completed, the current grade, and the telephone number of the parent/guardian. Additionally, the parent/guardian will be required to sign the application. MSC will notify parents either by US Mail or email confirming the receipt of the application. MSC will audit the application for completeness. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will be returned as promptly as possible indicating the reason(s) for non-acceptance and requesting resubmission.

Lottery

All applicants must submit an application prior to the published deadline. Applications received after the published deadline will not be subject to the lottery participation and will be placed at the end of the wait list in the order they were received.

The lottery will be duly publicized on the school's website and other print, radio, and television media broadcasts in the five-county area identified. It will be conducted in an open, public meeting. The lottery session will include an explanation of the lottery rules and process to the parents at the outset of the proceedings and will be easily understood and followed by all observers.

In the event the number of applications does not exceed capacity of the program before the established deadline, applications for all students will be accepted. If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program during any enrollment period, the student selection lottery process described below will be followed to determine who gains admission:

1. All priority categories as established by the SC Charter School Law Section 59-40-50(B)(8) shall be published prior to conducting the lottery.
2. All applicants entitled to receive a priority placement preference shall be identified prior to the lottery on their application including:
 - a. MSC may give priority to children of a charter school employee and children of the charter committee, but will ensure priority enrollment for children of employees and of the Charter Committee does not constitute more than twenty percent of the enrollment at MSC.
 - b. MSC may give enrollment priority to a student enrolled at the private school at the time of the application for a charter.

- c. In subsequent years MSC may give enrollment priority to a sibling of a pupil currently enrolled and attending.
3. Priority status entitles an applicant to be offered an available seat ahead of applicants without a preference status.
4. All preferences shall be considered in the following order:
 - a. Currently enrolled children.
 - b. Applicant siblings of a currently enrolled and attending student.
 - c. Children of MSC employees.
 - d. Children of an MSC Charter Committee member.

Priority enrollment for children of MSC employees and children of the charter committee cannot constitute more than 20 percent of the enrollment of the charter school. Priority for children of the charter committee members will no longer be afforded after the first year of operation as a charter school as the charter committee dissolves upon the election of the board of directors.

Lottery Process

For each applicant, MSC will create a lottery card with applicant's lottery number and include (a) the name of the student and (b) the grade of the student for the upcoming year. MSC will verify all information on the lottery card against the application.

1. Each card will be placed in an envelope. The outside of the envelope will note only the grade level for which the applicant applied.
2. Each envelope will be placed in a corresponding large, transparent container marked with each grade level. The envelopes will be thoroughly shuffled.

3. The containers will be stored in a secure locked location.
4. 3K children will be drawn first and then each of the other grade levels will be put on a card and placed into an unmarked envelope. These envelopes will be placed in a transparent container.
5. A community representative, not associated with MSC, will then draw from the container to establish the order in which grade levels will be drawn.
6. Once grade level order has been established, the representative will then proceed to draw from the first chosen grade level and continue until all envelopes are drawn.
7. Each envelope will be opened and the applicant's lottery number will be called out and placed on the board. The number and name will be recorded on an independent tally sheet.
8. This will continue until all envelopes have been drawn for that grade level. Once all available slots have been filled, the process will continue with the rest of the applicants going on a wait list in the order they are drawn. This process will be repeated for each grade level until all grades and all cards have been drawn.

To ensure that the student body maintains appropriate levels of racial diversity, outreach and recruitment activities MSC has designed activities to reach all segments of the community and surrounding areas.

Within 10 business days after the drawing, MSC will send lottery results to all applicants (including families that were not on the waiting list). An acceptance letter and enrollment packet will be mailed to students that are admitted. A letter will be mailed to the students on the waiting list informing them of their status. Parents or legal guardians will be informed whether or not their child was selected in the lottery, and if not, their position on the waiting list. Each parent or legal guardian will then have 10 business days to accept the position and return the completed

enrollment packet. Any enrollment packet(s) that is received late, declined or not returned to MSC will result in that slot being offered to the next child on the wait list. The lottery process may change if the school decides to do an electronic lottery.

Students outside the District

Because MSC is seeking sponsorship through the Charter Institute at Erskine, the school may enroll students who reside anywhere in South Carolina.

Student Appeals Process

The lottery will be the final and binding result for admission. In the event that MSC denies admission to a student for reasons other than the result of the lottery, the student may appeal to the governing board of The Montessori School of Camden. In the event that a suitable resolution cannot be decided, the student may then appeal to the Board of Trustees of the Charter Institute at Erskine. The appeal to both groups must be within 10 business days in writing and state the grounds on which the appeal is based. The decision of the Charter Institute at Erskine shall be binding and final without the right of appeal (Section 59-40-50(C)(1)).

Desegregation Order

As depicted in Appendix S, neither the Charter Institute at Erskine, nor the Kershaw County School District are under a desegregation order.

Paragraph II-6. Student Conduct, Rights and Responsibilities

MSC strives to provide a safe learning environment for all students. The Charter Committee has developed a robust Student Code of Conduct (see Appendix T) to add to our existing Policies and Procedures Manual. This document is being evaluated by a Faculty Committee and a Parent Committee tasked to assess its tone, clarity, and effectiveness. The intent of the document is to stress the characteristic behaviors expected of students, the approach to remedial action on the part of adults in cases where the students fail to meet expected behaviors, and the logical consequences students and their parents may expect. In addition, it describes the appeal process and expectations of parents.

Once the review period for the Student Code of Conduct is complete it will be approved by the Charter Committee and the MSC Board of Directors and implemented at the school in anticipation of the conversion to a charter format.

The current Policy and Procedure Manual states that students have the right to work in a non-threatening, safe, pleasant environment. The children are free to work and to choose activities so long as that freedom does not infringe upon the rights of others and does no harm to themselves, others, or the environment. Children are expected to conduct themselves responsibly. Adults help children develop strategies to control their own behavior, to settle disagreements without physical or verbal abuse, and to respect others. Those whose behavior is unacceptable are asked to remove themselves from the activities until they choose to accept the rules. Since the children are considered responsible for their actions, the staff members are always available to assist them in achieving self-control. In an extreme or persistent case of inappropriate behavior, parents are notified and a summary of the behavior is provided to parents for information—not intended to be punishment. We hope parents will consider the receipt of such a note to afford a teachable

moment used to help their child understand the need for self-control and the benefits of making good personal choices. Staff members, parents, and children work together to achieve acceptable levels of behavior and performance. Referral services for counseling and other means of assistance are available upon request. The Headmaster annually conducts a Parent Workshop on discipline.

Obviously, corporal punishment is **not** used at MSC. MSC discipline policy disallows corporal punishment, any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child, any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child, the use of food as a reward or punishment, and the use or withholding of physical activity as a punishment. Children should be brought to the office for disciplinary reasons only if they have defied the adult authority in the classroom. When a staff member brings the child, she should give a full explanation of the sequence of events leading to the transfer so the office staff can discuss the matter with the child at the appropriate time. In addition, if the staff member expects the child will need time to calm down and adjust, she may also bring lessons so the child may concentrate as part of the calming process. Only in the rarest cases will a parent be called to take a child out of school before the end of the day, and this measure will be taken only to indicate non-verbally to the child the seriousness of the matter. In exceptional circumstances in which these procedures do not prove to be effective and the Classroom Director fails to reach the desired outcome through typical measures, the headmaster will convene a peer review committee to refer the child to appropriate services, establish time lines for improvement, monitor progress of the child, and make a final decision as to success or failure of the intervention in consultation with the Classroom Director.

The charter school complies with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-235 (Supp.2001), which provides for the expulsion of any student who brings a firearm to school, and with the Family Education

Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232). The parents of every MSC student acknowledge receipt of the explanation of the policies annually with regard to student conduct, rights, and responsibilities at the beginning of the school year by signing MSC Form 3-6.

Under IDEA of 2004, the continued provision of FAPE for a student with a disability who is expelled from a public school remains with the LEA. Recognizing that struggling learners need additional support, MSC will adopt a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The MSC RTI emphasizes:

- *High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction.*
- *Ongoing student assessment.*
- *Multi-tiered instruction.*
- *Parent involvement.*

These qualities are already important aspects of Montessori education. The Special Education Coordinator oversees the RTI, and convenes Multidisciplinary teams as necessary, and as described in I-3 (above).

A Manifestation Determination will be completed as part of an IEP team meeting. The IEP team must convene no later than 10 school days when: a parent requests such a meeting following a disciplinary incident, A student is suspended for **5 or more consecutive days**, a student is suspended **for more than 10 cumulative days in a school (and for every suspension thereafter**, a change in placement for more than 10 consecutive days is being sought for disciplinary reasons, or if exclusion or expulsion is being considered.

In order to determine if the behavior **was or was not** a manifestation of the student's disability, the team will gather for review information such as evaluation and diagnostic results,

observations, current IEP, placement information and other relevant information supplied by the parents must be gathered for review by the IEP team. With this information the team will determine if:

- the information gathered is sufficient information to make the manifest determination,
- further information is needed in order to make the manifestation determination,
- if the student needs changes in the current special education program.

If further information is needed, the IEP team will follow the due process steps in obtaining written parent consent for an evaluation. Referring to current data, observation and parent reports as well as from the IEP, evaluations (ESR), teacher reports, discipline records, etc. the IEP team will discuss the characteristics of the student's disability (e.g., withdrawn, aggressive, impulsive, academic or cognitive deficits, information processing, organizational deficits, peer relationships, etc.).

The IEP team uses four questions to determine if the behavior is part of the student's disability. If the team is unsure about any of these questions, the behavior is automatically assumed to be a part of the student's disability. If there is disagreement among the team members, the administrator makes the final determination.

1. Are the IEP and placement, supplementary aids and services judged to be appropriate by the IEP team? Initially, this is based on the current IEP. As the discussion progresses, it may be decided that one or the other, or both needs to be changed.
2. Are IEP services and behavioral intervention strategies described on the IEP consistently applied? This is based on the identified needs in the current IEP.
3. Does the disability impair the student's ability to understand the impact and consequences of the behavior? In addition to the cognitive component, the IEP team

should explore the way in which the rules were presented to the student and if they were understood. Consider chronological age, maturity and developmental level.

4. **Manifestation Determination.** If the student's behavior is not a manifestation of his or her disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be applied to the student in the same manner in which they would be applied to students without disabilities. If the behavior is determined to be a part of the disability, the IEP team makes an appropriate plan to address some or all of the following areas (the student may not be expelled from the school):

- Consistently implement the IEP as written.
- Change the IEP as needed (e.g., adaptations, service, alternative consequences, etc.).
- Complete additional evaluations to provide additional service, if needed.
- Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to develop more effective behavior intervention strategies.

MSC will notify the parent of the decision to take disciplinary action and of the procedural safeguards no later than the date on which the decision is made. If the parent disagrees with a determination that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, or with any decision regarding placement, the parent has the right to an "expedited" due process hearing conducted by the Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors places the student in the allowed interim placement, the "stay put" placement is that setting until its expiration or until the hearing officer's decision, whichever is first.

Paragraph II-7. Transportation

The Charter Committee does not envision providing transportation at this time; however, once the Board of Directors is in place it will re-evaluate this position annually. The school plans to contract bus services through the Kershaw County School District for field trips, as it has in the past. *However, lack of transportation will NOT preclude students from attending MSC.*

In the instance where a student requires public transportation MSC may choose to use Kershaw County School District assets, and an agreement in principal has already been reached to that effect (see Appendix U). As the precise need has not been determined the Superintendent of KCSD has informed us that “you'd identify a specific need... we'd work with our supervisors and the state guy figure out how to cover it and the cost.... The request would be made through my office...pretty simple and straightforward...” (Email from Dr. Frank Morgan, 31 August 2015). MSC will also assist parents seek carpool arrangements if the particular circumstances of the transportation need are impractical for KCSD.

In case the MSC Board determines the need would better be met with a bus owned by the school it has obtained a quote for a bus and insurance for it (see Appendix FF). In this instance the school will seek to hire a driver with a CDL with “P” and “S” endorsements, if required. MSC drivers will complete 50 hours in-service training during the 5-year licensing period, or such training as required by SC statutes and regulations. In addition, if a student has transportation needs listed in his or her IEP we will abide by those requirements.

Paragraph III-1 Budget and Finance

The Montessori School of Camden is committed to being excellent stewards of public funds and allocating resources to meet the academic needs of students and advancing the mission of the school. The school will implement best practices and generally accepted accounting principles that have resulted in a successful 38 year history of fiscally sound and conservative practices as a nonprofit private school. Multiple layers of oversight and policy assure financial responsibility and will carry over to the charter school.

The charter school finance committee includes Joseph Folsom who is a CPA with over fifteen years of accounting experience and Dr. John Moncure who is the current private school's headmaster. Dr. Moncure has run the school and prepared the private school's budget for over ten years. Both provide the necessary qualifications and experience to develop the charter school's budget and ensure proper accounting and internal controls are put in place.

Five and ten year budgets were developed based on information from the SCDE funding guidelines, the current private school's historical financial data and conservative estimates of enrollment over the ten year period. Current EFA and SCDE funding rates have been used.

The process for developing the ten-year budget begins with careful assessment of goals and growth projections. Projecting the student enrollment over the ten-year period determines the required number of classrooms and teachers which determines the necessary additional classroom materials and other related expenses. Projected enrollment is based on the private school's historical enrollment data and actual demand and expressed interest in the charter school from the public. Administrative and overhead expenses are budgeted from actual historical costs with increases for inflation.

The budgeting process used for the charter school will reflect the requirements associated with being excellent stewards of public funds.

- November – Assess the expected revenues and expenses for the current school year in line with projections from the spring.
- January – Prepare a draft budget to be presented to the finance committee.
- Early February – Present the draft budget to the finance committee for any revisions.
- March – Present the proposed budget to the entire board for vote on first reading.
- May – 2nd reading of the budget with refinements and changes.
- No later than June 30th – Final reading of the budget.
- During the fiscal year – Revise the budget based on actual enrollment numbers and present to the board for approval.

The ten year budget is built to be flexible to account for possible differences in actual and projected enrollment. Student enrollment numbers directly influence expense amounts such as required staffing levels, materials, and supplies. The current private school has a good banking relationship with Heritage Community Bank which will continue with the charter school. In the event of cash flow issues due to timing, a short term operating loan can be obtained from the bank.

The school is fortunate to have access to existing facilities owned by the Montessori Learning Center, Inc. (MLC) available to lease to the charter school (MSC). The lease agreement between the charter school and MLC will charge monthly rent based on local fair market rent on the existing and future buildings that MLC owns and will build. Future new buildings will be needed based on the ten-year projected enrollment. The agreement requires MLC to secure funds (mortgage), and build these new buildings at MLC's cost. The increased lease payments to MLC

due to the new buildings are built into the ten-year projected budget. (See Appendix CC for the memorandum of understanding between MLC and MSC)

Budgeted charter school teacher and staff salaries are consistent with similar public-school salaries. The teacher salaries for the pre-school program and intersession periods are covered by the associated instructional fee and intersession fee listed in the ten year projected budget. Salary incentives are budgeted in for teacher certifications, academic credentials, length of tenure, and professional experience. After year one, the budget allows for increased payroll expense, therefore increasing all salaries each year.

The pre-school program instructional fee is currently budgeted to be \$155 per week per student. However, the school's goal is to have the instructional fee as low as possible and not exceed the cost of local day care facilities, and will engage in a variety of fund-raising activities to achieve that goal.

The school will have a dedicated "power school" employee to enable it to adhere to the procedures and regulations regarding the *Pupil Accounting System*. The power school employee will receive necessary formal training to ensure they will correctly follow the *South Carolina Pupil Accounting Manual* and the *South Carolina Student Accountability Manual* principles. Policies will be in place to safeguard student information with access limited to only personnel involved in the Pupil Accounting System.

The ten-year budget includes funds for outsourced fiscal management (monthly financial reporting and payroll functions) to assist the school with ensuring it is in compliance with South Carolina public school accounting practices and making sure a proper system of internal control is followed. Actual day to day management of the school including human resource matters and maintenance will be conducted in house by the school's headmaster and staff. Food services will

be outsourced to local providers. The ten-year budget assumes funds brought in by lunch sales and the USDA will cover the food services. USDA revenue is calculated at 10% reduced and 20% free lunch at the current USDA rates.

A “student incidental fee” will be assessed to each student. The incidental fee will match the then current student incidental fee (\$30 for 2017-2018) that the local Kershaw County School District (KCSD) charges. Students qualifying for free lunch will not pay a fee and reduced lunch students will pay a lower fee (also matching KCSD). Per charter school law, no student will be denied enrollment based on ability to pay the incidental fee. Income from the student incidental fee is built into the ten-year budget.

“Soft funds” including annual contributions, donations, and fundraising activities are built into the ten-year budget. Documentation of these soft funds are presented in Appendix AA.

Assets consisting of a foundation maintained at the Central Carolina Community Foundation will transfer to the charter school. MSC will contact the original donors to review details of the endowment agreements in light of the change from a private school to a charter school and make such changes as necessary.

Due to budget constraints, the school will not be able to initially participate in the South Carolina Retirement System. A private retirement plan may be offered over time as the budget allows for the additional expense. The school will participate in the state benefits program in order to offer employees health insurance.

“In accordance with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40 50(B)(3), a charter school must adhere to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as are applied to public schools. Also, in accordance with Section 59-40 230(E)(10), a charter school must procure an outside annual certified financial audit on funds

and submit it to the SCDE as required. As a charter school is a component unit of the sponsor, the audit report is required to be submitted to the sponsor to incorporate the school's audit report in the sponsor's audit report" (South Carolina Department of Education). Annually, The Montessori School of Camden will solicit three bids from independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firms experienced in public charter school finances to perform an independent and thorough audit of The Montessori School of Camden's financial practices. The school will take into account the firm's prior charter school auditing experience, the location of the firm, and their pricing structure. The Board of Directors will receive, review, and approve the Auditor's Report prior to official reporting. The resulting audit will be submitted to the sponsor to be complied in the sponsor's audit report for the South Carolina Department of Education. Annually, The Montessori School of Camden's management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The auditor will conduct our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that the auditor plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error.

An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. The school will disseminate the financial statements annually with a presentation by the auditor at a full and public board meeting. The financial statements will also be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, are public information, and available to anyone upon request.

Paragraph III-2. Facilities

Founded in 1979 as the early-childhood component of Joseph Kershaw Academy, the Montessori Learning Center, Inc. became an independent, private non-profit corporation and constructed its first building on a 2-acre plot on Battleship Road, in Camden, in 1985. In 2002 it expanded to 9 acres, built a second structure, added a campus road (Montessori Way) and *put in place water and sewer connections for four future buildings*. In 2003 it acquired two more adjacent acres and a year later added Primary Hall. MSC, the new charter school, will occupy most of the existing 11.1 acre campus and three buildings and become the tenant of the Montessori Learning Center, Inc., which will continue to operate Infant and Toddler programs and occupy approximately one-third of the original building, Beard Hall (see Appendix CC for details of agreement).

Locations for three more buildings have been identified on the campus, corresponding to the student population growth plan outlined in Appendix V, School Enrollment Projection Form. Years for opening new buildings are projected to be 2019, 2021, 2023, and 2024. Each of these buildings is projected to have the same basic footprint as Bossong and Primary Hall (see Appendix BB), with interior dimensions adapted to the grades intended to occupy them. The architectural firm of Boykin & Munnerlyn of Camden, South Carolina designed the original structures and has agreed to provide their services for future buildings as well, and to consult architects experienced with public Montessori school construction as well.

Both SCDOT and OSF representatives have visited the campus. The report of SCDOT is attached as Appendix EE. MSC has not received a formal report from OSF at the time of this submission, but the oral report at the time of the visit consisted of a requirement to replace the

front door of Beard Hall and widen the bathrooms in Primary Hall. The inspector said she saw no “show stoppers.”

Every part of Montessori education is designed to inspire the child and the environment is no exception. Maria Montessori developed her theory around the environment and its significance for learning and its design being much more like a home than a classroom. In addition, plants and animals impact children’s achievement levels and behavior. MSC provides a comfortable, beautiful, well-designed space that facilitates rather than inhibits their learning experience. The outdoor space is an extension of the classroom, a place to meditate, walk a labyrinth, experience gardening, enjoy a natural play space with hills and water features, care for animals, design structures or sit with a friend.

Classrooms at MSC offer 1,100 square feet of space inside and still more area in the “outdoor classroom” behind each building. Future structures will incorporate spaces for workshop where students can create and envision designs, a science lab and kitchen area, a technology lab with laptops and tablets for design ideas, and meeting spaces for groups of the older students.

Paragraph III-3. Insurance Coverage

MSC will continue to maintain adequate levels of insurance coverage to insulate the school. Appendix FF contains a summary of all current policies including type of insurance, carrier, limits, cost, coverage dates and copies of the policy documents. Insurance policies and the limits will be adjusted accordingly with the projected future enrollment to the eventual projected 280 students. These types of coverage include:

- Worker's compensation insurance
- Liability insurance that covers limits of SC Tort Claims Act
- Property insurance
- Indemnity insurance

MSC will not own, lease, or operate any vehicles, therefore no automobile insurance will be needed. In the event MSC does acquire any vehicles, proper automobile insurance will be secured.

Liability and Indemnification. The Board of Directors of The Montessori School of Camden assumes liability for the activities of the charter school and agrees to hold harmless the Charter Institute at Erskine, its servants, agents, and employees from any and all liability, damage, expense, causes of action, suits, claims, or judgments arising from injury to persons or property or otherwise that arises out of the act, failure to act, or negligence of the charter school, its agents and employees, in connection with or arising out of the activity of the charter school.

See Appendix FF for coverage.