
Pennsylvania Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Charter Annual Report **Tuesday, October 09, 2007**

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SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

Bucks County Montessori Charter School (BCMCS) is located in the Pennsbury School District at 8931 New Falls Road, in Levittown. It is found in southeastern corner of Pennsylvania along the great bend of the Delaware River. It is surrounded by the Lower Bucks County communities of

Bristol, Langhorn, Lower Makefield, Tullytown and Yardley Borough. These communities can be characterized comprising a broad range of ethnic, racial, and socio-economic households encompassing family statuses from lower to upper middle class. The region itself is a mix of small towns and suburban locations, having a variety of residential, commercial and light industrial sectors.

BCMCS consists of 176 students in grades K through 6 comprised by surrounding school districts of Bristol, Bensalem, Centennial, Council Rock, Morrisville, Neshaminy and primarily our chartering district of Pennsbury.

Enrollment at BCMCS has held steadily at capacity since opening in 2000. In 2006-07 there were 33 kindergarten students, 20 first graders, 36 second graders, 38 third graders, 19 fourth graders, 16 fifth graders and 14 sixth grade students.

Each year it BCMCS conduct a lottery to select new students as there are continually more applicants than open spaces. Upholding to our school's philosophy, students are primarily chosen at the lowest possible grade level so as to best formulate Montessori responsiveness. For the 2007-08 school year, 24 kindergarten students were selected for admission, which left a kindergarten waiting list of 52 children. No spaces were available in any of the upper grades, of which a number of applicants were automatically placed on the wait list.

BCMCS admits students of any socio-economic, racial or ethnic heritage, religious belief and family structure. In order to be considered for the kindergarten class, a child must be 5 years of age by September 30th. Children who are between 6 and 9 by September 30th are considered for Lower Elementary program. Those children between the ages of 9 and 12 by September 30th are of an eligible age for the Upper Elementary program.

Each member of BCMCS family-staff; parent; student; and community endorses its mission. Primarily, our school makes an individualized educational experience consistent with Montessori principles available to elementary students within the Pennsbury School District and the surrounding districts.

Montessori principles are based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician in Italy at the turn of the Twentieth Century, who believed that children learned best by performing. At Bucks County Montessori Charter School, the goal is accomplished through the active pursuit of many integrated learning experiences: physical, social, emotional, kinesthetic, as well as cognitive. The learning environment provided at BCMCS facilitates intellectual, emotional and social growth, thereby empowering the students to become responsible, confident and caring global citizens. A goal of the school is to enable students to become young adults possessing strong, independent and analytical thinking skills, as well as an enduring love and passion for learning.

Our Montessori program embellishes students to discover knowledge at an individualized pace utilizing hands-on manipulative in an environment which promotes collaborative learning. This concept is emphasized, reinforced and supported by a highly trained, committed Montessori staff that helps maintain high achievement levels by the students on all the Pennsylvania and other assessment standards.

BCMCS is truly a learning community, where children are encouraged to reason, explore, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand. The teachers, administrators, students, parents and the surrounding community are all integral parts of its structure.

Core Purpose

Mission

SCHOOL:

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School will make an individualized educational experience consistent with Montessori principles available to elementary age students within the Pennsbury School District and surrounding districts. Montessori principles are based on the philosophy and methodologies of Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician in Italy at the turn of the twentieth century, who believed that children learned best by doing. In our Montessori School, this goal is accomplished through active pursuit of many different, integrated learning experiences: physical, social emotional and cognitive. The environment we provide facilitates intellectual, emotional and social growth, thereby empowering our students to become responsible, confident and caring global citizens. Our goal is to enable children to become young adults possessing strong independent and analytical thinking skills, as well as an enduring love and passion for learning.

TECHNOLOGY:

The educational goal of Bucks County Montessori Charter School is to provide our students with an individualized educational experience consistent with Montessori pedagogies and principles which support 'learning' by 'doing.' In the technology sector, computer equipments and related skill based programs will relate to our core principles and methodologies presenting various opportunities for our students to participate in activities in agreement to applied experiences in the classroom.

The technology lessons and activities at BCMCS will foster the pursuit of abundant integrated learning experiences. The goal of Montessori learning is to enable children to become young adults possessing strong, independent and analytical thinking skills and an enduring love and passion of learning. Therefore, our technology program's central purpose will be to empower students to locate information that they can use for knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis in order to synthesize and evaluate their learning and overall understanding.

To physically achieve this purpose, BCMCS we will supply, provide and make available apparatus such as computers, networks, secured connectivity to the Internet, scanners, digital cameras, and appropriate software applications.

Vision

SCHOOL:

The vision of the founding coalition was that the Bucks County Montessori Charter School will be a model Montessori School, providing a superior learning environment for its students through implementation of individualized Montessori curricula. The school will function as a learning community, where children are encouraged to reason, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand. The School's teachers, students, parents, board of trustees and the surrounding community will collectively be an integral part of its structure.

TECHNOLOGY:

BCMCS educators, administration, BOT, parents, students and community recognize that

technology and improved learning are inseparable. Our school facility currently has a computer lab and varying numbers of classroom computers, with the prevailing goal of 1 computer per 4 students. Our vision continues to place wireless and wired computers throughout the school connecting to a robust infrastructure which enhances immediate learning needs.

We envision imaging devices such as a Smart Board, LCD projectors, digital video cams, and scanners designed for students to use for illustrating reports, projects and assignments in all components of the curriculum.

It is our intent that the BCMCS web site becomes an accurate resource for parents, students, staff and community, becoming an informational tool that shares our Montessori values and informs the school community of all pertinent, relevant and significant current administrative and classroom information.

Administratively, the objective is to branch all elements of the school's infrastructure into a programmed system. Along with the current Progress Report and purchase order forms, our aim is to have in place a system which accounts student and teacher attendance, student and staff information via alpha lists, teacher lesson plans, calendar system and behavioral reports through a centralized processing unit.

Shared Values

The following are values shared by all constituent groups of Bucks County Montessori Charter School and its Board of Trustees:

- Children learn best by doing.
- Children learn through the pursuit of integrated learning experiences.
- Every child is an individual, who learns and grows at different rates and in different ways.
- Montessori principles promote a learning environment, which facilitates individualized intellectual, emotional and social growth.
- BCMCS functions as a learning community with a staff committed to high achievement and children who have a love of learning.
- BCMCS teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community are all integral parts of its structure

In the technology sector, values shared by all constituent groups of BCMCS and its BOT relate to the facts that:

- computers and their technologies will be an vital part of each student's future educational settings
- word processing skills will be vital toward this endeavor
- understanding of technological communications, varied computer programs and their equipment will become more prevalent in all learning settings

Academic Standards

Montessori education arose from detailed observations of children at different stages of their development. Its essence is to create an environment that allows children to exercise to the fullest those strengths and interests most prominent at each particular stage of life.

The Kindergarten and Elementary program at the Bucks County Montessori Charter School (BCMCS), then, is based on developmental needs common to 5-12 year old children and is also highly individualized. Our goal is to help the child become an independent, inquiring, and confident person. We see each child as a whole person, not a vessel into which we pour measured amounts of knowledge, but rather a fire to be ignited. By working to understand and support the developmental characteristics of the age level and the unique personality of each child, we follow Dr. Maria Montessori's plea to "follow the child."

In the Montessori elementary classroom, the children are given opportunities to learn to set their own goals, budget their own time, and appraise their own results. They are "self-starters" who work because of interest and enthusiasm rather than external incentives and sanctions.

It is worth noting that while the division of the world into these separate "subjects" is perhaps a convenient way to write about our work at school, it is not the way Montessori children experience it. As noted above, we emphasize the interconnectedness of the many things we study. To take perhaps the simplest kind of example: a child's arithmetic problems will often deal with real questions arising in his own study of, say, history of geography, rather than some fairly irrelevant problem drawn from a text.

To this end, BCMCS encompasses a wealth of subject matter which far exceeds any of those noted **section 4.12 of 22 Pa. Code (relating to academic standards)**. Accordingly, documentation and verification of each subject area will be taken into consideration:

(1) Reading, writing, grammar, speaking and listening

Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills flourish at BCMCS. Through activities and concepts related to each of these areas, work and interrelated learning is interwoven and thrives through all subjects areas.

Reading becomes the most important means to satisfy our students' interests. Witnessing older children reading and writing spontaneously, the younger ones are highly motivated to perfect those language skills which still need work. With carefully structured presentations and appealing follow-up work, the teacher and child work together to accomplish that goal. This basic skill-building in reading is done individually or in small groups. In general, early language work in Montessori is something exciting, not a chore or an opportunity for failure. The teacher carefully selects a treasury of special books for the classroom. The school combined Junior Great Books/Making Meaning program is developed, and the children learn to have very focused readings and discussions. Reading aloud to the children is a daily practice.

Writing develops in connection with exploration, research, and experimentation, as children want to share what they have discovered. Narrative, informational and persuasive formal writing for all audiences are primarily developed in the Upper Elementary grades, with finished drafts that stipulate appropriate spelling and editing skills. Informal and Creative writing allows all children to acquire very early in life a valuable tool for self-expression.

Grammar is made accessible to young children with the aid of colorful materials which employ symbols familiar from preschool work. In etymology, word study (synonyms, affixes, compound words, word families, etc.), analysis of sentence structure and of the parts of speech, the children find many activities in which to apply their vocabulary and their creativity with language. At the same time, they become more conscious of its structure. Discoveries in grammar, word study, and etymology quite naturally give rise to topical spelling lists; thus the children's spelling drill and dictation is assisted by their knowledge of the words' origins, meanings, and functions.

Once acquiring both the mechanics of language and a sense of its history and spirit, the student then experience poetry, prose, drama, dialogue, discussion, debate, and research, in true **speaking** and **listening** forums.

(2) Mathematics and Geometry

Maria Montessori described the "mathematical mind" as a universal human attribute. The materials and methods of the Montessori classroom reinforce the child's tendency to count, compare, compute, and measure. The child begins in Kindergarten a progression from concrete experience to abstraction. The concrete materials are appealing to children, ingeniously designed for revealing principles and concepts, and are made to be experienced and manipulated. Through both physical and mental activity with this material, the child acquires a profound basis for **mathematics**.

During the elementary years, a sequence of lessons brings the child naturally and gradually to the point of understanding abstract mathematical operations. The structure of the decimal system, the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and other key concepts follow this same pattern. Once they have a firm understanding of the concepts, children move toward memorization, keeping track of their own progress and work both in teams and individually. By using the Montessori math materials, most children experience many concepts traditionally taught much later, including fractions, squared and cubed numbers and roots, as well as the exploration of other base sets.

The Montessori **geometry** materials offer children an open-ended field of exploration. These materials and the lessons which accompany them permit children to discover important principles and relationships. A student may learn nomenclature for the types and parts of polygons, circles, angles, and lines. New knowledge is always applied to the environment (e.g., finding right triangles in the floor, walls, and furniture) and often extends to the creation of a piece of handwork as well. With the principles of geometric equivalence, the child acquires a key which unlocks a whole field of creative work and which prepares him for the study of area and volume.

(3)History

The **history** of life, both before and after the arrival of humankind, is inextricably linked to other subjects such as geology, geography, and biology. Thus it might be said that history is the framework for all fields of study in Montessori. Even in mathematics and language, we tell children stories of the great discoveries and inventions by which our predecessors built the powerful tools of language and number. Children love stories of the past, and in Montessori elementary we use stories to spark the children's interest in all areas.

Natural history materials, such as an elaborate time line of life, show children the dramatic and colorful spectacle of life forms and their development. Human history is presented from a perspective of the basic human needs (food, shelter, protection, transport, spiritual expression, etc.) and the variety of ways in which different peoples have been able to meet them. This framework guides their research and reveals both the unique attributes of different cultures and the universality of all. The further study of U.S. and Pa. history reveals many fascinating connections and interdependencies, not only among various peoples, but between people and the changing physical environment.

(4)Geography

We begin with theories on the origin of the Universe, in which principles of physical science are revealed, and then proceed to examine the forces which have acted over the ages to shape the world we inhabit. Children explore volcanism, the work of water, wind and air, and the basic physical properties of matter. We employ demonstrations, field activities, and experiments the children learn to perform on their own.

The relationships of earth, sun, seasons, zones of climate, etc., are also studied along with economic and political geography. A basic principle here and throughout the Montessori elementary program is that we give first the "big picture"-- answers to the fundamental why's and how's-- and only then work toward the more particular parts.

(5)Biology

Children are fascinated by plants and animals. It is not unusual for our Kindergarten children to have learned the names of many of the flowers, trees, birds, and mammals that surround them in the world, as well as the parts of flowers and the very beginnings of biological classification.

In the elementary, the emphasis is on understanding plant and animal behavior and physiology. The basic needs of plants and animals (e.g. water, food, defense, reproduction) provide the framework for investigating the unique varieties from the point of view of adaptation, both to contemporary environments and throughout time. Children's observation and discussion of differences build up the stores of experience with which they further their understanding of biological classification.

(6)World Languages

Our students receive a program rich in the Spanish Language starting in Kindergarten. Children receive 45 minutes of instruction a week, dealing with the spoken, written and the application of Spanish and its juxtaposition to the English language.

(7)Music, Art, Computer Technology and Physical Education

Music is as much a part of the classroom environment as pictures on the wall. Most settings have classical music playing in the background, enabling the children to discover the aspects that music brings. The work with ear training with both the diatonic and chromatic scales begins in Kindergarten. In the elementary we build upon these experiences, taking children into the beginnings of reading and writing music. Instrumental lessons are also offered to any Upper Elementary student who wishes to enroll.

Rather than art projects, we teach techniques and media for artistic expression. Children use colored pencils, clay, paints, collage and other media to illustrate their work.

Drama is a very noticeable part of a Montessori classroom. It is a special love of many children this age, and serves a number of purposes. Making an original play or one taken from a Great Book lesson or skit about something they have recently learned are ways in which children truly make knowledge their own. Older students perform a large scale recital that combines character performances, stage crew, concessions workers, etc. so as to encompass the entire process of theatre.

Children are physically active continuously throughout the day. Nonetheless, there is a need for the aerobic activity and skill development that physical education provides. Always our emphasis is on skill-building, to develop consciousness and control of movement, to enhance personal confidence, and to teach the techniques and values of teamwork and cooperation.

Strengths and Challenges

The carefully planned and prepared Montessori environment, with specialized developmentally appropriate materials, student teacher ratios of 11:1, lead teachers that are both Montessori and Pa. State certified, and a Leadership Team and parent community that is committed to the Montessori educational philosophy help our students develop within themselves the foundation of knowledge, habits, attitudes, skills and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. A flexible and creative staff has enabled us to provide an exemplary program.

The greatest challenge for the school has been locating qualified Pa. & Montessori dual certified teachers. This challenge has been met by recruiting teachers from a larger geographic area and retaining qualified staff members. In addition, the school has developed a Montessori Intern program to develop future qualified lead and assistant teachers.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

In the Spring of 2005, it was determined that Bucks County Montessori Charter School would pursue accreditation through the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and the American Montessori Society. BCMCS made application to both organizations and was accepted into membership as a Candidate for Accreditation on December 19, 2005. All of the above was achieved in conjunction with an Accreditation Steering Committee composed of parents, administrators, board of trustee members and teachers.

In anticipation of acceptance, Bucks County Montessori Charter School began researching a variety of self-study options and settled on an on-line computer based program called the **On-line School Assessment School Improvement Process or OSASIP**. This program was developed by Foundations INC, a non-profit organization providing support services to charter schools and matched very closely the standards developed by the Middle States Association.

During the winter and spring of 2006 a selection of **OSASIP** Building Blocks or standards were assessed, action plans created and timelines assigned. These were all standards that primarily addressed the educational program. The self-study process involved teachers, parents, board members and ancillary staff, who were divided into teams and assigned to Building Blocks.

The results of the above study have become the basis for the strategic plan included in this Annual Report.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Brian Long	Teacher/Vice Principal	Administrator	CEO and BOT
John Funston	Principal/CEO	Administrator	BOT
Tony Stango	BOT President	Board Member	CEO and BOT

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: MATHEMATICS

Description: At least 85% of 3rd grade students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Improving 3rd Grade Math PSSA scores

Description: To improve consistency of instructional techniques

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Improving PSSA Scores		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Provide more opportunity for grade level planning	Teacher preparation time to be scheduled in back to back block sections in accordance to special's schedule	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: MATHEMATICS

Description: Student Problem solving skills

Strategy: Students to increase problem solving skills

Description: Develop staff awareness and learning sessions in relation to problem solving skills

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Montessori Team Leader Coach	Retain a highly qualified staff member to act as coach aiding and assisting teachers in the content area of mathematics	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Brian Long	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$4,000.00

Goal: READING

Description: At least 54% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Introducing higher level thinking skills into the lower elementary

Description: Promote more use of the Junior Great Books program into the lower grades

Activities:

Activity	Description
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Workshop on Bloom's Taxonomy and its implications in the classroom		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: READING

Description: At least 85% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Phonetic skill based reading improvements

Description: Reading coach to work individually with teachers, primarily in Lower Elementary grades, to better develop instructional skills in the area of work attach and phonemic awareness

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Improve phonemic awareness accross all curriculum areas		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: STUDENT ATTENDANCE (any school that does not graduate seniors)

Description: Student attendance will meet a 95% threshold and/or show growth toward the goal of 98%.

Strategy: Move to a healthier facility

Description: Facility change to a location that offers outside air access, improved HVAC systems, increased bathroom facilities

Activities:

Activity	Description	
new facility	Move site to a state of the art facility that offers better and healthier enviroment	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS

Description: At least 95% of eligible students will participate in required state-wide assessments.

Strategy: Maintain 100% participation

Description: Continue to write IEP that include student participation in PSSA and other local standardized testing

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Maintain status quo		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
John Funston	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School adopted the principles developed by Maria Montessori for their curriculum. Montessori Education last year celebrated 100 years of success world wide. Over 7000 Montessorians from around the world attended the American Montessori Society Convention last March in New York City. The BCMCS instructional staff and administration were also in attendance.

BCMCS has worked diligently to infuse Pennsylvania Standards into the Montessori Curriculum. This has been done systematically over the years since the school opened in 2000. Each teacher has a manual reflecting the infused standards

The BCMCS Curriculum has been aligned to the Pennsylvania Standards. The most pressing problem was that the Montessori Standards, which Maria Montessori developed, were in age range format. For example, the Montessori Standard for the understanding of the dynamic stamp game material is ranged for ages from 5 to 7 1/2 years. It was necessary to realign the Montessori Standards to match a grade level format. Consequently, the BCMCS Curriculum Standards can be thought of as being baseline standards by which we and the the state of Pennsylvania feel a student should be able to comprehend, understand and master. Montessori Standards containing vital linear and beginning stages not include in the PA standards were also included in the BCMCS Curriculum

It must also be noted that BCMCS is a true Montessori environment, and a key component is that students have the ability to move at their own rate and pace. This is true for both advance and less able children. The program is completely individualized each day for each child. The standards are useful in that they are "red flags" for students unable to achieve a particular goal. However, it is also likely that students will be working with materials and concepts two or more grade levels above their own. It is up to the teacher in each of the above circumstances to support each child with a program at their level.

As Maria Montessori states, "We are to follow the child". Manipulatives and "hands on" instruction help students move from concrete to conceptual and are important components, which are used to help all students and those less able in particular.

Teachers in a Montessori environment tend to be more of a facilitator by which they guide, support, tutor, demonstrate and teach their students. Montessorians have been using for decades the latest instructional strategy, Differentiated Instruction, being taught to under graduate teacher candidates. Large group instruction, small group instruction, cooperative learning and independent study are what one sees all day every day at BCMCS

English Language Learners

Although there are no English Language Learners at Bucks County Montessori Charter School at this time, BCMCS has developed a plan to evaluate potential students' language proficiency and provide services if needed.

The administrative staff has been trained and know the only documents need for admission are immunization records and proof of residence. The CEO is identified as coordinator and will ensure implementation of the ESL

A Home Language Survey for parents of incoming students provides a means of identifying potential students.

What was the first language your child spoke?

Does your child speak a language other than English? If so what is that language?

What language is spoken in your home?

If one of the three questions above is not English, a language proficiency assessment is administered.

BCMCS may partner with the Pennsbury School District to receive this service

Arrangements have been made to utilize the Bucks County Intermediate Unit to provide instructional services

This past year it was necessary to proceed to the administration of the language proficiency assessment for three students. All three children had not been identified through the initial screening, but were discovered as part of the IST Process. The screening found no language deficiency for any of the children.

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Graduation Requirements

Graduation Requirements

There is no graduation requirement for students exiting sixth grade other than the mastery of skills required for promotion to middle school.

The decision to promote a student to the next grade or level is based on a satisfactory level of progress in all academic and social areas. This progress is assessed through standardized test performance using both PSSA and Terra Nova results, performance on the Albanesi assessments, Montessori classroom work, and teacher and parent observation. Students with special needs who are receiving special education services are promoted to the next grade/level based on adequate yearly progress toward goals identified in their IEPs. While their instructional level may be below their chronological grade level, retention/promotion decisions are based on individual levels of academic progress each year.

A student may be retained at his/her present level of achievement that differs from the traditional pattern of retention. Since a Montessori curriculum is based on mastery at a level rather than in a grade, if the teacher and parent feel that additional work is needed to master the curriculum and/or social skills needed, a student may be retained though remaining in the same classroom. If satisfactory progress is made, the child may move to

the next designated level during the school year. It has happened that because of significant progress a student has been moved from lower to upper elementary during the year. Because of the multi-age classroom, and the Montessori philosophy of individualized instruction and planning lessons for each child at their own level, retention is being used less and less.

Special Education

The Special Education staff at Bucks County Montessori Charter School are extremely pro-active in identifying and supporting students who are at risk and require additional services.

During the 2006-07 school year, it was decided to pilot a full inclusion program in one of the lower elementary classes. Montessori classes usually have a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher. The Assistant Teacher in the class identified as the class to pilot the inclusion program was replaced with a dual certified teacher (PA Instructional Level I and Special Education). The results of the pilot program showed the inclusion model is more effective, efficient and cost effective than a pull-out program. The children did not identify the Assistant Teacher as one who was there to help just the children with the IEP, but as another teacher to help everyone. Of course the IEP children were a priority and their IEP was addressed, and done in a way that did not place a stigma on the child as it would have with a pull-out program. In addition, the support the IEP children needed was available the entire day and not just for the 30 minutes a day they would have received in a pull-out program.

The inclusion program is being expanded to a second Lower Elementary Class and one Upper Elementary Class for the 2007-08 school year.

Services will also be available in a pull-out program for a very small number of children who have more serious disabilities. Their level of inclusion will still be above 70%

Speech, Language, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy will continue to be contracted through the Intermediate Unit on an as needed basis.

Any additional time in the special education staff's schedule is used to address remediation for children needing temporary support.

Evaluative services for the purpose of identifying children with disabilities are provided by a private contractor.

In addition to the above, the Montessori Curriculum is an excellent program for at risk children. Individualized instruction, hands-on manipulatives, learning at one's own pace are all strategies used for these children, which allows them to be successful in the regular education classes.

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Cathryn Campbell	.5	Hearing Impaired	BCMCS	1	1:1 support for a deaf child
Anna Millili	1.0	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	4	Inclusion Class
Sherry Walter	.5	Learning Support	BCMCS	6	Inclusion and pull out support
Kelly Erickson	.4	Learning Support	BCMCS	6	Pull out support

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
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Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Personal Health Care Assistant	BCMCS	1.0

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
BCIU 22	Speech Therapy	7.5
BCIU 22	Occupational Therapy	10.0
BCIU 22	Physical Therapy	1.5
Barbara Noble Psychological Services	Psychologist	As needed

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
Terra Nova	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Albanesi Montessori Assessments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Albanesi	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment

I. Student Assessment:

a. Overall Statement:

BCMCS has an exceptional system of student accountability that allows exclusive Montessori principles to work within the traditional testing requirements and assessments that the state and NCLB necessitate. Through a three-part structure, student accountability at BCMCS first and foremost identifies the individual student, and then focuses on the specific classrooms, finally centering on the school as a whole. Through this initiative, BCMCS students continue to make marked progress in nearly all measurable aspects.

First off, befitting the Montessori Philosophy to focus on the **individual** child, BCMCS evaluates each student's standardized results. Through this individualized study, the teachers, presenting to and for the administration, make an effort to identify students who score in a

manner uncharacteristic of their performance in the classroom. Supporting documentation, such as Albanesi Montessori assessment scores, progress reporting grades, teacher observation notes, classroom assessments and/or portfolio works are used in this juxtaposed measure. Each teacher then monitors the progress of these identified students carefully and over a long period of time. In our program, it is not unusual, but rather typical, that students to remain with the same teacher for three consecutive years. Recognizing the need for a centralized school-wide system for tracking individual pupil progress from year to year, BCMCS began a longitudinal study of achievement with the early data input coming from the initial testing year. An internal record keeping system has also been developed to enable BCMCS to carefully monitor individual pupil achievement and provide information necessary for accountability issues and school improvement.

As well, this individualized approach has provided early diagnosis of BCMCS students who test at or below basic range levels, allowing us to monitor learning and development so as ensure growth. From this forum, individual students are screened and closely monitored so as to be tracked and possibly identified. Close attention has been placed on this individualized track in grades K through 2. Our goal is to identify 'at risk' student during these early years, when proposed and detailed learning strategies and interventions are most productive.

Additionally, through the use of a combination of multiple assessment measures (standardized tests, Albanesi tests, classroom participation and performance, writing activities, teacher observation, etc.), the staff identifies those students who consistently score below a proficient level in reading and math. Students who fall in this range in two or more of these measures begin to go through our school's Instructional Support (IS) process and are set to receive intervention services. There is a certified special education teacher on staff who provides services to classified students, and as well serves as the resource teacher for these identified students not making reasonable progress. Each identified child has an Instructional Support Team (IST) Plan developed using this set procedure:

1. The resource teacher observes the student in the classroom.
2. The resource teacher and classroom teacher confer to review all available formal and informal data.
3. A conference is held which includes the parent(s), resource teacher, classroom teacher, and/or Principal or Vice Principal.
4. All available data and assessment information gathered is studied and evaluated. Strategies for intervention and support are planned.
5. The classroom teacher and resource teachers or inclusion teachers are actively involved in remediation and support. The resource teacher provides lessons, either within or without of the regular classroom setting, one or more times a week, depending on the degree of remediation required.

Secondly, each **classroom** is evaluated using the same data. Individual teachers report their classroom scores with the administration noting classroom strengths and needs. From this forum, strengths are supported by the teachers & administration and information is utilized and shared with the rest of staff during Staff Learning Days. In addition, each teacher looks for trends by group or level, paying special attention to the concurrence of subsequent years. The classroom is then adjusted to give such areas the emphasis needed to improve student understanding and performance. Weaknesses are noted as well, and support is offered via material needs and/or instructive assistance. In cases where additional instructional materials is needed, it was subsequently purchased and implemented. In the case of instructive assistance, peer coaching, team leader modeling, and/or administrative monitoring is utilized.

Finally, data that relates specific and identifiable **school-wide** areas of strengths, common standards and needs are created and discussed during Staff Learning Days. As the Montessori classroom consists of multi-age levels, student data is placed into grade levels, as is consistent

with traditional forms and the NCLB model that now exist. Below lists each grade level, with standardized results (when necessary) and summaries offered. The grade levels will be further broken into two parts that related to the respective standardized administered test.

1. K— First — Second Grade Standardized Scores: [Terra Nova]

For grades K thru 2nd, each grade has been broken down to relate grade equivalency scores in all tested areas. Results of the Terra Nova Tests have been reviewed and studied by the staff and shared with parents each year. The breakdown is as follows:

a. Terra Nova Scores — Kindergarten

*This past year marked the first that testing data warranted action planning, since we now had a subsequent year for which to measure. The majority of the preparation and evaluation dealt with individual students and other classroom needs. Below is a summary of the standardized grade equivalency scores collected from the Terra Nova tests in all testable areas:

Kindergarten	Reading	Language	Math	TOTAL SCORE
2006-07	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.4
2005-06	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.3

b. Terra Nova —First Grade

*This past year marks the sixth consecutive year of testing results. Changes this year continued to include a more comprehensive administered testing battery, with the intention of identifying more measurable data. The outline is as follows:

First Grade	Reading	Vocabulary	Reading Composite	Language	Math	Math Computation	Math Composite	Total Score
2006-07	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.9
2005-06	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.1
2004-05			2.7	2.7			2.1	2.4
2003-04			2.4	2.0			2.4	2.6
2002-03			2.4	2.2			1.9	2.0
2001-02			2.5	2.2			1.8	2.2

c. Terra Nova —Second Grade

*Again, this marks the sixth year of testing results. As was done in grade 1, a more comprehensive testing battery was administered. The results are as follows:

Second Grade	Reading	Vocabulary	Reading Composite	Language	Language Mechanics	Language Composition	Math	Math Composite	Math Composite	Spelling
2006-07	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.7
2005-06	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4
2004-05			3.6	3.2					3.0	2.9
2003-04			3.6	3.5					3.0	
2002-03			4.6	3.6					3.2	
2001-02			4.2	4.0					3.0	

Summary:

As these results indicate, grades K - 2 Terra Nova scores continue to be at or above grade level. The grade mean equivalent scores above represent an average of the performance of students in each grade in the sixth month of school. For example, students taking the test in March of their first grade year would be expected to be achieving at a 1.6 grade level in each subject area to be considered "on grade level."

Overall, the total grade equivalent scores for each grade level indicate that BCMCS students, on average, are performing at least one-half grade level above their current grade in all academic areas measured on this test. Results from each year are consistent for each grade tested.

Reading scores showed the greatest rate of above grade level performance. Math and language scores showed less dramatic rates of above grade level performance, but averages still indicate above grade level achievement in all grades tested. Noted improvements were made in the 1st grade math areas from last year to this year.

Most of these scores show that results of instructional methods remain consistent from year to year, with the exception of a slight decline in 2nd grade reading from the 2005-06 school year to this. Possible reasons for the decline were explored by the curriculum committee, with a more strict teacher accountability system [primarily peer and administrative coaching] being initiated, with slight staff reshuffling resulting as well.

In this manner, scores continue to be used to adjust or augment curriculum for upcoming school year in areas that suggested improvement. Past examples of occasions of implemented change include:

1. First year students scoring lower than expected in subtraction in 2005-06--- solution: teachers adjusted the sequence of Montessori instruction in which students learn multiplication after addition, and introduced subtraction earlier in the year to provide students with sufficient exposure to this concept prior to testing with noted positive results.

2. Second year students scored lower than expected on the spelling portion of the test in 2004-05—solution: Lower elementary teachers implemented a new spelling program and designed a process to more effectively monitor student progress. To date, two years of continued increased scoring.

2. Third — Fourth — Fifth — Sixth Grade Standardized Scores: PSSA

Since PSSA testing began, BCMCS has annually met the state mandated AYP requirements. The following grade levels have been broken into *subject* compartmentalized sections and are formulated to relate to the NCLB baseline standards. For grades 3rd thru 6th, subcategories of Reading and Math will be abridged to the data that reflects any/all improved academic performances, and will be followed with summaries that relate features of school-wide student achievement plans as well as indicate significant improvement and/or continued strong student performances.

a. PSSA Third Grade Reading

The data in the 3rd Grade Reading shows improvement made in each year since the PSSA testing began. With the current NCLB proficiency scale of 54%, BCMCS is currently 23 percentage points above the baseline target. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly baseline objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency in 2014.

Subsequent to the 2003-04 Assessment year, the school identified an area of need in the Reading sort. It was thus determined that a multifaceted reading program, which encompassed individual, small and large group learning settings, be created within the school's Reading program. This three year transitional project has just recently concluded, with improved score that show early indications of success.

Being that enhancement needs in *Learning to Read Independently* (developing purposes for reading, increasing word recognition skills, vocabulary and comprehension) and *Reading Critically in all Content Areas* (reading to relate details, recount inferences, differentiating fact from opinion) were identified, the school piloted a program intended to manage all comprised basic reading elements. Since our Montessori curriculum had already integrated areas with a direct focus on lower level receptors [i.e., to arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, and repeat]; and the comprehension section [i.e., to classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate] had as well been supported by our basic reader and SRA Individualized Reading Programs, a new reading program, *Making Meaning* (of which the school received through a grant) was initiated to extend and enhance the Reading program in the lower grades.

b. PSSA Third Grade Math

After the 2003-04 Assessments, the school continued in a more robust manner to employ the formed BCMCS Curriculum which juxtaposed and matched benchmarks to that of the set PA Standards. The newly developed Curriculum enabled the teaching staff to address certain content areas that were either not present in the Montessori curricula, or were addressed at such an earlier age/grade level that elapsed time had created a difficulty making the material readily accessible for the student. The BCMCS Curriculum aligned its benchmarks in accordance to how the state had established its standards.

In keeping in line with the Montessori philosophy, the BCMCS Curriculum embodied the standards to the/a specific manipulative [or material] needed in order to complete a particular

benchmark, as manipulative materials are the core component of a true Montessori learning environment. In 2005, this developed curriculum also had placed an emphasis on the newly revised State Anchors, which has further enabled the teaching staff to identify key testable material(s). The decline from the 2004-05 to 2005-06 levels were studied and assumed to be caused by a larger number of students identified as requiring special education services.

c. PSSA Fourth and Sixth Grades—Math and Reading

These results are indicative and consistent with achievements compatible with marks from the 3rd and 5th AYP scores. Being that these scores do not apply to AYP goals, they have been viewed as benchmarks for future assessments.

d. PSSA 5th Grade Reading

As the gains indicate, improvement has been made from last year to this year's scores in Reading. After the decline in scores from the 2004-2005 assessment, the Curriculum Committee, a collaboration of staff, board, parent and administrative personal, identified that the decline was due to major needs in *Analyzing Literature*, and minor needs in *Critical Reading*. The major needs in *Analyzing Literature* related to the inability to recount literary elements and devices in poetry, drama, and within fictitious stories connected to details, inferences, comparisons, as well as differentiating fact from opinion and evaluating written work. It was proposed that the Upper Elementary grades utilize a system that encompassed more of an emphasis on the critical and analytical components of literature, something the current Making Meaning program was not able to accurately address. The intent was to create students who were efficient in the *Analytical* [analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test] *Synthetic* (arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write) and *Evaluative* [appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate) aspects of true Literature.

The proposed and adopted program, which was set on a three year full integration schedule, was The Great Books series, which is touted to boast at its core a course outline that incorporates those identifiable areas related to our needs. The goal was to allow students to test ideas for clarity, coherence, and support from the text, involving themselves in a 'shared inquiry' which discusses, establishes, and develops individual perspectives. These were the identified factors which were in direct relation to the Analytical, Synthetic and Evaluative components for which our needs were identified.

Presently, the school has viewed this project in relation to the reading program school wide. With the needs identified, the Curriculum Committee utilized and related Bloom's Taxonomy, in relation to reading, as the framework for the entire Reading Curriculum. Concepts from the primary grades [1st-3rd] that relate to lower receptive components were to have the most emphasis on those lesser echelon receptors--reading receptors with a higher level of thinking were to play a subsidiary role, but a role nonetheless. In direct contrast, the upper grades were to place a stronger emphasis on the higher level thinking receptors, with a subsidiary emphasis on the lesser echelon receptors. Thus, it was the proposed goal that the Making Meaning/Great Books program and series currently be incorporated at each grade, utilizing each program's emphasized strengths next to the differentiating grade levels. The current system has the majority of the lower elementary grades utilizing the Making Meaning program, with each subsequent year placing more of an emphasis on the Great Books series. Models suggest a relative 90/10 split in favor of Making Meaning in Kindergarten, with moderate transitions that converts into a 75/25 split in favor of the Great Books series by the end of the 2007-08 school year.

Preliminary results show the new curricular initiatives have led to an early success, with a 15% increase in the Proficient or above category in its first year. Currently, the 5th Grade Reading scores are 26 percentage points greater than the NCLB target scores.

e. **PSSA 5th Grade Math**

PSSA testing has shown steady accomplishments the past three years, displaying continued strong student performances. Our 5th grade students have maintained consistent strong student performance marks in the Mathematics area. This, the committee has attributed, is the direct result to the well-formed and highly comprehensive Montessori math curriculum for which we instill. Our students learn mathematics by doing, with hands-on manipulatives and materials. This enables math to be conceptualized rather than memorized, which creates true understanding. Formulas related to math are discovered as opposed to being memorized by rote, allowing the students to perceive math as truly didactic in manner as well as approach.

These results, again, support a steady strong student performance, with the scores 43% greater than current NCLB targeted marks.

Highlights of the PSSA 2006 Results:

- **To a great extent, the AYP measurable gains that have been touted show improved scores from the 2004-05 marks in 3 out of 4 testing areas. Taken as a whole, goal improvement has shown an overall 12% increase from 2004-05 to 2005-06.**
- **In the most recent 4th, 5th and 6th grade areas, not a single student tested in the Below Basic level in Mathematics. As well, not a single student tested in the Below Basic area in Reading in the 4th and 5th grades.**
- **Math outcomes continue to display astonishing results, with the 3rd — 6th grade students testing in the 'Advanced' level at a 55%, 59%, 56%, and 67% rate respectively.**

3. **District to District to State Accountability Results:**

Not only have basic NCLB and AYP requirements been met, but testing scores are quite competitive, if not greater than our host and other local districts for which we serve. Below is listed a desegregated juxtaposition of our scores in relation to the state, our host district, and our surrounding servicing districts. The highest and lowest district scores have been taken from local serving districts which include our host district, Pennsbury, as well as other serving districts, including Bristol Township, Bensalem, Bristol Borough, Centennial, Council Rock, Morrisville and Neshaminy. High and low scores were the solitary score that corresponded to any of the listed districts. Highlights are as follows:

- **¾ of the last two scoring years have surpassed '05 state averages**
- **all '05 and current Math scores yield average marks of 10% to 24% points greater than that of the '05 State average**
- **'05 year scores are consistently within 5% percentage points in ¾ of the grading areas in relation to the highest local serving district score. Scores were consistently much greater than that of the lowest scoring district in all areas.**
- **Current test year scores indicate strong increases, with the high score [5th Grade Math] surpassing all '05 local district scores, being over 20% points greater than that of the last year's state average.**

4. **The Albanesi Testing Program:**

The Albanesi testing program is yet another testing tool utilized by BCMCS for all students. This testing system is purely performance based, specialized on specific content areas. Each test is broken into three subject areas; Language Arts, Geometry and Mathematics. Within each of these subsets is a segmented and categorized set of problems, questions, fill-ins, etc. that are non-subjective in nature. All testable material is non-ambiguous, in that answers are direct. A typical segment would relate division of whole numbers, parts of speech, percentages, etc. Each set is hand scored and recorded with the scores being related to the parents at each of the four marking periods. The tests are categorized in a related fashion that enables the school to use the scores as benchmarks, with the perfected model to show student progress throughout the school year by measuring the each compartmentalized sections. Not only can these scores help the teacher identify specific needs related to a particular content area, but can assess this process throughout the year. Similar assessments are used in the beginning and the end of the school year to demonstrate progress.

5. Achievement Plans & Other Local Measuring Instruments:

1. Development of combined PA State Anchor and Montessori Progress Report in a computerized system, which denotes not only academic achievements and progress, but social and emotional developmental growth rankings. As well, classroom behaviors and observations are noted in the annotated section of the progress report that is completed 4 times a year. Teacher observations are denoted in the anecdotal section, as these elucidations have been and will remain a vital tool in our Montessori learning environment.
2. Portfolio works, which include but are not limited to, math/geometry procedures, science projects, art works, cultural area dealings, etc., are held in reserve throughout the school year. These are carefully monitored and compiled in a fashion to denote progress, development, advancement and growth in many academic areas. As a bonus, Student-led conferences, involving the student, parent(s) and teacher(s) alike, allow the child to utilize his/her yearly portfolio [works] in a presentation fashion for the selected group.
3. Yearly surveys are conducted and relate to applied evaluation marks for teachers and administrators alike. As well, changes in school policy (rules and regulations), differentiated documentation (new report card system), or adoptions of new programs are given *primary*, *working* and *post* surveys, with the results discussed at Principal's breakfast, PTA and BOT meetings to validate, tweak and refine any and all changes which the school community identifies.

Teacher Evaluation

Rather than an authoritative top-down evaluation system in which the only evidence of teacher performance is that collected by an administrator during classroom observations, our teacher evaluation process is an ongoing, collaborative one in which the teacher participates through self-analysis.

The BCMCS Board of Trustees designed a teacher evaluation system that served the following purpose:

- To provide constructive feedback to individual educators.
- To recognize and help reinforce outstanding service.
- To provide direction for staff development practices
- To unite teachers and administrators in collective efforts to educate students

Therefore, the performance appraisal has been revised to include PDE 426 entitled Performance Evaluation as well as components of professional practice based on the PRAXIS III: Classroom Performance Assessments criteria developed by Educational Testing Service and aligned with teaching standards. The critical components of professional practice are organized into four general domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Each of the four domains of the framework refers to a distinct aspect of teaching.

Each category has teacher performance indicators that support the category's evaluation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The Teacher's Performance Demonstration indicators are the criteria for the evaluation. The categories presented on the PDE 426 provide knowledge to both the evaluator and the teacher of performance expectations and the required levels of proficiency for each category. The category's results, either satisfactory or unsatisfactory, are evaluated over time through the review of defined Teacher's Performance Demonstrates indicators in each of the four categories. PDE 426 is discussed at a pre-evaluation conference attended by the evaluator and the teacher.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure the availability of evidence required for each of the categories evaluated. The evaluator and teacher share the sources at the post-evaluation conference. The Overall Justification for Evaluation section specifies any key areas for improvement and provides the teacher with a clear understanding of the evaluator's overall judgment of the teacher's performance. The Recommendations for Professional Development section is based on information gathered over time to make a recommendation for the teacher's continuing needs for professional development and growth.

The evaluator and teacher agree on professional development goals at an end of year conference. A locally developed Summative Evaluation form is used as a basis for discussion of the professionals over all annual performance. A Professional Improvement Plan is then created for the staff member based on the summative evaluation review. If a specific goal is determined, the evaluator must include such at this time.

If a previous professional development plan was required from a past evaluation, the completion of that is noted. The evaluator includes in writing the recommendation for professional development, intended outcome of participating in the professional development and the timeline for completion.

Support personnel at BCMCS receive annual performance appraisals. Customer service, awareness of children's needs, program competencies, and professional growth are important features. Successes, needs, and interpersonal relationships with children, parents, and peers are some of the areas addressed at the pre-evaluation conference. In addition, the employee survey discussed in the Charter has been enhanced to include a pre-observation conference and a post-observation conference.

Each teacher receives two formal observations per year. Usually the second observation will focus on areas of improvement identified in the first observation. The CAO/Principal is responsible for conducting the Performance Appraisal process.

The current administrator is fully certified and qualified to conduct the above process. During the fall semester he taught a graduate course in supervision to students pursuing their MA in School Administration. The course was offered through Foundations, INC in partnership with Arcadia University. An Evaluation Check List for Montessori was developed by the school Montessori Team Leader, who is a highly trained teacher and Montessori Instructor. The check list was used as a guide by the evaluator during the supervision process. A copy will be included with this report.

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SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

There were no leadership changes on the Board of Trustees and/or school administration during the past school year. For the upcoming school year the board of trustees has elected Al Tenaglia to serve as President and Raymond Synder as Vice President. Mr. Tenaglia previously served as Vice President during the past two school years.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Anthony Stango	President
Al Tenaglia	Vice-President
Debbie DeNofa	Secretary/Treasurer
Chip Darling	Trustee
Jeff Fogel	Trustee
Ray Snyder	Vice-President

Professional Development (Governance)

All Board members have a full understanding of the school's charter application and by-laws. The Board's legal counsel and consultants from Foundations Technical Assistance Center (TAC) for Charter Schools have explained the charter school law, Sunshine Law, and relevant sections of the public school code. A BCMCS School Documentation Guide that includes a copy of the Sunshine Act, Right to Know Law, Act 22 Charter School Law, and the school's Policies and Procedures, Bylaws, Charter, Crisis Prevention Plan and Technology Plan is also distributed to each trustee.

John Funston, the Principal/CEO is an experienced retired superintendent of schools with over 40 years experience in education. As a consultant for Foundations, INC, he specialized in school governance and has conducted training sessions with numerous boards of trustees for charter school Pennsylvania and New Jersey. His experience as a resource is utilized on a regular basis

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The BCMCS Board of Trustees meets once a month for their scheduled public meeting, which is on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The Board President meets with the Principal/CEO weekly. Board Committees for curriculum, finance, fundraising, human resources/grievance and facilities meet regularly and the Executive Committee meets on an as needed basis. Day to day management is handled by the Principal/CEO. The board members are aware of their role and are very professional and conscientious as they carry out their responsibility.

Communication between BCMCS and its host district is predominately handled between the school's respective administrators.

Community and Parent Engagement

The BCMCS Board of Trustees is composed of parents, and founders from the community. At the beginning of each year teachers are directed to have the parents of their students fill out an expectation form to elicit input on anticipated outcomes for their child. At the end of each school year parent evaluation forms are provided to parents to elicit responses regarding the perceived success or lack thereof of key elements of the educational program, communication, and overall experience at the school.

The BCMCS Board of Trustees has instituted quarterly Roundtable Meetings at which announced presentations on relevant topics are made. Teachers and parents are invited to attend and discussion is encouraged.

At the beginning of each year BCMCS also holds a back-to-school night to introduce parents to the administrator, staff, and member of the Board of Trustees, all of whom are available to address questions about all aspects of the school and its operation. Parents learn where their required volunteer efforts could best be utilized and receive information about the various service committees they might want to join.

Open House opportunities, Community Days, and Montessori workshops are also offered throughout the school year. These events attract members of the community, encourage them to come to the school and experience what is going on in the classrooms and make them aware of the many ways they might be able to assume a role as an active member and partner of the school.

BCMCS has a very active and successful PTA, which meets monthly. It publicizes school events, ensures ongoing communication among all stakeholders, facilitates discussion of educational programs and school policies and procedures, acts in a service capacity, and is another opportunity for parents to partner with the school in their children's education. There is an open forum at the end of every meeting during which parents are able to raise concerns and ask questions. The Principal/CEO attends all meetings.

BCMCS actively seeks opportunities to participate in community service activities. Some examples are: sponsoring food and clothing drives, the Peace Study Program, and participation in the local St. Patrick's Day parade.

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School requires that every parent/family volunteer at least three (3) hours per month for the school. Fund raising, school maintenance, assisting the teachers with non-instructional tasks, administrative support tasks (i.e. mailings/copying), setting up/maintaining the library, serving hot lunches, participation in the Parent Teacher Association and accompanying classes on field trips are some of the services performed by parents.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

Numerous fundraisers were held this year, including book fairs, clothing sales, box tops for education, ink cartridge and cell phone recycling, and our Monte Carlo Night. Fundraising during the upcoming school year will be the same as last year, with additional fundraising events that are still in the planning stages.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The board is committed to adopting a budget each year which projects a surplus of no less than \$100,000. The budget also contains contingencies which more than adequately provide for fiscal solvency. The school also maintains more than sufficient fund balances. The school will also have its annual independent audit performed, with said audit results to be delivered to Pennsbury School District upon completion.

Accounting System

The accounting system used at BCMCS is a Quick Books Pro accounting system loaded with the State Chart of Accounts. All budget and financial reporting requirements are completed in a timely fashion and delivered to the appropriate state departments. The school also has an annual independent audit performed each year by a certified public accounting firm.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Section V

Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit

Siegal & Drossner, PC., Certified Public Accountants served as the school's audit firm. The most recent audit was conducted in October of 2006 for the 2005-06 school year. The 2006-2007 audit is scheduled and results of same will be forwarded to the host district once completed. Attached is a copy of the auditor's report for the 2005-2006 school year.

Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit - Attachment

- Section V

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

There were no citations or recommendations

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Acquisition of Facilities, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment During the Last Fiscal Year

During the 2006-07 school year the school rented the facility located at 8931 New Falls Road in Levittown, Pa. Furniture and equipment needs are identified and acquired through compliance with any bidding requirements and the established purchasing procedures.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

During the 2007-08 school year and beyond, it is the intent of the school to lease space located at 219 Tyburn Road in Fallsington, Pa. The facility located at this site will provide more spacious grounds that can house a playground, as well as additional interior size that will allow for more classroom space, additional administrative offices, and a larger library, multi-purpose room and nurse's office. Obtaining a facility such as this has been a long term goal of the school as it will impact favorably towards our pursuit of Middle States & Montessori Accreditation. Additionally, it will allow for more flexible scheduling and more creative science programs, and provide opportunities for the school to host more of the after school and fundraising activities on site.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunizations Records for Students

Bucks County Montessori Charter School employs a nurse who is on site during school hours. A doctor is under contract to approve standing orders, sign off on reports, provide physicals and write prescriptions for allergy antidotes. It is the nurse's responsibility to maintain all health records, dispense medications, conduct health screenings and provide first aid treatment.

- The Bucks County Montessori Charter School has a certificate of occupancy and fire inspection certificate on site.
- A complete listing of the year's fire drills is maintained in the school office and sent to PDE upon completion of the school term. BCMCS is required to maintain this record of monthly fire drills.
- The school nurse is responsible for oversight of the health and immunization records for students and staff. These are maintained in the school office.
- The BCMCS Safety Plan/Emergency Handbook is designed to provide a "best practice" response to any number of potential crises. It will help personnel make the best decisions and take the most important steps for safety and security until administration, emergency staff, and/or local authorities arrive.

Depending on the specific nature of the crisis, specialists within the school community and outside the building can be utilized. The safety team is operational and prepared to make the necessary and appropriate contacts. Our key personnel will carry cell phones, making instant communication possible. In case of an emergency, teachers will use the telephones in their classrooms to contact the main office. A two-way VHF radio, which broadcast's on the same channel as the Pennsbury School District has been purchased to provide communication during emergencies, when telephone communication is interrupted. The Falls Township Police also monitor the Pennsbury channel. Dependin g

on the specific nature of the emergency, additional personnel will be mobilized and the appropriate interventions will be made.

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

- **Health and Disability**
- **Workmen's Compensation**
- **Unemployment Compensation**
- **Property/Contents (\$250,000 replacement cost)**
- **Commercial General Liability (\$1,000,000 Occurrence Limit)**
- **Educator's Legal Liability (Errors and Omissions, \$1,000,000 Each Wrongful Act Limit)**

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

The staff retention patterns have been very positive since Bucks County Montessori Charter school opened in 2000. Each year the staff retention rate improved and more staff were added as the enrollment increased in response to the realization of established goals for the addition of additional grades. Additional staff were also added to meet the needs of the school in the area of special education.

The following are examples of staffing patterns for 2006 -07:

- Sixty percent of the original staff employed in 2000 when BCMCS opened are still functioning as lead teachers.
- The part time art teacher who started in September 2006 was the only person not to complete the entire year. She left to accept full time employment in January.
- Nineteen of twenty one staff are returning for the 2007-08 school year. A shift in the student population has increased the size upper elementary classes. Since BCMCS has an enrollment cap of 176 students, the number of kindergartens was reduced from two to one. A change in the special education program to a full inclusion model resulted in replacing an assistant teacher with one who was qualified to teach special education.
- The two staff above not returning were teaching with emergency certificates and are being replaced with certificated staff.
- Three of the twenty one staff are not certified. One is the school nurse and one is the part time music teacher. 85.7% of the staff have a teaching certificate. Two of the returning staff with emergency certificates are currently enrolled in programs leading to certification.

The board of trustees values highly qualified teachers and has made it clear that a teaching certificate for all staff is a priority for BCMCS. In addition the board of trustees has developed a policy and a salary matrix rewarding highly qualified staff and longevity.

Student Enrollment

As a charter school, Bucks County Montessori follows the enrollment guidelines of the host school district, Pennsbury, and state regulations. There are two requirements for admission in to kindergarten. The child must be 5 years of age by September 30th for kindergarten and 6 for grade 1, and all required immunizations must be current.

Enrollment history for 2006-07:

Starting Enrollment Sept 2006

K	34
1	20
2	35
3	37
4	20
5	16
6	14

During the course of the school year only 1 child left voluntarily from grade 1 and returned to the Pennsbury District. The parent believed a traditional more structured environment was better for their child.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

BCMCS continues to maintain full enrollment with a waiting list of at least 75 students for the upcoming school year.

Over the years the parents who withdraw their children have reasons, which fall into a pattern related to the school's organizational structure.

Each year several are withdrawn between kindergarten and grade 1. Many parents enroll at BCMCS for the full day kinderten program to save on child care costs. Most like the Montessori program and continue on, while every year there a few who leave to return to their district where siblings attend. This year there were 3 who withdrew to Pennsbury Schools.

Also there are parents who choose to leave after third grade at the end of Lower Elementary program. This year there was 1 student who voluntarily returned to the Council Rock District.

The next point when students frequently withdraw is after grade five at the beginning the middle school programs in local districts. Parents want their children to start middle school at grade six to experience the entire 3 year program. This year 3 children left to do so.

This year one grade 4 student withdrew and returned to the Central Bucks School District.

The remainder who leave are the grade 6 students, who have completed the full program. This year there were 14 children who were promoted to grade 7. These 14 were unique in that they all started at BCMCS in kindergarten and were the first group to complete the entire course of study.

No children were expelled from BCMCS.

153 of this year's students will return in September.

Sources (self-studies, surveys, discussions, meetings, conferences, etc.) demonstrate strengths of the quality and integrity of education at BCMCS. Public confidence is affirmed through achievement of enrollment projections and the constant, continual expression of high satisfaction with institutional effectiveness and student learning/achievement. Any changes during the instructional year were mainly due to family relocation, philosophical differences, or a need for a more restrictive or tightly structured classroom setting.

Conferences are held with parents who are considering withdrawing their child. Some parents are unable to attend a conference and an exit survey is mailed to them requesting the reasons for the transfer. For some parents, the decision to return to a neighborhood public school was made according to what they felt was a natural jumping off point from the very beginning; for example, finishing the cycle of Montessori kindergarten and lower elementary and re-entering a more traditional setting at fourth grade. For several parents, the end of fifth grade represents a logical time to make a smooth transition to a more traditional setting, especially as most public middle school programs begin at sixth grade. Some, anticipating an eventual move to a traditional high school program, felt that giving their child time to re-acclimate to their classmates and to this type of structure during the three years of middle school would make for the smoothest transition. In a few cases, parent perceptions of how a Montessori Charter education will benefit their child are based on their prior experiences in a private school setting, which may not be congruent with the programs that we as a public charter school offer. It is important to note that parents' decisions to choose a traditional, charter, Montessori, or other type of setting are driven by what they believe is best suited to the particular needs and temperament of their own child.

Waiting List Data

2001-2002	104
2002-2003	52
2003-2004	55
2004-2005	100
2005-2006	72
2006-2007	78

Transportation

The Pennsbury School District provides bus transportation in accordance with their regular policy for private and secular schools. Any children from other districts will be provided bus transportation service by their home district (provided their home district provides bus transportation, as Morrisville does not) Special Needs Transportation is contracted through the Bucks County Intermediate Unit.

Bucks County Montessori Charter School's responsibility for transportation involves providing the necessary student data to the local districts and assuring good student behavior on the school bus.

Food Service Program

Bucks County Montessori Charter School does not operate a food service program at this time. As the school grows, addition of a food service plan may be considered. The school PTA again implemented a Milk Program during the 2006-2007 School year and offered several selections of hot lunches on Fridays. Free and Reduced Lunch Surveys are circulated and used as a means of providing assistance to needy families.

Student Conduct

The Board of Trustees with support from BCMCS' legal counsel has developed a Code of Conduct. All parents and students receive a copy of the Student Handbook and the Code of Conduct yearly. Both were designed with the mission of the school in mind, to foster a structured learning environment in which students, faculty, administration, parents, and board members treat one another with mutual respect and with regard to the safety of self and others.

The Principal or his/her designee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct. The Board of Trustees with feedback from the Principal, Parent Advisory Committee, and faculty will continually review the Code of Conduct and make changes as necessary.

The school complies with the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24PS 1317.2 (Act 26 of 1995) 1318, Article XIII-A (Safe Schools) and Chapter 12 as follows and more fully described below:

1. The Board has adopted a Code of Student Conduct including policies **governing student discipline and a listing of student rights and responsibilities. The Code of Student Conduct is made available to the public, a copy made available in the school library and distributed to students and parents yearly. (22 Pa. Code 12.3)**
2. **The Board has defined and published the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from school. (22 Pa. Code 12.6)**

With regard to 1317.2 (Act 26 of 1995) and Article XIII-A the school prohibits the possession of weapons and shall expel for one year, any student who is determined

to have brought onto or is in possession of a weapon on any school property as required under Act. 26.

The school reports all incidents involving the possession of a weapon to local law enforcement officials and to the Pennsylvania Department of Education all incidents relating to expulsions for possession of a weapon on school grounds, etc.

The Montessori program incorporates conflict resolution into the curriculum. Also the nature of the program, which allows more movement about the classroom and more individualized instruction results in a less rigid environment. This philosophy tends to reduce the number of incidents and referrals for behavioral interventions.

There were 4 suspensions during 2006-2007, which involved 3 students

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

Name of School: Bucks County Montessori CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: June 16, 2000 Renewal 2005

Length of Charter: 5 Years **Opening Date:** September 2000

Grade Level: Kindergarten to Grade 6 **Hours of Operation:** 8:30AM to 3:15PM

Percentage of Certified Staff: 85.7% **Total Instructional Staff:** 20

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 11:1 **Student Waiting List:** 79

Attendance Rate/Percentage: Kindergarten 96.51% Elementary 96.46%

Enrollment: 176 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Pennsbury: \$9,245.08 Reg & \$21,049.60 SPED

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0

Asian/Pacific Islander: 16

Black (Non-Hispanic): 3

Hispanic: 10

White (Non-Hispanic): 147

Multicultural: 0

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 3.9%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 20

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	173	173	0	0	173
Instructional Hours	0	0	908.	908	0	0	908.25

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2007

The Bucks County Montessori CS within Bucks County IU 22 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

1. There are a full range of services, programs and alternative placements available for placement and implementation of the special education programs in the charter school.
2. The charter school has adopted a "child find" system to locate, identify and evaluate children who are thought to be a child with a disability eligible for special education residing within the charter school's jurisdiction. "Child find" data is collected, maintained, and used in decision-making. Child find process and procedures are evaluated for effectiveness. The charter school implements mechanisms to disseminate child find information to the public, organizations, agencies, and individuals on at least an annual basis.
3. The charter school has adopted policies and procedures that assure that students with disabilities are included in general education programs and extracurricular and non-academic programs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with an Individualized Education Program.
4. The charter school will comply with the PA Department of Education annual report requirements including special education information.
5. The charter school follows the state and federal guidelines for participation of students with disabilities in state and charter school-wide assessments including the determination of participation, the need for accommodations, and the methods of assessing students for whom regular assessment is not appropriate.
6. The charter school assures the Pennsylvania Department of Education that funds received through participation in the medical assistance reimbursement program, ACCESS, will be used to enhance or expand the current level of services and programs provided to students with disabilities in this local education agency.

This assurance must be signed by the Board President and the Chief Executive Officer for the charter school to operate services and programs.

Board President

Date

Chief Executive Officer

Date

2007 - 2008 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools

Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete

YES _____ **NO** _____

SIGNATURE PAGE

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.

Name John Fuston

Title Principal.CEO

Phone 215-547-5230

Fax 215-547-5032

E-mail jfunston@bcmcs.com

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

Identify the charter school's President of the Board of Trustees.

Name Al Tanaglia

Title President

Phone 215-547-5230

Fax 215-547-5032

E-mail AVtena@msn.com

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name Sherry Walter

Title Coordinator of SPED

Phone 215-547-5230

Fax 215-547-5032

E-mail swalter@bcmcs.com

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date