

---

# Pennsylvania Department of Education

---



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
333 MARKET STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

## **Charter Annual Report** Tuesday, October 09, 2007

**Charter School:** Philadelphia Montessori CS  
**Address:** 2227 Island Rd  
Philadelphia, PA 19142-1009  
**Phone:** (215) 365-4011  
**Contact Name:** Kathleen Dzura

### **SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Organization Description**

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School (PMCS) is currently the only public Montessori school serving children from preschool through fifth grade in the city.Â Montessori is a child-centered educational approach which highlights student autonomy and problem-solving skills, hands-on learning, andÂ student initiated learning.Â The curriculum emphasizes topics which are of interest to the students, with subjects studied in depth.Â The ability to do this is grounded by the fact that students remain with the same teacher for three years. Â Peace education and the interdependence of all things are at the core of the Montessori curriculum.Â Â The school opened in 2004 with preschool through third grade, and has added a grade each year.Â This coming year (SY 2007-08), we will add sixth grade and graduate our first class of students.Â PMCS is located near the corner of two busy streets in Southwest Philadelphia — Island and Woodland Avenues — less than ten minutes from the Philadelphia International Airport.Â During the 2006-07 school year, PMCS enrolled 192 students ages three through eleven (fifth grade), while maintaining a sizable waiting list.Â The majority of our students come from the following zip codes: 19142, 19143, 19151 and 19153, although we do attract students from throughout the city.Â The student population is 81% low-income,[1] 92% African American, 2% White, .5% Latina, .5% Asian, and 5% mixed race.Â All students speak English.Â Thirty-three students received special education services this year.

[1] As defined by income eligibility for free or reduced price breakfast/lunch.

## **Core Purpose**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School is to provide early childhood and elementary school children in inner-city Philadelphia with a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate Montessori education that will enable them to become young adults possessing strong self-discipline, independent and analytical thinking skills, and an enduring love of learning.Â By the time students leave us at age twelve, they will be accomplished readers, skilled researchers and will be able to apply math skills to solve real world problems.Â

### **Vision**

The overarching vision of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School is to offer a fully implemented Montessori program in an urban, public school setting.Â Building on the School District of Philadelphia’s history of Montessori education — the School District has implemented Montessori programs in some variations at the Thomas Mifflin School, Alexander Wilson School, William C. Longstreth School and Overbrook Elementary School — the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School will offer a program for students ages 3 to 12 in which the Montessori method is implemented by specially trained teachers who pay special attention to the unique developmental needs of individual students.

### **Shared Values**

## ***The core beliefs and values of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School:***

1)AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA Focus on Education for Life:

The purpose of PMCS goes beyond helping students to acquire basic academic skills. Students should graduate with both academic skills and the ability to act independently, think analytically, resolve conflicts peacefully, and realize their responsibility to others and to our world.

2) **Student-Centered Classrooms:**

Following the Montessori method, PMCS gives children, within a controlled environment, the freedom to choose their own activities. This stems from the belief that children learn by doing, and this requires movement and spontaneous investigation. Individualized "lesson plans" are developed for each child based on observations of the child's previous skill attainment. Each child is given lessons at his/her own developmentally appropriate level in all subject areas. Lessons are re-presented until the child attains mastery. Presentations and teacher follow-up establish the foundation for spontaneous choice.

3) **Specially Trained Teachers:**

Because of the unique role of the teacher in the Montessori classroom, the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School requires its teachers to have undergone specific Montessori education, which includes rigorous training in child development, psychology, observation, student teaching, use of Montessori materials, and classroom management.

4) **Multi-Age Classrooms:**

The charter school organizes children in multi-age class groupings that correspond with the developmental stages of childhood (ages 3-6 and 6-9) rather than traditional grade groupings (K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd). Younger students are stimulated by older role models, who in turn blossom with the responsibilities of leadership. Students not only learn *with* each other, but also *from* each other.

5) **Prepared Environment:**

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School has carefully prepared each classroom environment to reinforce the children's independence and intellectual development.

Rather than rows of desks, the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School's classrooms are set up to facilitate student discussion and stimulate collaborative learning.

6) **Montessori Materials:**

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School uses hands-on Montessori learning materials (other than textbooks and workbooks) that are designed to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. The materials are provocative and simple, each carefully designed to appeal to children at a given level of development. Each material isolates and teaches one thing or is used to present one skill at a time, as the child is ready.

7) **Focus on Peace Education:**

In the Montessori classroom peace education is not taught as a separate curriculum but is the unifying thread throughout the child's academic, social and emotional experience in the classroom. It is "taught" through the interactions between teacher and child, child and child(ren), and children and their use of the materials in the environment. Children are taught continually to respect everyone and everything in the

environment and to solve problems through peaceful means. At the elementary level, children will move from the ability to solve problems in their own classroom into a growing understanding, compassion, and tolerance for their world.

## **Academic Standards**

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School has submitted to the state and the school district a document that aligns the Montessori curriculum with the state standards in all subject areas. This document was submitted with our charter and with our first annual report. If requested, this document can also be submitted electronically as an attachment to the e-strategic plan.

What is included below, is a brief synopsis of the minimum requirements in order to be promoted from one grade level to the next. This is not a full description of our academic standards.

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School groups children in three year, developmental age groups: (3-6 years), (6-9 years), and 9-12 years). These are roughly equivalent to preschool - kindergarten, 1st - 3rd grade, and 4th - 6th grade. Below are the minimum academic requirements for moving from kindergarten to first grade, from 3rd grade to 4th grade, and for graduation from 6th grade.

### Criteria for Moving from the Primary (3 years - 6 years/kindergarten) Level to the Elementary (6 years/1st grade - 9 years/3rd grade) Level:

At the end of his first three years (i.e. equivalent to kindergarten completion), the child will be proficient in the following areas:

#### **Academic Areas**

##### Language

The child will:

- Be able to read phonetic words, identify a variety of sight words and recognize consonant blends in words.
- Be able to read level one easy readers.
- Be aware of the function of words and describe them as action, descriptive, naming, connective or positional words (i.e. verb, adjective, noun, etc.)
- Be able to express his/her thoughts in writing and have the hand and finger dexterity to use pencils as instruments for writing.

## Mathematics

The child will:

- Be able to count from 1-100 or beyond
- Be able to identify tens and teens
- Be able to identify units, tens, hundreds, thousands
- Be able to add and subtract (with concrete materials) single digit problems
- Be able to add and subtract (with concrete materials) complex numbers up to 9,000
- Be able to count by 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's, 9's, 10's up to 100.
- Have an understanding of addition and subtraction

## Geography

The child will:

- Have some knowledge of the 7 continents; their names and locations
- Know some simple facts about the people, their houses, common customs, common religions and livelihoods
- Will have a developing concept of land and water forms

## **Nonacademic Areas**

The child will:

- Have a sense of process (be able to follow multi-step directions)
- Have a well-developed sense of order (organization) and control of movement (fine and gross motor skills)
- Be able to concentrate on a task for at least 45 minutes
- Have developed a good degree of self-control

Because there is some overlap between the 3-6 curriculum and the 6-9 curriculum, children who have not mastered everything in each area of the curriculum can move on because the receiving teacher will be able to address the skills that have not yet been attained.

### Criteria for Moving from the Elementary Level (6-9) to the Elementary (9-12)

At the end of the second three-year curriculum (i.e. when leaving the third grade), the child will be proficient in the following areas:

#### **Academic Areas**

##### Language

The child will:

- Be reading at or above the grade level appropriate for his age
- Have an understanding of and ability to apply the rules of grammar and syntax
- Be able to produce a finished piece of writing having gone through rough draft, editing, polishing the piece.

##### Mathematics

The child will:

- Be able to count from 1-1000 and beyond
- Be able to use math operations in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using complex numbers
- Be able to read and solve math word problems and describe the process used
- Have an understanding of squares and cubes of numbers, multiples of numbers
- Understand basic geometric principles

##### Geography

The child will:

- Have in depth knowledge of the 7 continents; comparing them in size and population

- Have begun to study a particular continent in depth, including its countries
- Have a working knowledge of the United States
- Have made a state book for each of the 50 states
- Have identified land and water forms on various maps of the world

A child of 9 will be able to select an area of study, know how to research it and organize the information in at least one way to produce a finished product.

### **Nonacademic Areas**

The child will:

- Have a well-developed sense of process
- Have a well-developed sense of right and wrong
- Be able to accept responsibility for his behavior
- Be able to solve conflicts peacefully

### Criteria for Graduating from the 6th Grade at PMCS:

At the end of six years in the PMCS elementary program, the child will be able to:

#### **Academic Areas**

##### Language

The child will:

- Be reading at the appropriate grade level or above
- Have an understanding of noun and adjective classification, compound and complex sentences
- The child will have completed an in-depth study of literature and have developed an appreciation of style
- Be able to express thought through various forms of writing: persuasive, expository, narrative, poetry, etc.

## Mathematics

• The child will:

- Have an understanding of squaring and cubing, negative numbers, powers of numbers, nondecimal bases, ratio and proportion, and algebra.

## Geography

The child will:

- Have an understanding of the nature of the elements
- Have an understanding of the relationship between the sun and the earth
- Have an understanding of the work of air and water
- Have an understanding of the interdependencies of people
- Have knowledge of natural resources and the development of industry

The child of 12 will be able to select several areas of study, know how to research an area using many kinds of sources, and have the ability to organize the information in several ways according to the subject.

## **Nonacademic Areas**

The child will:

- Be able to work independently
- Be able to help younger children organize a project
- Be able to mediate problems between other children

• • • • •

## **Strengths and Challenges**

# **(Regretfully, I cannot change the formatting because the formatting toolbar has limited options).Â**

## **The charter school's program strengths and areas needing improvement:**

Strengths<sup>1</sup>[1]:

Commitment of staff and leadership to the integrity of the Montessori model (i.e. including 3 and 4-year-olds, ensuring all teachers have Montessori training and experience, tying the largest budget expenditures to the highest priorities, etc.);

The school is based on a coherent philosophy and pedagogy, not a mish-mosh of "innovative programs."

Special Education is a strength of this school.Â This year we moved to a more inclusive model with the help of two inclusive practices mini-grants (2005-06 and 2006-07).Â Students who had previously left the classroom to go to a resource room are now being served in the classroom.Â A small number of students whose learning or social-emotional needs are best served in a very small setting will be educated in two self-contained classrooms (one for life skills and one for social-emotional) in 2007-08.

- The school continued to implement our signature peace education model (aka discipline program) that emphasizes conflict resolution, logical consequences, and alternatives to suspension.Â We continue to share our Code of Responsibility, Respect and Self-Control (aka code of conduct) with parents, teachers and students as we work to build a culture of peace in the school.Â Five staff members shared our approach to peace education at the PA charter school conference this past Spring.Â Â
- The school included art, art therapy, and body movement in our educational program this year.Â In the 2007-08 school year, all elementary students will have five "specials" - one each afternoon.Â These will be: (1) physical fitness; (2) art; (3) music; (4) etiquette/grace and courtesy; and (5) fabric arts (quilting, batik, knitting, etc.).Â In addition, all students Kindergarten and up will participate in body movement.
- Our Home and School organization finally began operating this year. Â They ran fundraisers, meetings, and helped to generate attendance at parent meetings, conferences and other events.Â Â In addition, we have a parent representative on our Board and eight parents and grandparents serving on staff.
- With help from our sister agency, Montessori Initiative in Education, our facility was purchased last year.

Areas needing improvement:

---

<sup>1</sup>[1] Data obtained from Research for Action, a Pennsylvania non-profit advocacy group that analyzes the quality of public school education.

- Elementary (6-9) and (9-12) need improvement in reading and math achievement. There was improvement in reading this year as demonstrated by Terra Novas, DIBELS and DRAs. However, we have not yet reached our goal for proficiency and even when we do, we will still expect students to grow beyond that goal (which is set relatively low).

- Facilities need renovations and both interior and exterior building maintenance must be improved.

## **SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

### **Strategic Planning Process**

The Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School (PMCS) is just beginning a strategic planning process. We began this process by convening a strategic planning committee and by meeting with members of the Philadelphia Foundation who provide support to non-profit organizations that wish to improve organizational effectiveness. PMCS School leadership (board members and administration) will fill out a school governance self-assessment available as a strategic support to non-profits from the Philadelphia Foundation. In addition, strategic planning committee members will review sections of the PMCS annual reports for the past 3 years, the school's accountability plan and progress to date, PDE's "getting results" framework, AYP School Improvement requirements and Title I requirements to ensure that we are meeting all requirements. One teacher who also has a child at the school has agreed to join the committee. Other parent and teacher members will be added once the school year commences. We consider these members to be critical as they are key stakeholders in the school. We may also invite a community representative, the Children's Librarian of our local branch library, who has played an active role in our school since our inception. Once this committee has had time to meet, the details of the strategic planning process, including a schedule and a plan for soliciting input from larger groups of stakeholders beyond committee representatives (parents, teachers, community members, etc.), will be formalized.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	Administrator	Kathleen Dzura

### **Goals, Strategies and Activities**

#### **Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment**

- Quality Assurance

## **SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN**

### **Rigorous Instructional Program**

**NOTE RE: ATTACHMENTS - I TRIED AT LEAST 25 TIMES TO ATTACH A PDF SCANNED COPY OF OUR ACT 48 APPROVAL LETTER TO NO**

**AVAIL. I DID ATTACH A COPY TO LAST YEAR'S ANNUAL REPORT, SO BOTH PDE AND THE LOCAL CHARTERING AUTHORITY SHOULD HAVE A COPY OF IT. THANK YOU.**

## **1. Rigorous Instructional Program**

### ***What curriculum does your charter school utilize?***

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School uses the Montessori curriculum.

### ***Do you have documentation that shows that your curriculum meets the chapter 4 content standards and all requirements therein?***

The Montessori curriculum was developed well before the Pennsylvania content standards, in the early to mid-1900's, through years of observation and research. "Maria Montessori began her work as a scientist in the early part of the twentieth century, willing to delay judgment until adequate observation had been done and willing to change beliefs if convincing evidence was presented. As a medical doctor, she was trained to observe her subjects in a holistic manner; consequently, her research was naturalistic or ethnographic. From her first observations of children in psychiatric wards to her final work in the experimental elementary classes in Holland, she was constantly the scientist: observing, manipulating the environment or conditions, observing again, revising her approach, seeking other knowledge, and continually experimenting."<sup>2</sup>[1]

The Montessori curriculum is rich and exciting and it meets and often exceeds the Pennsylvania State Standards. PMCS has attached documents labeled Correlation of Montessori with Pennsylvania State Standards below. There are three documents attached, one labeled 3-6 (or pre-K and Kindergarten), another labeled 6-9 (or first to third grades) and a third labeled 9-12 (or fourth to sixth grades). These documents align the three vertical age groupings of the Montessori educational approach with the traditional grades referenced in the PA State Standards.

### ***How is the curriculum organized to meet the developmental and academic needs of students?***

*(For a more detailed description of the curriculum, please refer to the charter application, pages 12-25).*

The Montessori curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies, rather than a traditional model in which the curriculum is compartmentalized into several separate subjects, with given topics considered only once at a specific grade level. In the early years, lessons are introduced simply and concretely and are reintroduced several times over succeeding years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

---

<sup>2</sup>[1] Boehnlein, Mary Maher. (1988). Montessori Research Analysis in Retrospect. *NAMTA Journal*, 13(3), p. 1-119.

The course of study at the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School will use an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. Literature, the arts, history, social issues, political science, economics, science, and the study of technology all complement one another.

The curriculum is divided into two levels: Primary (ages 3 to 6) and Elementary (ages 6 to 12).

### The Primary Curriculum (Ages 3 to 6)

Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that children under six have extraordinary powers of mind. They “take in” their environment, the physical space, the language and movement of adults and children, with what Dr. Montessori called the absorbent mind — the brain’s malleability in the early years. The absorbent mind is at its peak receptively before the age of 6.

Because of the absorbent mind, the child learns easily from his/her interactions with the teacher, other children, and the instructional materials. The prepared environment allows him/her to touch, move, manipulate, and explore — learning at his/her own pace. The classroom is designed for children of mixed ages, with three, four and five year-olds all sharing the same space and teacher for three years. Because of their constant interaction, the children learn to take responsibility for themselves and for each other. They also learn to get along with children of different ages and abilities, to respect each other’s work and workspaces, and to treat each other with courtesy.

At this age, the curriculum is organized around five areas:

1. Practical Life - These exercises are designed to enable independent functioning, social grace, and self-esteem among children three to six years of age. Content includes development of coordinated movement, health, safety, in both indoor and outdoor environments and play (spontaneous, free choice of activities.)
2. Sensorial — These perceptual-motor development activities are designed to lead the child to an intelligent and imaginative exploration of the world. Content includes identification of a child’s process of classifying his world, problem solving, and critical thinking.
3. Language — This area of the curriculum focuses on the development of spoken and written language in the areas of daily life, story telling, composition, literature, geography, history, biology, science, music, art, as well as the functional aspects of grammar, syntax and reading analysis.

4. Math - These mathematics exercises give sensorial foundations for counting, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and fractions of whole numbers.
5. Culture — These exercises expose children to geography, history, biology, botany, and the physical sciences.

### The Elementary Curriculum (Ages 6-9 and 9-12)

The Elementary Montessori curriculum is broad in scope and provides for in depth learning, which results in well-educated and socially responsible human beings. It builds on the rich foundation the child has already received in the Primary Montessori Program (ages 3-6). There are five main themes from which the Elementary curriculum flows:

1. The Story of the Universe (General Science) — The origins and development of the universe are explored through this theme.
2. Life on Earth (Botany, Zoology, Geography) — Biology and botany are introduced to give an understanding of the interdependencies of life on earth. In addition, physical and political geography are introduced to give an understanding of the interdependencies of the Earth and life upon it.
3. History of the Civilization of Humans (History) - Social Studies is introduced to give an understanding of human beings' relationships to the development of the universe.
4. History of Written and Spoken Language (English/Language Arts) - Children are introduced to the concept of the development of spoken and written language. They also learn important functional aspects of grammar that are appropriate for children from 6 to 12 years of age.
5. History of Math — Children are provided with an understanding of and proficiency with key ideas in mathematics. Links between arithmetic and geometry are explored and the importance of problem solving is stressed.

While this curriculum is interdisciplinary by design, the child also learns by following the developmental inner structure of each discipline. Thus, skills and proficiency are developed at the same time, as learning flows from the child's individual interests. For example, while the child is learning the history of math as developed through the ages, the child is using math in all disciplines and moving through all stages of math proficiency. The child learns by practicing and moving forward, fueled by the desire to learn and facilitated by a research based model with the help of structured materials and research instruments. The fact that the Montessori curriculum is organized in three-year segments supports the child in his or her pursuit of curriculum mastery at his/her own rate.

## ***How does the charter school promote in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning?***

An excellent example of how the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School promotes in-depth and inquiry based teaching and learning is the Great Stories. These stories are a framework for cross-curricular learning which are intended to inspire an individual child or maybe a small group of children to develop and pursue some area of research based on their own individual interests, carry it out over a few weeks, maybe plan their own field trip, and then writing a report or doing some sort of culminating project. The intent behind the Great Stories and the approach to teaching and learning which results is described quite articulately by Angeline Stoll Lillard in her recent book. Thus, the following indented section is taken directly from Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius by Dr. Lillard.

Dr. Montessori believed interest comes in part through integration and interconnection, and the Elementary curriculum was taught with an eye to making connections across disciplines in what she called Cosmic Education. As the Montessori trainer Phyllis Pottish-Lewis described it to me, "Cosmic Education is a way to show the child how everything in the universe is interrelated and interdependent, no matter whether it is the tiniest molecule or the largest organism ever created. Every single thing has a part to play, a contribution to make to the maintenance of harmony in the whole. In understanding this network of relationships, the child finds that he or she also is a part of the whole, and has a part to play, a contribution to make." This interrelationship is one reason that Dr. Montessori advocated having only one teacher teach all subjects: it enables topic connection. In traditional schooling, when different teachers teach different subjects, at each hour a new teacher will "talk about something completely different, which has no logical connection with the preceding topic." (1989, p.88 as quoted in Lillard). Interest, she believed, is stimulated by seeing the interrelationships among things. Dr. Montessori saw the world of humans as based in five critically important developments: the creation of the universe, the beginning of life, the coming of human beings, and two stellar achievements of human civilization — the development of language and the development of numbers. These five developments are told about in the five Great Lessons, told early in the fall every year in Elementary classroomsâ€The stories are delivered with drama and are often accompanied by demonstrations such as pouring sulfur into ammonium dichromate to show how volcanoes spewed forth in the formation of the earthâ€The information given in these stories is built on throughout the year, in an ever-expanding spiral. In addition, each story is told with reference to the stories that came before it, facilitating integration across the curriculum. The stories are grand and impressionistic, designed to give children a framework for many of the lessons children will engage in over the yearâ€The stories are intended to leave the children with more questions than answers, inspiring them to go learn more. There are no follow-up assignments; if the child's interest has been sparked, he or she will have questions and will follow up on his or her own. The information transmission aspect of the stories is also not the point; the points of telling these stories are to give the child a framework and to inspire interest. Dr. Montessori wrote that the child "needs an impression, an idea which above all awakens interest. If he acquires the interest he will later be able to study and understand these subjects rapidly" (1948/1976 p. 63 as quoted in Lillard). Indeed, Montessori specified that the teacher should feel awe and marvel at the stories and should also be very curious to learn more about the world. In this way, the teacher models interest and the urge for discovery. The first story is the Birth of the Universeâ€One day shortly after the arrival of new children in the classroom, the Elementary teacher gathers the new children and any children already in the class who are interested (they usually are) in a circle, sits down before them, and begins his or her story, which might go something like this (the exact wording is flexible; teachers make the story their own). "There was a time, long ago, when there was nothing here — no classroom, no town, no America, no oceans, no earth, no planets, no stars, no sun, no solar system — nothing. Can you imagine that? A time of nothing, nothing but darkness and cold. How did all this change, so that all these things just mentioned came to be? What could have made all the nothing turn into all of

these things we know? There is a tremendous power in nature, a power that could turn nothing into all these planets and stars and even our Earth.”After the first part of the story, in which the teacher inspires awe in the children, she goes on to explain that the universe exists in stable form because natural elements follow natural laws, like the law of gravity. The teacher does not tell them about the laws but demonstrates them so the children can see and discover them for themselves. For example, the teacher might stop the story and sprinkle tiny squares of paper on the surface of water, pointing out how some pieces move and attach to each other, a simplified demonstration of the law of attraction. Later, after the story, the children might wonder about what they saw, set up similar experiments (usually with prepared experiment cards that guide their investigations), conduct studies, and draw conclusions. Within the story, the teacher only raises questions and gives children the grand framework that because of these laws, there is harmony in the universe. Teachers say this appears to comfort children and inspire them to learn about the laws. Next in the story of the birth of the universe, the teacher delves into the narrative describing the main event: the Big Bang. He or she talks about the chaos that reigned, and the darkness, and the cold, helping the children to imagine a possible world before the universe was formed. “Then there appeared a fiery cloud — its ingredients would become every planet and moon and star.” With the aid of four charts and six experiments, the teacher helps the children imagine the explosion and the result. Children learn how the Big Bang resulted in gases, liquids, and solids, such as the planets, including Earth, which were very hot and then cooled. Children leave the lesson with a sense of awe. Montessori teachers say they do not “see” the children then for days, as they become deeply absorbed in investigations of aspects of the story. The lesson could bring on exploration of geology, tectonic plates, volcanoes, different kinds of mountains and how they are formed, crystallization, and so on. The underlying idea is that the teacher should inspire the children to ask their own questions, which they are motivated to pursue answers through books, through materials provided in the classroom, and through “Going Out” trips.<sup>3[2]</sup>

***What strategies does the school use to accelerate academic skill development, content knowledge and learning strategies of students performing significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills?***

Because many of our students came to us “performing significantly below standards,” we are focusing on helping them progress along a continuum of learning, and instilling a sense of joyfulness about learning — which we believe is the greatest motivator to “accelerate academic” learning.

The Montessori three-year curriculum gives a child ample time to master content. Hands-on materials are thoughtfully designed to isolate and teach one skill. Materials are sequenced (in each subject area) from simple to complex. There is virtually no whole group instruction. Lessons are based on a combination of the child’s interest and observations of the child’s developmental readiness. Teachers must be subtle investigators, observing how often a child practices with a given material and when s/he attains mastery. Because the Montessori materials are self-correcting, most children recognize their own mistakes and “teach themselves.” The teacher’s job is to record what s/he observes, and then to

---

<sup>3[2]</sup> The preceding paragraphs are all from: Lillard, Angeline Stoll. (2005). *Montessori: the science behind the genius*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.130-132 She continues to describe the other four Great Lessons.

remain vigilant to ensure that the child is progressing in a manner appropriate for his or her developmental age.

Teachers at the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School maintain detailed observational records on each student's academic progress. Portfolios are also developed and maintained for each children throughout their tenure at PMCS. DIBELS and DRA tests are given throughout the year to assess language/reading skills. All of this information is used by teachers on an ongoing basis to inform individual lesson planning.

**Additional strategies being used to address below average academic achievement include:**  
• • • •

All students will participate in a schoolwide screening using the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT). Students who initially test far below average will be watched more closely, and different interventions will be attempted until the struggling students begin to make progress toward grade level performance..

The Youth Education for Tomorrow (YET) after-school reading program. This program is a four day a week intensive reading support program, focusing on specific reading strategies, vocabulary development, reading "games" and independent reading using leveled readers. Children are referred to the YET program based on below grade level reading performance and parent interest. The program is free, funded by a grant from Public/Private Ventures. YET was also offered over the summer four days a week from 9-12. The summer program integrated the traditional YET program but included art activities as well. For 2007-08, we have received a second grant so that we can add a class of 9-12 year old students (YET has been only 6-9 year olds for the past two years). This will double our numbers from approximately 24 students to 48 students participating after school.

Teachers took part in training on balanced literacy in 2006.

Teachers took part in 2007 in training on the foundations of teaching reading in the Montessori classroom. This was targeted to the teachers, assistants and consultants in our school who do not have the Montessori training. Montessori teachers participated as a refresher.

Our school adopted the Wilson Reading Program for the 2006-07 school year. We purchased the materials and all staff were trained in the reading program in August 2006. In addition, we hired a consultant who had experience with this program. He first delivered the program to special needs students, and teachers were invited to watch. After several months, he trained one adult in each classroom (either teacher or paraprofessional) in the program. All student support services (special education) teachers/assistants were also trained. For the second half of the year, students who tested low in reading were tutored one on one or in small groups within their classrooms using Wilson.

We also purchased the Simon Sounds It Out software program for our special education resource so that students who are emerging readers can practice their reading skills on the computer.

***What types of teaching strategies are used to actively engage students in the learning process?***

"Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is self-motivation of the child. Children must move themselves toward learning. The teacher (director) prepares the environment, programs the activity, functions as the reference person and exemplar, offers the child stimulations; but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through the work itself (not solely by the teacher's personality) to persist in his chosen task. If the Montessori child is free to learn, it is because he has acquired from his exposure to both physical and mental order an 'inner discipline.' This is the core of Dr. Montessori's educational philosophy." — From the PMCS Charter Application

**Prepared environment:**

Montessori teachers are trained to prepare a learning environment that will be aesthetically pleasing, that will convey a sense of order and calm, and that will stimulate interest in a wide variety of activities. Montessori classrooms are set up with what might be known as "interest centers" or "learning centers" in a traditional classroom. The room is divided into sections that relate to the curriculum. Within a learning center, hands-on learning materials are organized along a shelf from simple to complex. There is typically only one of each type of activity, so children must learn to take turns. A few highlights of the prepared environment include pets and/or plants to teach care of living things, a peace table for resolving disputes, a cabinet with chains of glass beads to teach square and cube roots, a cabinet with drawers full of geometric puzzle pieces, the "movable alphabet" — with large letters to initiate writing words and stories with four and five-year-olds, a robust classroom library, large puzzle maps of the different continents, and individual set-ups for "practical life" activities such as washing clothes on a washboard, coring and slicing an apple and serving pieces to friends, or scrubbing a table.

**Hands-on materials:**

In a Montessori environment, hands-on materials are used at all levels of the curriculum. Rather than teaching place value as an abstract concept to be deciphered on paper, the Montessori Golden Bead materials present place value in a concrete form which is interesting to and easily comprehended by very young children. Four and five-year-old children work with "unit beads" (individual glass beads), "ten bars" (ten glass beads held together by a wire), "hundred squares" (ten "ten bars" tied together by wire to form a square of 100 beads), and "thousand cubes" (ten "hundred squares" wired together to form a cube). Children can manipulate these objects to see relationships (for example: ten unit beads can be lined up to form one ten bar or ten hundred squares stacked on top of one another is the same as a thousand cube). Children of five and six can perform simple operations with very large numbers using these concrete materials. While young children are not yet ready to grasp the abstract concept of place value, they are engaged by these materials, and they are able to gain an impression of number size that creates a foundation for later number learning. Hands-on materials are not restricted to the math curriculum, they are used for language, geography, science, and practical life activities as well.

### **Freedom and choice:**

In a Montessori classroom, children are free to choose their own learning materials, where they will work (on a mat on the floor or at a table), whether to work alone or with friends, and when they are finished. They are limited only by practical concerns. For example, they may not choose something that is already in use, and they may not disturb a friend who is concentrating on another task. They may only choose materials which have been presented to them by a teacher; this ensures that they work on activities at their developmental level. They must treat the materials (and other members of the class) with respect, and they must always put away their work when finished.

### **Individual and small group instruction:**

Rather than whole group instruction, teachers in a Montessori environment observe children at work and then give individual or small group lessons based on their observations of children's skills, interests, and developmental readiness.

### **Great stories:**

See above under inquiry-based teaching and learning.

### **Other strategies for engaging students:**

This year, all classrooms will hold weekly poetry circles and monthly student reports (when students can present results of their research projects or stories to the group). In addition, we will hold a school-wide science fair and all students (either individually or in groups) will be involved in demonstrating their knowledge of the scientific method. Pre-K and Kindergarten will do class projects.

## **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- Montessori 3-6 Curriculum correlation
- Montessori 6-9 Curriculum correlation
- Montessori 9-12 Curriculum correlation
- Induction Plan Letter

## **English Language Learners**

During the 2006-07 school year, the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School served no English Language Learner (formerly LEP) students. Therefore, no ELL accommodations or special plans were necessary.

However, the school does have a procedure in place to identify and place students for whom English is not their first language.

Our plan to serve English Language Learners is as follows:

At every level (PreKindergarten through upper grades) immersion in a classroom where many voices are heard through out the day facilitates the acquisition of language.

The vertical grouping of children in each classroom exposes the children to enriched modeling of and exposure to the English language.

Having the same teacher for three years ameliorates many of the problems that can occur for an English language learner.

Ongoing educational evaluation by teachers will ascertain child's understanding of the classroom work. The use of manipulatives and hands on materials allows more specific and effective feedback making evaluation easier and more efficient

If an ESL child shows signs of needing additional help or is experiencing learning problems we will implement the process outlined below for the evaluation of children who may require special help. The evaluation, consultation, etc. for ESL children will occur in the child's primary language. Students deemed to have limited English proficiency will be assessed using an approved test of English language skills to determine their status as a student needing special assistance with English. The staff will be responsible for identifying any needs for second-language materials or additional personnel for their ELL students. Recommendations for purchases or additional personnel will be presented to the Board, who will be responsible for authorizing those purchases. Students who are English Language Learners will not be excluded from curricular or extra-curricular activities in school because of an inability to speak and/or understand the language of instruction. ELL students will not be assigned to classes for students with disabilities unless they qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We will provide translation for non-English speaking parents at conferences and support their efforts to learn English.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Not applicable - we only go through sixth grade.

## **Special Education**

I HAVE SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES READY TO ATTACH IN PDF FORMAT, BUT THE ESTRATPLAN SYSTEM IS NOT ALLOWING ME TO UPLOAD DOCUMENTS AT THIS POINT. I WILL HAVE TO ADD THESE TO A REVISION, OR PERHAPS FAX THEM.

Philadelphia Montessori Charter School provides Learning Support, Emotional Support, and Life Skills Support to students who are in need of Specialized Services. There are three teachers and two instructional aides to implement the services. The goal is to create as inclusive an environment as possible. Self-contained classrooms will be used only for students who have tried for a long time to co-exist in the regular classroom without success. These students will be placed in two new classrooms in the Fall where they can learn in very small classes with small teacher - student ratios. The Wilson Reading Program has been implemented for the Learning Support and Emotional Support. Small math groups with adaptive materials have been implemented for all children identified with Special Needs. Behavior Plans and Supports are

in place for the Emotional Support and the Life Skills Support. The Life Skills Support receives instruction for functional academics across all subjects. The Learning Support and Emotional Support receive one to one or small group instruction. The classroom teachers and the Special Education teachers collaborate throughout the year to support the identified student. The Special Education team consists of Special Education Coordinator, LEA, Regular Classroom teacher, School Psychologist, Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist to provide a complete and thorough evaluation as well as complete and thorough services.

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Loana Onwuka	1.00	Emotional Support	PMCS	8	Ms. Onwuka is also the Special Education Program Coordinator.
Julie Vercinski	1.00	Life Skills Support	PMCS	6	Ms. Vercinski is conducting ESY this summer and will run our life skills classroom in 2007-08.
Heather Silberman	1.00	Learning Support	PMCS	20	Ms. Silberman came to us mid-year and helped us to transition to a more inclusive special education environment.

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
One on One Tutoring	.5	Learning Support	PMCS	25	Mr. Thaddeus Falana, Director of One-on-One tutoring worked directly with special education students using the Wilson Reading Program. He also coached paraprofessionals to deliver the Wilson program in the classrooms.

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Special Ed Assistant	PMCS	1.0

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Pediatric Therapeutic Services, Inc.	Speech and OT	12hrs wky
BETA ONE, Incorporated	School Psychologist	4hrs wky

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Terra Nova	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Not Applicable	No						

### Student Assessment

- a.) Using the most recent PSSA/PASA data, any locally developed tests and other data that reflects improved academic performance, describe how the evidence indicates significant improvement or continued strong student performance. Include in the discussion:

#### *How these results influence development of annual measurable goals and targets.*

2006-07 was the third year of operations for the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School. Our first year's test scores were considered our baseline data (2004-05). We are consciously following our children's progress from one year to the next to look for improvements. We are not interested in comparing our third grade PSSA scores last year to our third grade PSSA scores this year, because this is two different sets of children — apples to oranges so to speak. Instead, we compared last year's third grade scores to this year's fourth grade scores. We feel this is a more accurate predictor in our progress in terms of academic achievement. Our longer term goal is to track the progress of each individual child over time, controlling for factors that might impact performance such as: number of years attending our school, attendance, number of disciplinary actions, etc. What we want to see is at least a 10% improvement each year.

Standardized tests (PSSA and Terra Nova) showed that the majority of children entered the school in 2004 at the basic or below basic level. Scores were worse in math than in reading comprehension, but in no area are our students achieving to the expectations set out in the school's Accountability Plan (included in Charter Application).

Although PMCS did not make AYP for two years running (based on PSSA scores), we did make considerable improvements in reading on several different assessments between the 2005-06 school year and the 2007-08 school year. See attached document entitled "Local Test Data" which actually shows progress toward academic goals by grade over three years on PSSAs, Terra Novas, DIBELS, and DRAs.

The Terra Nova is a statewide assessment that tests both math and reading. Using the Developmental Reading Assessment, we tracked the % of students reading on grade level. The DIBELS test looks at reading skills such as phonemic awareness in young children and reading fluency and comprehension in older children. (See attached).

We have not changed our annual measurable goals in reading or math, because we still feel it is crucial that students improve by at least 10% each year in reading and math skills. Rather than changing our goals, we put in place a number of strategies such as response to intervention, an overhauled special education program, retraining of teaching assistants (to work one-on-one with targeted children), professional development in different aspects of teaching reading for classroom teachers, the Wilson Reading System and Simon Sounds It Out programs, and continuing and expanding our successful after-school reading intervention (YET reading program).

***If locally developed tests are used, discuss how they are used and what impact they have on the curriculum and any measurable goal decisions.***

Please see above. Discussed PSSA, Terra Nova, DRA and DIBELS in the response to the last question.

In terms of "impacting the curriculum," that really does not apply in a Montessori environment. This is because there is an established, developmental three year curriculum that each child follows at his/her own pace. When a teacher notices through observations and diagnostic tests that a child needs to review a certain skill, the teacher will invite the child to participate in an individual lesson or small-group lesson designed to reinforce the weak skill while still following the child's interests. Remedial education in the traditional sense (drills, worksheets) most often elicit resistance and dislike of the skill/content being reviewed. The Montessori teacher must choreograph lessons that reinforce skills that are weak while at the same time inspiring a child to spend time in repetition because they are so engrossed in the task.

***Please describe features of the student achievement plan and note the usage of teacher observations, surveys, portfolios or other local instruments to measure student progress.***

During the 2006-07 school year, all teachers recorded their observations of student progress on a daily basis. Montessori teachers are trained to record which lessons are given, how the child receives the lesson (Do they seem interested? Is it at the appropriate level or is the child confused? Are they distracted by some other factor? Does the lesson need to be re-presented at another time?), when the child practices with the material, and when the child masters the material. In addition, teachers take note of socio-emotional developments and other milestones. These daily observational records for children are used to inform weekly plans that teachers create for each individual child (almost like an IEP, but updated on a weekly basis).

Each child has a portfolio that follows them throughout their time at the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School. Items collected in portfolios include writing samples from several dates throughout the school year, samples of math, science, and social studies/geography work, reflections on peace education, community service and other aspects of social responsibility. Book logs are collected to promote reading outside of school, especially reading with a parent or caregiver. Portfolios are reviewed to assess children's progress as teachers plan for parent-teacher conferences and progress reports. Students are encouraged to assess their own progress over time by reviewing their own portfolios and selecting their best work to include.

As described above, student achievement in reading is also measured several times during the year using the Developmental Reading Assessment and the DIBELS assessment.

***b.) Describe the strategies and interventions that are in place to ensure that students who are at-risk of failure, or those not making reasonable progress, are being addressed. What opportunities are they afforded in order to help them succeed? Provide clear evidence that demonstrates how those strategies are proving to be effective in terms of improved academic performance.***

Philosophical basis for supporting at-risk students:

Because many of our students came to us "at-risk of failure" we are focusing on helping them progress along a continuum of learning, and instilling a sense of joyfulness about learning — which we believe is the greatest motivator to help a child succeed in school.

The Montessori three-year curriculum gives a child ample time to master content. Hands-on materials are thoughtfully designed to isolate and teach one skill. Materials are sequenced (in each subject area) from simple to complex. There is virtually no whole group instruction. Lessons are based on a combination of the child's interest and observations of the child's developmental readiness. Teachers

must be subtle investigators, observing how often a child practices with a given material and when s/he attains mastery. Because the Montessori materials are self-correcting, most children recognize their own mistakes and "teach themselves." The teacher's job is to record what s/he observes, and then to remain vigilant to ensure that the child is progressing in a manner appropriate for his or her developmental age.

### **Specific academic strategies for supporting at-risk students:**

- Over the past year, we conducted professional development on the Wilson Reading Program; Teaching Reading to older elementary students; Writer's Workshop/ Balanced Literacy; Using Portfolios and teaching science and social studies in a Montessori classroom.
- Classroom teaching assistants were trained to work with individual, targeted children using the Wilson materials and other materials to reinforce basic reading and math skills.
- Continue the YET after-school reading program for children who are not reading at grade level, which teaches specific reading strategies, reviews vocabulary, plays reading "games," and provides time for independent reading using leveled readers. The YET program is free and operates four afternoons a week. Teachers refer students based on low reading skills and assessment results. Parents can also refer their children.

In addition, in 2007-08, we have committed to coordinating between classrooms to ensure that each teacher is teaching the Montessori curriculum in a way that addresses critical state standards. This will begin during our summer professional development in August.

### **Specific strategies for supporting students whose risk of school failure is based on social-emotional needs:**

Another factor that places children at-risk of school failure involves the connection between emotional well being and learning. As stated earlier in this document, in schools located in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods, it is tragically commonplace for children to come to school carrying burdens that most adults have trouble dealing with. In our school, 23 children (nearly 15%) of our students have lost a parent, grandparent, cousin or uncle to violence. An additional 11 children that we know of are impacted by parental alcohol or drug abuse, incarceration of a parent, sexual abuse, or domestic

violence. This brings the total to 20% of our student population. We had 8 suicide threats in the past year. These are young children to be in such pain.

In 2006-07, we contracted with an in-school counselor to do individual counseling with students. In 2007-08, we will increase the amount of time that in-school counseling is available, and will increase the scope of the job to include social work/case management with troubled families. In addition, we have created a special classroom, self-contained, for a small number of children with serious social-emotional needs that cannot be managed in a regular classroom. We will also work diligently during the first two months of school to set a culture of peace, problem-solving and kindness at our school.

As a school, while we maintain high expectations for academic achievement, we also work to develop relationships with children and to support them as human beings, not just as academic performers. Therefore, if a child is hungry, she gets a snack. If a child is tired, even if he is nine or ten, he may take a nap. If a child is feeling ill, she lies down while waiting for a parent to arrive to take them home. If a child is feeling sad, teachers encourage another child to reach out to comfort her. If a child is angry, he may write in an anger journal or remove himself from the situation and go sit in the peace corner, a quiet place, to calm down. When there is a problem, all members of school know that we work to find a solution, not to place blame. Much of this runs counter to mainstream practice. In many schools, if a child does not feel physically or emotionally ready to work, that is their tough luck. In a community where violence is common and resources are scarce, this sets children up for school failure. This is not just a "feel good" response. There is ample research tying children's emotional well being and learning. (For example, see Qi and Kaiser, 2003, and Parker and Asher, 1987)4[1]

We also focused on programming for our students to help diffuse anger. For example, students participated in conflict resolution training, art therapy, yoga, and grief counseling. We also offered art and dance to give children other outlets for their intense feelings. In addition, we spent more time working with parents to encourage them to seek mental health services for themselves and for children in cases where mental health problems seemed to be the root cause of behavior problems. Parent meetings on raising peaceful children and discipline with African American children were held. We plan to continue with existing programs to support children's social emotional needs. Our goal is to raise the necessary funds to add a full time social worker and school counselor or psychologist in the coming years.

## **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- PSSA (AYP) Data
- Local Test Data and Progress

---

4[1] Qi, C.H., & Kaiser, A.P. (2003). Behavior problems of preschool children from low-income families: Review of the literature. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 23, 188-216; and Parker, J.G. & Asher, S.R. (1987). Peer relations and later personal adjustment: Are low-accepted children at risk? *Psychological Bulletin*, 102, 357-389.

## Teacher Evaluation

### *a.) List the main features of the school's teacher evaluation plan.*

During the 2006-07 school year, Dr. Frances Connolly conducted formal observations of our teachers. PDE forms 426 and 5501 were used. The forms cover the following categories and performance:

- Planning and preparation
- Classroom environment
- Instructional delivery
- Professionalism

Observations include a meeting between observer and teacher to discuss the results of the observation. If a teacher does not receive a satisfactory rating, they would be given a corrective plan and would be re-evaluated in approximately two weeks. They would also receive specialized professional development, outside assistance, and/or direct support from the CEO of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School.

During the same school year, Kathleen Dzura, the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School CEO conducted informal evaluations of teachers' adherence to the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. Her evaluations covered the following categories:

- Teacher demonstrates ability to observe each student's learning needs and responds appropriately.
- Teacher demonstrates a broad repertoire of teaching strategies that honor varied learning styles. The strategies effectively meet the developmental, cognitive, emotional and social needs of children.
- Teacher demonstrates ability to give meaningful individual, small-group and/or large-group lessons.
- Teacher has appropriate expectations for quality and quantity of work.
- Children demonstrate decision-making, problem solving, and responsibility for their learning.
- Teacher gives clear and consistent verbal and nonverbal messages to children.
- Teacher models and facilitates positive techniques for conflict resolution.
- Teacher models and facilitates egalitarian interaction.

- Teacher voice level and tone is appropriate.
- Children demonstrate an appropriate level of independence.
- Children demonstrate pro-social behavior.
- Children participate in the care of the environment.
- There is evidence that children have internalized the ground rules and absolute limits of the classroom community.

***b.) List entities/individuals who are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation.***

- Dr. Frances Connolly was contracted to conduct formal evaluations of teachers.
- Kathleen Dzura, CEO of Philadelphia Montessori Charter School, conducted formative evaluations of teachers adherence to the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.

***c.) Describe professional development for the evaluators, particularly in the areas of Special Education and instructional techniques, that is unique to the mission of the charter school.***

Dr. Frances Connolly has been in the field of education for over 40 years. She is a certified Music Teacher K-12, Elementary Teacher, Supervisor of Curriculum, Elementary Principal, Secondary Principal, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent in Pennsylvania and Chief Administrator in New Jersey. She has been in a Director or Supervisory position since 1977 and has evaluated teachers and conducted staff development for various school districts and private schools. She also supervised Student Teachers for Penn State University which included extensive teacher training and evaluation. She has participated in the MDE/IEP teach. In her last position, as Director of Human Resources, she conducted new teacher orientation and was responsible for the final evaluation of any unsatisfactory teacher. This included representing the school district in legal proceedings.

Ms. Dzura is a life-long educator with more than 35 years of education experience in the Montessori tradition. Ms. Dzura has been the Head of School at two local private Montessori schools. In this capacity, she has conducted teacher evaluations in line with the education standards articulated by the American Montessori Society, an accrediting body.

**Teacher Evaluation - Attachments**

- Employee Evaluation Form I
- Employee Evaluation Form II

**SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

**Leadership Changes**

The President of our Board of Trustees stepped down at our June meeting after suffering serious health problems this year. We have a nominating committee that is working actively to fill this

position. One individual, who has been active in both our fundraising and board development/nominating committees, is considering the position. If this person declines and we do not immediately find a high quality replacement, then our Board Secretary, who is extremely active in the school, has agreed to serve as an interim Chair until the end of this calendar year.

Although on paper, it is not a good thing to operate without a Board Chair, this comes during a period of conscious board development, in which founding members were asked to reflect on their commitment to the school and whether they would be willing to commit this year whatever time and resources will be necessary to take the school to the next level. Founding members tend to fill a need with start up charter schools, but as schools grow, stabilize and develop, boards need to develop alongside.

Our board treasurer also stepped down, and we are considering two candidates for this position. As we are managed by an external business office (like an EMO), and our finances are stable, this does not create a leadership crisis in the short term.

The goal is to have all new board members voted in at our September board meeting if not sooner, so that they can help us think strategically about the next two to five years.

The CEO/Principal and Associate Director and the remaining board members are the same, providing continuity of leadership.

### **Board of Trustees**

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	<b>Office (if any)</b>
Regina Delaney	Vice President
Colleen Mele	Secretary
Nicole Walker	Parent Representative
Patricia Sinnott	member
Angela Zabrocky	member

### **Professional Development (Governance)**

The Board of Trustees undergoes an annual orientation (or refresher course) provided by an expert in charter school board development. Topics include the role of the board, board committees, charter school policy (state and national charter school law), the vision, mission and curriculum of PMCS, and the legal and fiscal responsibilities of the board with an emphasis on special education laws and discipline laws. In addition, the Board of Trustees and administration are in frequent contact with the school's counsel regarding legal issues including the Ethics Act, Sunshine Law, Special Education, Suspension/Expulsion, and Facilities acquisition. Attorneys for the school attend board meetings on an as needed basis, publish Sunshine Notices, review documents and provide updated information to the Board and administration.

The board will participate in yearly self-evaluations beginning in the 2007-08 school year. We are starting with the online tool provided by the Philadelphia Foundation. In addition, as the school undergoes evaluation from the American Montessori Society for the purposes of accreditation, this will include an evaluation of the Board. Finally, board members are invited to attend the annual charter school conference to attend sessions on charter school board governance.

## Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of Directors functions primarily as a policy-making body, delegating day-to-day administration to the CEO. The board exercises legal power and responsibility for the school. Its roles and responsibilities include: financial development and management, fiduciary oversight, and programmatic oversight. The board is responsible for: coordination of long-range planning and resource development; overseeing and evaluating the work of the principal; setting a framework for the budget process and authorizing the annual budget; approving large resource expenditures, significant changes in program or facility use, and expansion into new program areas; exercising final authority over personnel and faculty issues; and, serving as a court of last resort for resolving complaints. The CEO is an ex-officio member of the board and attends all meetings.

À

An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the board, duly recorded, showing how each member voted, is used in order to take action on the following subjects pertaining to school management: school calendar; adopting textbooks; appointing or dismissing school administrator or staff members; adopting the annual budget; purchasing or selling land; locating new buildings or changing location; creating or increasing indebtedness; adopting courses of study; designating depositories for school funds; entering into contracts of any kind where the amount exceeds \$500; fixing salaries or compensation of administrator, teachers, or other employees of the charter school; and, entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit or school district for the charter school's proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.

À À À À À À À

## Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment

- Board meetings with a quorum.

## Community and Parent Engagement

According to the bylaws of the school, there is always a spot on the board for a parent and a community representative. The Board of Trustees, in cooperation with the CEO and staff, provided opportunities for community and parent engagement in school activities:

- Parent Meetings (school-wide and grade-specific)
- Parenting classes (run by Resources for Change)
- Recruiting parents to serve as staff and volunteers
- Soliciting feedback and suggestions through a parent satisfaction survey
- Parent Advisory Committee finally fully engaged and actively participating

Home and School Association finally fully operational

First annual Poetry Cafe - a night where students served their parents appetizers and then took the microphone to recite poetry.

## SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### Major fund-raising activities

*Describe sources and amounts of funds and list significant private donations, foundation grants, other.*

The school receives its revenues from the School District of Philadelphia for regular and special education students for up to the enrollment allowed (168 students in the current year) under the charter as well as Head Start funding for 38 Head Start preschool students in 2006-07 and again in the 2007-08 school year. In addition, the school receives revenue from the Pennsylvania Department of Education through The Division of Food and Nutrition, Federal Consolidated Title Grants, FICA and PSERS reimbursements, IDEA Part B, and Rental Building Subsidy Grant. In addition, we applied for, and received, a second year of an inclusive practices mini-grant to promote inclusion of special education students in the least restrictive environment. We are also applying for ACCESS funding (Medicaid reimbursements for medically necessary expenses tied to special education IEP's, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy).

*Identify major fund-raising activities performed this year and planned for next year.*

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School has been actively fundraising to supplement public funds allocated to the school based on the number of enrolled children. During the 2006-2007 school year, the school was able to raise over \$50,000 in grants and donations from individuals, private and public foundations, corporations and non-profit sponsors.

#### 2006-07 Fundraising Revenue

Individual Donations/Fundraising Events      \$20,626

Public/Private Ventures (YET program grant)      \$20,000

Inclusive Practices Mini-Grant      \$10,000

\$50,626

Â

Many of the individual donations listed above were tied to two large fundraising events. The first was a wine tasting party. The second was a fashion show, where our students modeled clothes donated by the Good Lad Company. The event was held at the Union League of Philadelphia. The proceeds of any clothing sold at the fashion show went to support the school's capital campaign. In addition, both PMCS and the Montessori Initiative for Education have formed fundraising committees which are planning additional fundraising events for the 2006-07 school year.

Our estimated fundraising revenue for 2007-08 is as follows:

Â

2006-07 Anticipated Fundraising Revenue

Individual Donations	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ	Â\$ 5,000
Fundraising Events	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ\$15,000
Public Private Ventures (YET)	Â Â	Â Â Â Â	Â Â Â Â\$32,000
The Hoxie Harrison Smith Foundation	Â Â	Â Â	Â\$10,000
The Hassel Foundation	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ	ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ	Â\$ 5,000
The Philadelphia Foundation	Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â	Â Â	Â\$20,000
Â The Fels Foundation	Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â	Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â	Â\$10,000 Â Â Â Â Â
<u>Other Foundation Grants</u>	<u>ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ</u>	<u>ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ</u>	<u>Â\$ 5,000</u>
Total Anticipated Fundraising	ÂÂÂÂÂÂ	Â Â ÂÂ ÂÂ Â	Â\$102,000

**Fiscal Solvency Policies**

The School maintains an on-site Business Office and an education management company — OmniVest Management, LLC — to provide back-office support and ongoing financial planning services. The Business Office employs rigorous internal controls and procedures along with monthly actual to budget analysis to ensure that all expenditures are within the established departmental budgets. OmniVest Management prepares monthly financial packets which are shared with the School administration and Board treasurer and are presented to the full Board of Trustees at the monthly, public Board meetings.

Finally, the school maintains a line of credit with Sovereign Bank.

**Accounting System**

The School has contracted with Omnivest Management LLC to provide back office and fiscal management services. OmniVest ensures that the general ledger structure and account classifications are in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines. The School also utilizes OmniVest Management, LLC’s internal controls and procedures, which include annual and monthly budgeting, cash management, general ledger control, monthly financial reporting, and account reconciliation. The accounting software system used is QuickBooks Premier Accountant Edition 2007. This software is customized with the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts for Pennsylvania Public Schools. The school is 100 percent compliant with the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts for PA Public Schools. All of the school’s financial and budgetary reporting is prepared in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles(GAAP) and the applicable standards set by the Government Accounting Standards Board(GASB).

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

The School's Board of Trustees has engaged Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC , Certified Public Accountants (2370 York Road Suite A-5, Jamison, PA 18929) to conduct our audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007. The audit report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2007 is expected to be completed in October 2007. The School will provide PDE and the School District of Philadelphia with a copy of this audit report immediately upon its completion.

To date, the school has an audit report for each fiscal year through June 30, 2006. The Independent Auditor's Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 is attached to this report. The audit found that::

- There were no reportable conditions as disclosed relating to the audit of the financial statements reported in the Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on Audit of Financial Statements performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.
- No reportable conditions in internal control over major federal award programs are reported in the Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable to Each Major Program and Internal Control over Compliance.
- There were no audit findings which were required to be reported in accordance with Section 510(a) of OMB Circular A-133.

### **Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report**

The School did not undergo a state audit conducted by the Auditor General in 2005-2006 or, to date, for 2006-2007. In 2006-2007, the School forwarded our Financial Statements and Supplementary Information for the year ended June 30, 2006 to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Office of Budget, Bureau of Audits. We understand that the Auditor General has the right to review expenditures and to audit the expenditures made from state appropriated moneys.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The School leases a 14,400 square foot facility from an affiliated company, Montessori Initiative for Education, a non-profit organization who purchased the property from the City Of Philadelphia in February, 2006. The result of this lease is a newly renovated and modern school facility that will serve the needs of the School for the long term future.

In August, 2006 the School leased a modular building from General Electric in order to house the additional children registered as the School continues to grow. The School also purchased furniture, fixtures and equipment to supplement its current inventories.

### **Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs**

The School is scheduled to install additional school furniture, fixtures, equipment, curriculum and technology in accordance with its approved operating budget. These capital expenditures will be funded from the school's general fund. In addition, the School is in process of negotiating another modular building in order to house the additional children registered as the School continues to grow. The School will purchase additional furniture, fixtures and equipment in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 to supplement its existing inventories.

## **SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

NOTE ON ATTACHED DOCUMENTS: I AM HAVING TROUBLE ATTACHING SCANNED PDF DOCUMENTS. I THINK MAYBE THE ESTRAT PLAN WEBSITE IS JUST JAMMED. I SUBMITTED THE SIGNED WELLNESS POLICY AND CHECKLIST IN HARD COPY WITH LAST YEAR'S ANNUAL REPORT. I AM HAPPY TO FAX THIS OR SEND IT AS AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT OR EVEN MAIL A HARD COPY. I WILL DO THE SAME FOR THE REIMBURSEMENT AND REPORT OF SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES. THANK YOU.

#### **Safety**

In accordance with the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code, fire drills are conducted throughout the year for the charter school (in accordance with The School District of Philadelphia Policy and Procedure Number 110.4 and Sections 703.1 & 2 of Chapter 7 of the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code.

The school follows the foregoing fire evacuation procedures:

There will be an "all clear" issued, to advise persons in the fire drill exits to return their floor upon completion of the drill.

The date and time of fire drill will always be announced in advance. Every student and employee of the school is instructed as follows: If you hear a fire alarm and there has been no prior notification, you must assume that there is a real fire emergency.

All fire alarm drills are recorded in a logbook with all of the relevant information; date, time of drill, the actual time for evacuation, and any other factors. The Philadelphia Fire Department inspects the logbook annually.

#### **Health**

During the 2006-07 school year, the school contracted with a part-time Certified School Nurse (CSN), who provided oversight to a school nurse who was in attendance at least one day per week. This on-site nurse helped us to improve all of our health procedures. We did a much better job with keeping immunization records up to date, scheduling on-site hearing and vision checks and dental screenings for students whose parents were not able to do this with their primary care providers.

Upon admission to the school, each student is required to submit a physical examination, proof of appropriate immunizations, and dental, audio, and visual screenings. Each student is given an individual file which contains physical, copy of immunization records, screening results, pupil medical history, emergency control form, any professional observations, progress notes, problem list with follow up copy of any nursing care visits, medical administrative release forms, and doctors' prescriptions. All student health information is kept in a locked file cabinet, available to the CSN and school CEO.

### **Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs**

I had wanted to upload our certificate of insurance, but the estratplan system must be overloaded as it is not uploading.

Our insurance is through Hartford Insurance Company as brokered by Boardman Hamilton Company in Philadelphia. We have general liability, educators legal liability and Directors and Officers Liability. Limits are \$2 million. We have automobile liability for hired autos and non-owned autos at \$1 million. We have workman's compensation at \$500,000. Finally, we have property insurance at \$100,000. The city of Philadelphia is named as an additional insured and loss payee.

I am happy to attach this to an email, fax it or attach it directly into this plan at such a time as the system will allow attachments. Thank you.

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

### **Quality of Teaching and Other Staff**

NOTE ON ATTACHED DOCUMENTS: I HAVE A SCANNED PDF COPY OF THE ESPP ACCURACY CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE PAGE. THIS ESTRAT PLAN WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO UPLOAD THAT PAGE DESPITE MANY TRIES. I AM HAPPY TO SEND THIS AS AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT, BY REGULAR MAIL, OR TO FAX IT.

During the 2006-07 school year, the total number of full-time and part-time staff (including hourly) employed was 44. This total includes:

CEO

Associate Director

Administrative Assistant (2 - reflects turnover)

Maintenance/Security (2 - reflects turnover)

Food Service Manager

Special Education Coordinator/Teacher

Special Education Teacher

Special Education Assistant

Eight lead classroom teachers

Nine Classroom Assistants (reflects turnover)

Art Therapist

Art Teacher (2 - reflects turnover)

10 PT Classroom Aides (reflects turnover) (hourly)

2 Bus Aides (hourly)

1 Hall Monitor/Bathroom Aide (hourly)

1 Maintenance Aide (hourly)

***Staff turnover and retention:***

We lost two teachers mid-year. One was a new teacher who found that she was not allowed to do her student teaching in a Montessori school. The second had moved to us from a public Montessori school in Milwaukee who did not like Philadelphia and yearned for home. In both cases, we were able to replace them with very strong, certified teachers who were already teaching in our school. One was serving as a teaching assistant and one as an art teacher. We then hired a new assistant and a new art teacher. We have a number of hourly positions at our school that pay approximately \$8/hour and are about 2 hours a day (noon-time aide, bus aide, etc.). These positions typically have high attrition and many parents and community members use them as job experience and a stepping stone to better paying jobs or jobs where they can get more hours. This requires effort on our part to find new aides mid-year, but these are not essential positions. We also let our maintenance/security guard go mid-year and replaced him with a much more qualified individual. Our administrative assistant made a move into the classroom as an assistant mid-year and was replaced. So this year was marked by high mobility of staff. In addition, we did not ask a number of teachers and assistants back if they did not meet all the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Highly Qualified Teacher stipulations. We had hired some staff under the condition that they would complete the certification process, and when they did not, we had to let them go.

Recruiting and retaining teachers in a public Montessori school brings with it many inherent challenges. The first is the need to find teachers who are both Montessori and state-certified. Because there are many more private than public Montessori schools, most Montessori trained teachers do not seek state certification. Additionally, it is challenging to find teachers who have experience teaching the Montessori method *and* teaching urban students.

FORTUNATELY, we have recruited a very energetic and seemingly highly qualified team of employees this year. If all contracts are signed as we expect at this point, we will have more men on staff, more minorities, more certified teachers, and more Montessori trained lower elementary teachers than we have had in the past. We are cautiously optimistic that this group of teachers and assistants will lead us toward our five year renewal with energy, commitment and capability to help us meet our goals.

***Provide percentages for certified and non-certified professional employees with areas of teaching, specialist or administrative responsibilities. Do not include Resource Specialist in this percentage count.***

58% of our teachers (including art and special education) were certified this year. Of those classroom teachers not certified, one was working to transfer certification from New Jersey, one was working to transfer certification from Milwaukee, two are completing Master's programs with certification, and one is re-taking her Praxis. Of these five, three were not asked back and two signed contracts/action plans indicating that they must be certified by January. Both of our special education teachers were certified and so was our art teacher.

For the 2007-08 school year, all new teachers hired have state certification.

Our CEO is certified to teach and the Board member who conducts teacher evaluations is a certified principal.

All of our teaching assistants meet the qualifications of "highly qualified." In addition, quite a few of our assistants have Bachelor's degrees and are in Master's programs.

## **Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachment**

- PDE 414

## **Student Enrollment**

## **Student Enrollment**

***1. Describe the charter school's student enrollment procedures and policies, including the admissions policy. Describe how all policies and procedures comply with state law. Describe if a lottery was used, how students were placed on a waiting list and how those students were enrolled from the list.***

***If Kindergarten or First Grade is offered, provide a description of the admission policy with age requirements.***

Students are offered admissions to all grades with the exception of the incoming class of three-year-olds, based on their order on the waiting list. This is due to the fact that all spaces in the school are currently filled, and children simply move up to the next grade.

Applications for parents of new students wishing to attend the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School may submit an application to the office at any time to be placed on the waiting list. Students are placed on the waiting list, by grade level, in the order that applications are received. Applications can

be obtained from the school office or downloaded from our website: [www.philadelphiamountessori.org](http://www.philadelphiamountessori.org) - click on Register Your Child.

Each year, 24 three-year-olds are offered admission to Philadelphia Montessori Charter School. If there are more applicants than there are spots available, Pennsylvania's Charter School Law requires that a lottery be held. Open enrollment for three-year-olds ends the last Monday in March, and the lottery is held on April 1st of each year. All applicants receive notification in the mail with an exact date (for example if April 1st falls on a weekend).

The cutoff for birthdays is September 1st (i.e. to be eligible for enrollment this year, the youngest children must turn three by September 1, 2006; to be eligible for fifth grade, a student must turn ten by September 1, 2006).

Based on the charter school law, siblings of students already attending the previous school year as well as children of the school's founding members receive first preference, unless that number exceeds the number of spots available; then, those students will be placed into a separate sibling/founder lottery. The grade that is filled out on the application is the grade in which the student will be entered into the lottery; students may not be moved from one grade's acceptance/waiting list to another after the lottery has taken place. As spots become available throughout the school year, we will pull from the waiting list and contact the parent.

Philadelphia Montessori Charter School is a free, public school open to Philadelphia residents. There are no tuition or application fees.

***Provide an enrollment history for the past year, by grade level, including the number of students initially enrolled, number dropped, and number added. For students who transferred out, indicate the school(s) to which they transferred, if known.***

Grade	Initial Enrollment*	Number Dropped	Number Added	Schools Transferred To
Pre-K (3 & 4 yrs)	48			Unknown
K	24			Unknown
1st	24			Unknown
2nd	24			Unknown
3rd	24			Unknown
4th	24			Unknown

5th

**NOTE: OUR SCHOOL COMPUTER NETWORK COMPUTER (WHICH COLLECTS ATTENDANCE DATA) WAS DOWN FOR WEEKS AND WEEKS AT THE COMPLETION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. AS A RESULT, WE DID NOT DOWNLOAD DROP/ADD DATA.**

***Provide the number of students who completed the 2004-2005 year who are currently enrolled to return in September.***

192 (This includes preschool/pre-K/Head Start). Also, we are adding a sixth grade this year. Thus, we will have a total of 216 children in our building next year.

***Provide numbers of students who were required to leave the school (expulsions, other), and the numbers who left voluntarily.***

No students were expelled. However we did initiate expulsion proceedings with one student, whose mother chose to remove him from the school.

***2. Discuss any trends in enrollment including student turnover and retention data. Drawing upon exit interviews and other sources, explain why students choose to, or not to, return to the school. If the school is under-or over-enrolled based on the charter, provide an explanation.***

***We did start the year fully enrolled (144 Elementary + 48 Preschool. We finished the year down about ten students. One student we asked to leave. Several families moved away (to Delaware, the south, out of the country).***

## **Transportation**

The school contracts with the SDP for the purpose of providing transportation to its students. Kindergarten students are not eligible to receive bus service and those parents (as well as parents of our preschool students) drop their children off and pick them up daily. In 2006-2007 PMCS paid to hire bus aides in each of the two school buses that picks up our students in order to ensure discipline on the bus and the safety of all students. This was also an accommodation for a student with an IEP who rides the bus. The bus service provided to us is horrendous. We have gone through all the proper channels to complain, with the result being that the bus company "punished" us by only providing us with substitute bus drivers instead of a regular driver. The substitutes do not know the routes and as a result they are sometimes very late and sometimes miss certain stops leaving children stranded. We routinely field numerous distressed phonecalls from parents on icy or rainy days when no bus has shown up to pick up their children from their stop. Bus service is the one area where we rely on the school district for service. We appreciate the fact that we do not have to pay for this service and do not want to seem ungrateful. However, if we could receive a bus allocation that would allow us to contract with our own bus provider, that would be a much more efficient option.

## **Food Service Program**

Our school provides students with breakfast and lunch. We also serve snacks to children in our after school reading program and our after school daycare. We participate in the National School Lunch Program - with about 80% of our students qualifying for free or reduced price breakfast/lunches. The 2006-07 school year saw great improvements in the quality of our food service program. For our first two years of operations (2004-06), we contracted with Preferred Meal Services to provide our lunches. The food was all processed, and I had to argue repeatedly with the company's nutritionist to get her to stop sending us chocolate milk and captain crunch, to get her to replace white bread with whole wheat, to get cream cheese instead of butter with our bagels, and to get fruit to replace juice when possible. After extensive research, we switched vendors to Linton's Managed Services this year. It is refreshing as well as fresh! They serve fresh salad or cucumbers/celery/carrots and ranch dressing. We get fresh canteloupe and watermelon. Chicken nuggets are replaced by baked chicken. Meals are served warm in warming boxes and we have a warming unit if needed to keep temperatures at a set level. Milk is delivered each morning and we have a milk refrigerator in our food

preparation area.Â There are still some glitches, but overall the quality and nutritional value of the food has improved remarkably and Linton's is very responsive to our requests for changes.

We also changed the way food is served.Â We decided to serve family-style, a requirement for our Head Start children and something that fits in with our philosophy of creating a home-like environment.Â Children sit at tables of four and serve themselves from large bowls and platters, just as you would at home.Â We use this opportunity to teach etiquette such as: don't reach - instead ask, "Please pass the mashed potatoes."

We made one final change in an effort to reduce our school's impact on the environment.Â This is the year that we switched from paper, plastic and styrofoam to real dishes and utensils.Â This involved installing a three partition sink and hiring somebody to wash and sterilize many dishes each day.Â By doing this, we are reducing our contribution to landfills and preserving natural resources.

## **Student Conduct**

### *5. Student Conduct*

***a.) Describe your expectations for student behavior and discipline. Explain how your discipline policy complies with Chapters 12 of the Public School Code, particularly with respect to due process.***

For a full copy of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School Code of Responsibility, Respect and Self-Control, please see attached. It articulates compliance with all necessary laws and lays out due process procedures. In terms of expectations of student behavior and discipline, the following is excerpted from the Code of Responsibility, Respect and Self-Control.

### **Responsibilities of Students**

Children will be involved in making classroom rules and are expected to follow all classroom and school rules.

Follow directions the first time they are given.

Use calm, quiet voices and kind words.

Listen to what other children and adults say. Try to listen to both their words AND their feelings.

Treat your classmates, your teachers, classroom pets, classroom materials and the school environment with respect. Think of how you would like to be treated.

Do not disturb another student who is concentrating on his or her work.

Never hurt another living thing.

If you have a problem, use your words to work it out.

If you make a mess, clean it up.

If you see someone who needs help, see if you can help them.

If you do something wrong, or break something, tell the teacher and ask him or her to help you figure out a way to fix it or make it better.

Come to school every day, unless you are sick.

Always do your homework.

Think about how you can make the world a better place.

***b.) Provide the number of suspensions and expulsions by student.***

In 2006-07 6 students were involved in 6 suspension incidents. One was an in-school suspension. In addition, two children were given a week's bus suspension for unsafe activities on the bus. Expulsion proceedings were initiated for one student, but his parent withdrew him rather than proceeding to a hearing.

This compares to 2005-06 when 19 children were suspended.

We consider this a success of our peace program, which consists of a conflict resolution procedure with children to resolve their problems.

We also focused on programming for our students to help diffuse anger. For example, students participated in conflict resolution training, art therapy, yoga, and grief counseling. We also offered art and dance to give children other outlets for their intense feelings. In addition, we spent more time working with parents to encourage them to seek mental health services for themselves and for children in cases where mental health problems seemed to be the root cause of behavior problems. Parent meetings on raising peaceful children and discipline with African American children were held. Our goal is to raise the necessary funds to add a full time social worker and school counselor or psychologist.

**Student Conduct - Attachment**

- Code of conduct

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

**Name of School:** Philadelphia Montessori CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** March 17, 2004

**Length of Charter:** 5 years    **Opening Date:** September 23, 2004

**Grade Level:** 2006-07: 3 yrs thru 5th grade, will add 6th grade.    **Hours of Operation:** 2006-07: 8:30 - 3:15

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 2006-07: 58%    **Total Instructional Staff:** Teachers, not assts: 12

**Student/ Teacher Ratio:** Teachers, not assts: 16:1 (counts special ed & art)    **Student Waiting List:** Over 300 students

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 94%

**Enrollment:** 144    **Per Pupil Subsidy:** \$7,248

### Student Profile

**American Indian/Alaskan Native:** 0  
**Asian/Pacific Islander:** 0  
**Black (Non-Hispanic):** 132  
**Hispanic:** 2  
**White (Non-Hispanic):** 2  
**Multicultural:** 8

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 80%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 30

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	171	171	0	0	171
Instructional Hours	0	0	969	969	0	0	969

## **ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

**School Year: 2007**

The Philadelphia Montessori CS within Philadelphia IU 26 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**  
**2007 - 2008 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete**

**YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

*Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.*

**Name** Kathleen Dzura

**Title** Chief Executive Officer

**Phone** 215-365-4011

**Fax** 215-365-4367

**E-mail** kathleendzura@verizon.net

---

*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name** Regina Delaney

**Title** Board President

**Phone** 215-365-4011

**Fax** 215-365-4367

**E-mail** reg-del@msn.com

---

*Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date*

*Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.*

**Name** Loana Onwuka

**Title** Special Education Coordinator

**Phone** 215-365-4011

**Fax** 215-365-4367

**E-mail** ljo06@verizon.net

---

*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*