
Pennsylvania Department of Education



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

Charter Annual Report **Monday, November 10, 2008**

Charter School: Montessori Regional CS
Address: 2910 Sterrettania Rd
Erie, PA 16506
Phone:
Contact Name:

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2008 - 2009

Name of School: Montessori Regional CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: February 20, 2004

Length of Charter: Five Years **Opening Date:** September 1, 2004

Grade Level: Kindergarten-6th **Hours of Operation:** 8:00-3:30

Percentage of Certified Staff: 95% **Total Instructional Staff:** 18

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 11:1 **Student Waiting List:** 132

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 95%

Enrollment: 169 as of 6/8/2008 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** \$7,314 average for non-IEP and \$15,081 ave. for IEP students

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 3
Asian/Pacific Islander: 5
Black (Non-Hispanic): 7
Hispanic: 4
White (Non-Hispanic): 146
Multicultural: 4

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 53.8%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 29

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	170	170	0	0	340
Instructional Hours	0	0	912	912	0	0	1824

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

The Montessori Regional Charter School (MRCS) is the only public school located in Erie County and Northwestern Pennsylvania that provides children in kindergarten through sixth grade an authentic Montessori Education. The Montessori Regional

Charter School provided a tuition free public Montessori education to 169 children during the 2007-2008 School Year.

True to the Montessori Method, MRCS utilizes multi-aged, inclusive classrooms. The children are grouped in classrooms spanning 3 age ranges; 3 years to 6 years old, 6 years to 9 years old, and 9 years to 12 years old. Unique to our charter and essential to the Montessori method, MRCS' 3 to 6 year old classrooms include 3 and 4 year old students from a private preschool.

Each child in a Montessori classroom works at an individualized pace based on his or her educational readiness. A child who is ready to read or multiply fractions is given developmentally appropriate challenges, without the artificial limits of chronological age, or what the other children in the room are able to do. A child, who is not developmentally ready for these tasks will not be rushed through, again based on this same philosophy. The individualized education plan is something most educators associate with students receiving special education services. MRCS is committed to provide individualized education for all of our students.

Teachers individualized instruction for students and children with special needs are educated in accordance with their educational needs and with all state and federal laws and statutes. Special education students are educated in an inclusive classroom environment whenever educationally possible, in full accordance with their IEP's. MRCS employs a Special Education staff to provide support to the Montessori classroom teachers and to provide individualized instruction as needed.

Montessori classroom are distinctly different from traditional public education. Montessori classrooms are staffed with a head teacher and a teaching assistant in order to provide ample support for individualized instruction. Specific Montessori materials, such as binomial cubes, pink towers, bead frames, and movable alphabets are all utilized as appropriate on a daily basis and are essential to a Montessori education and curriculum. Although papers and pencils are used, the traditional worksheets and practice sheets have been replaced with the various Montessori materials that reinforce concepts.

Workstations replace desks in a Montessori classroom. Children are, and are expected to be, self directed, independent learners. Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician in Italy at the turn of the 20th Century, believed that children learn best by doing. In a Montessori school, this goal is accomplished through active pursuit of many different, integrated learning experiences: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. The child centered approach keeps motivation high and consequently expectations very high.

Core Purpose

Mission

The mission of the Montessori Regional Charter School is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. The children will be

prepared academically, emotionally, and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences.

Vision

The vision of MRCS is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally, and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences. By using a carefully prepared curriculum and concrete learning materials developed by Maria Montessori, our students are stimulated into logical thought and discovery.

Shared Values

The guiding principles of the Montessori Regional Charter School:

- To encourage independence and self reliance
- To honor, respect, and value individual differences
- A commitment to multi-age, multi-ability, and multi-cultural classroom environments
- To provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials
- To maintain a highly qualified staff and administration
- To recognize parents role in our educational process
- To be a resource for our community as a center for Montessori training, observation, and awareness.

Academic Standards

Act 22 states that a charter school “shall be accountable to the parents, the public and the Commonwealth.” (24 P.S. §1715-A (2)) MRCS differentiates three areas of accountability with annual measurable goals: performance, regulatory, and market accountability.

Performance accountability encompasses the achievement of measurable goals and objectives that reflect the mission of the school as established in the charter.

- During the 2007-2008 School Year, as required by the PDE, students participated in the PSSA testing.
- Progress reports were completed and reviewed by parents during the school year at parent-teacher conferences

- All children were evaluated daily on an individual basis using an individualized lesson plan created jointly between the student and the teacher.
- All children are evaluated based on their achievement of goals set at the beginning of the year and progress made toward completion of required skill sets per the student evaluation forms.

Regulatory accountability and business management encompass submission of all required annual financial reports, annual audits and other reports to the PDE and other agencies, which confirm the school's compliance with existing and applicable rules and regulations.

Finally, *market accountability* encompasses the recognition that the charter school is in a competitive market for students and if results are not achieved or parents are not satisfied, the demand for the school will diminish.

Strengths and Challenges

The vision of MRCS is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally, and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences. By using a carefully prepared curriculum and concrete learning materials developed by Maria Montessori, our students are stimulated into logical thought and discovery.

The Montessori curriculum is organized to move from concrete to abstract in a series of studies that tie separate curriculum areas together to complement one another in an integrated approach to learning. To facilitate this approach, the Montessori classrooms are composed of multi-aged groupings of students as follows:

Pre-K - K	3 years to 6 years
Elementary I	6 years to 9 years
Elementary II	9 years to 12 years

The classrooms are also physically organized into these curriculum areas - Language Arts (reading, literature studies, grammar, writing spelling and Handwriting), Mathematics and Geometry, Geography, History, Biology, Botany, and Science.

The Montessori materials are tools that lead the child to logical thought and discovery. They are arranged on low open shelves from most simple to most complex, and most concrete to most abstract. The Montessori lessons employ the Montessori materials to introduce concrete experiences and direct interaction as they isolate and teach one

concept. As the child masters each concept and is developmentally ready, the materials move into abstraction and more difficult concept.

Lessons are presented to students in small groups of three to four students (occasionally the whole group will receive a lesson together) by teachers using the Montessori materials and methods of presentation. Impressionistic stories, moving from the whole to the parts and using accurate “Scientific” language are integral to each lesson. Learning occurs through self and teacher initiated experiences by manipulating materials and interacting with others. Emphasis is put on the child as a whole with his physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, and cognitive needs and interests inseparable and equally important.

Beginning in 2007-08 MRCS has begun the process of aligning the Montessori based curriculum with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Academic Standards. The Montessori Curriculum Alignment Project (MCAP) is the three year project designed to improve PSSA scores through the outcome based Montessori education model. In 2007-08 phase one has been completed.

In addition to the Montessori curriculum, MRCS is affiliated with LEA Region Earth Force program. Earth Force combines elements of civic involvement, environmental education, and service learning to encourage young students to become active citizens and improve the environment and their communities now and in the future. This philosophy is compatible with Montessori’s cosmic approach to education. Each classroom is required to participate in a project following the Earth Force Model.

There are several strategies we use to improve performance of children struggling to meet the standards. Our multi-age groupings within the classroom offer opportunity for students to review and practice with materials needed for review. Peer-teaching, small-group, and individual instruction are available within the classroom or outside of the classroom as needed.

The Special Education Department pushes-in or pulls-out individuals and groups of students for intensive education and remedial work including Mathematics and Literacy daily.

Weekly, the Title One program pulled-out identified students scheduled to take the PSSA Test and conducted Test Prep and extensive work with multiplication and division computation and memorization of basic facts. Kindergarten through 2nd year students were offered extra practice with the Dolch Sight Words and Reading aloud using phonics based reading material.

Children with IEP’s were monitored for compliance with the stated goals on the IEP. Where necessary, Montessori materials are adapted for use. For example, a large version of the Stamp Game was built using 1 inch cubes instead of flat pieces and a Small Bead frame was enlarged from 1/4 inch beads to 1 inch beads for those children with poor fine motor skills. This enabled them to use these basic math materials to meet their IEP goals.

The Montessori teaching clock and money materials were also used for meeting IEP goals for students in the 6-9 classes and 9-12 classes.

MRCS has followed the Montessori scope and sequence and used the Traditional Albums (teaching manuals) in each subject area for each level. We are currently aligning the PA State Standards with our Montessori curriculum. Each subject area for each level will be aligned with the PA State Standards. After the PA Standards have been cross referenced with the Montessori curriculum, it will be determined if there are areas that need additional lessons and materials to meet the proficiency levels required. MRCS will acquire any necessary materials and add them to the curriculum in the appropriate sequence. Additional materials will be re-formatted to be compatible with the Montessori materials. Also, the scores from the PSSA exam will be used to monitor student performance and act as a catalyst to identify areas of the Montessori curriculum needing additional resources.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

Assessment is an indispensable part of any educational process. Presuming it is intelligently designed and carefully conducted; a system of assessment can both measure the effectiveness of an educational program and reveal growth and difficulties experienced by individual students. MRCS is committed to the continued assessment and evaluation of the students, teachers, administration, curriculum and Board of Trustees.

MRCS is committed to highest quality education for all students. This quality education will be achieved by, but not limited to, the following:

- assuring all professionals and paraprofessionals meet highly qualified standards as set forth by NCLB
- attendance by the Board of Trustees at a seminar in August 2006 regarding increasing the ability of the board to be an effective governing body
- other training for all employees as needed
- aligning the Montessori curriculum with the State standards
- providing students with the resources to meet and exceed state standards on the PSSA tests.
- training for Principal/CEO in the areas of Superintendent and Montessori Administrator Training.
- coordinators of curriculum and student services were added to the leadership team

All aspects of the school are reviewed annually to ensure growth along a continuum of excellence, resulting in continued improvement.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Anthony Pirrello	Montessori Regional Charter School	Administrator	Board of Trustees
Mary Burrows	MRCS Board of Trustees	Board Member	Board of Trustees
Charlie Witchcoff	MRCS Board of Trustees	Board Member	Board of Trustees
Ken Gamble	MRCS Board of Trustees	Board Member	Board of Trustees
Margo Wolfe	MRCS Board of Trustees	Board Member	Board of Trustees
Chris Marsh	MRCS Board of Trustees	Board Member	Board of Trustees

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: MATHEMATICS

Description: At least 56% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: PSSA

Description: The student body will score at or above goal on the PSSA test as set forth by the PDE

Activities:

Activity	Description	
PSSA	Participation in PSSA testing	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Heidi Sheehan	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: Under-achieving on PSSA

Description: 5% increase in individual student scores for those students not achieving at proficient or advanced on the PSSA

Strategy: Instruction

Description: Using the PSSA scores as a base, students use their Title I time to determine areas or weaknesses or strength

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Instruction	Students weak in math and/or reading skills are given additional intensive one-on-one or small group math and/or reading instruction	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources

Not Currently Assigned	Ongoing	\$0.00
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Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has met AYP.

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

The vision of MRCS is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally, and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences. By using a carefully prepared curriculum and concrete learning materials developed by Maria Montessori, our students are stimulated into logical thought and discovery.

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acquire any necessary materials and add them to the curriculum in the appropriate sequence. Additional materials will be re-formatted to be compatible with the Montessori materials. Also, the scores from the PSSA exam will be used to monitor student performance and act as a catalyst to identify areas of the Montessori curriculum needing additional resources.

The specific educational goals for the children that attend MRCS are:

Each student will demonstrate the ability to be an independent learner who shares in the responsibility of acquiring knowledge.

- Ability to plan learning goals on a daily/weekly basis with the teacher
 - Ability to achieve learning goals on a timely basis
 - 2. Each student will have the opportunity to reach their individual maximum learning potential.
 - Ability to acquire skills and knowledge at a pace based on the student's individual intellectual abilities and maturational level - minimum expectations would be set, which match or exceed expectations in traditional school settings, but potential progress would be unlimited
 - 3. Each child will be educationally challenged according to their unique needs and abilities using the Montessori Method.
 - 4. Each child will be presented with all state requirements for education, and will progress towards meeting these standards while following the requirements of the Montessori Method.
 - 5. The children will have an age appropriate mastery of the Montessori curriculum.
 - The ability to work independently
 - The ability to work with others
 - Proficient use of Montessori materials in all areas
 - Demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge through use and mastery of materials and frequent assessment by the teacher
 - 6. Each child will demonstrate mastery of the necessary tools and skills (such as reading, writing, mathematics, etc.) in order to be able to pursue knowledge.
 - Demonstrated proficiency at each level before advancement.
 - Materials are sequenced; once a student demonstrates proficiency they advance and receive a lesson on the next set of materials.
 - Demonstrated proficiency through standardized tests
 - 7. Each child will learn to think independently, develop research questions, and use all appropriate available technology, including Montessori manipulatives, interpersonal resources, as well as print and electronic reference materials to research the answers to their questions. He or she will develop an understanding of how to find information through the use of various media and references.
- Ability to find and use reference materials: printed and multi-media
 - Ability to use a library

- Ability to use a computer - including word-processing, CD-ROM, Internet

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Induction Plan
- Letter for Approval of 2008 Professional Education Plan
- 2008 Professional Development Plan
- Induction Plan Approval Letter

English Language Learners

For the 2007-2008 School Year, MRCS did not have any students who qualified for an ELL program. When the school does have ELL students, they will be fully included in regular education classrooms and the small group activities which will enable ELL students opportunities for English immersion.

When language-minority children do become a part of our school, the initial instructional priority will be developing the children's oral proficiency in English. Although print materials may be used to support the development of English phonology, vocabulary, and syntax, formal reading instruction will be postponed until an adequate level of oral proficiency in English has been achieved.

English Language Learners - Attachment

- ELL Report from PIMS

Graduation Requirements

MRCS strives to ensure that the transition for students completing 6th grade and entering “traditional” educational settings is positive.

Special Education

Montessori environments are adaptable to the needs of many special needs children due to the emphasis placed on multi-sensory presentation, the multitude of hands-on work, individualized tasks and “self-pacing” of the lessons. These are the hallmarks of Montessori which research studies have shown repeatedly to be the most effective methods for students with identified learning challenges.

Frequently children with special needs require additional time to repeat and review the concepts of lessons. The multi-sensory materials serve to reinforce the concepts both tactilely and visually. The need for repetition is provided through un-timed lessons until the child demonstrates a mastery of the material.

Every effort was made to be responsive to the needs of the students without interrupting their natural participation as regular members of a class. Montessori curriculum and materials are adapted when necessary to facilitate participation with reasonable expectations. Disability type or severity of disability did not preclude involvement.

Support services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy are also provided. Assistive technology and special materials were available in the classrooms, as needed. Peer tutoring and modeling contributed greatly to the successful integration of a diverse population of students.

A Building Level Support Team held weekly meetings to discuss progress, needs, strategies, concerns and successes throughout the school. Teachers could request a discussion of a particular student or a general classroom or school-wide concern.

Special Education - Attachments

- 2008 Special Education Policies and Procedures
- 2008 Penn Data Report

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Katherine Perry	1.00	Consultative/Learning Support	MRCS	12	n/a
Kathy Gorka	1.00	Consultative/Learning Support	MRCS	12	n/a

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Northwest Tri-County IU 5	.25	various	MRCS	13	MRCS contracts with the IU for certain services pertaining to IEP's
Psychologist	.40	Psychological Services	MRCS	10	Number of students varies based on testing and referrals
Speech Therapist	.60	Speech Services	MRCS	17	MRCS subcontracts with a certified Speech Therapist

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Administrator/Special Education Supervisor	MRCS	1.00
Administrative Assistant/Special Education Secretary	MRCS	.25
CAO/Principal	MRCS	.25

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization,	Title/Service	Amount of Time
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or Individual		Per Week
IU 5	Physical Therapist	.10
IU 5	Occupational Therapist	.05
IU 5	Special Education Supervision	.10
IU 5	Special Education Technical Assistance by the Director of Special Education	as needed by request

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

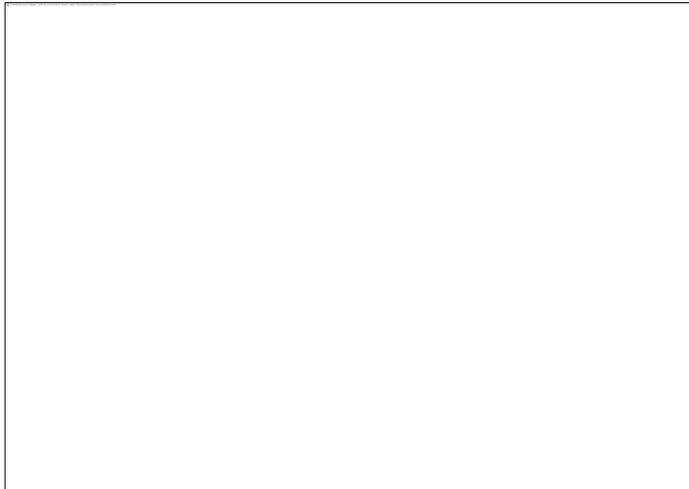
Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Three-Period Lesson Procedure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Three-Period Lesson Procedure	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
PASA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment



The Montessori Teaching Learning Cycle is used to present lessons and measure student progress at MRCS. The lessons are presented using the *Three-Period Lesson Procedure* as shown below: the first period being the Introduction phase; the second period being

the Practice and Learning phase; and the third period being the Time of Mastery and Assessment phase.

Observation is used during the second period to determine when the student moves to the third period. Students have individual goals set annually. Each student's progress is recorded three times throughout the school year on a lengthy evaluation report using a /, ? or Δ to indicate which period of learning has occurred for each skill/goal. When a student is identified as not achieving measurable goals, that student is afforded additional resources, including one-on-one classroom attention, intensive reading and/or math tutorial through Title I funding and peer-to-peer review to assist them in achieving those goals. Each student also compiles a comprehensive portfolio which is reviewed by their teacher with samples of their work to further illustrate progress throughout the school year.

Student Assessment - Attachment

- [Link to AYP Results](#)

Teacher Evaluation

For the 2007-2008 School Year all of the Head Teachers were evaluated using a Danielson evaluation model. Head Teacher evaluations are focused on key areas that will promote a successful Montessori classroom. The areas include environment, classroom leadership, professionalism, administrative responsibilities, communication and partnerships with parents. The environment is included on a Head Teacher evaluation because the prepared environment is paramount in achieving success in a Montessori classroom.

All of the Head Teachers and Special Education Teachers are evaluated by the CAO. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to evaluate their assistant. If needed, the CAO is available to facilitate the evaluation process.

For the 2007-2008 School Year the CAO supervised and assisted the Special Education Teachers with additional support provided by the Intermediate Unit. The CAO and the other two members of the Special Education staff attended several trainings to remain informed about laws pertaining to special education services. Special Education Teachers are evaluated by the CAO, taking into account any feedback provided by the IU Supervisor.

Supportive services in Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy and Psychology were contracted services received.

Teacher Evaluation - Attachment

- [2008 Teacher Evaluation Plan](#)

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

In August 2006 the board hired a qualified candidate with advanced degrees in Education and Educational Leadership. The qualified candidate now has an advanced degree in Superintendency.

The President of the Board of Trustees for the 2007-2008 School Year changed from the previous year. The President is elected annually for a one-year term.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Mary Burrows	
Mary Slusarz	
Charlie Witchcoff	
Leesl Warren	President
Susan Carnes	Secretary
Ken Gamble	Vice-President
Joe Kaiser	
Chris Marsh	Treasurer
Ali Samuels	
Margo Wolfe	

Professional Development (Governance)

All members are versed in the Sunshine Law and have completed a Statement of Financial Interests. The school solicitor guides the board regarding compliance with applicable state law. The Board attended an all day retreat in August 2007, presented by Brain Carpenter of the National Charter School Institute, focusing on characteristics and practices of a successful board. This same presenter will conduct 2 or 3 seminars for the board in August 2008 and January and May 2009.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of Trustees meets the second Wednesday of every month. The CAO participates in various committees of the board, including but not limited to the Executive Committee, the Human Resource Committee and the Finance Committee. This allows for continual interaction and feedback between the school administration and the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Board of Trustees President and Treasurer reviewed cash flow on a weekly basis and were the signors for the checking account. Checks are approved and signed monthly.

The Board of Trustees continues to build a relationship with the two granting school districts' Board of School Directors. The relationship with the Erie School District has progressed so that during the 2006-2007 School Year, tuition payments continue to be

made directly to MRCS. During the 2007-2008 School Year, MRCS continued to maintain membership in the PA School Board Association (PSBA) with the support and through the generosity of the Millcreek Township School District. Also, representatives from MRCS attended many PDE sponsored training programs. This allowed for the continued growth of the relationship between the charter school and the PDE

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachments

- Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule
- 08-09 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

Community and Parent Engagement

The Board of Trustees promoted many different opportunities for parents and the community to become engaged in school activities. The Monday e-memo, a weekly newsletter containing a calendar of events and other information and announcements was dispersed to all families. Also, an Internet web page was maintained at www.mrcserie.org to further disseminate information to families and the community. This website carried announcements, the newsletter, information concerning the school's mission, curriculum, measurable goals and objectives, a school calendar, highlights from the board of trustees, student performance on state tests and other general information.

The board recognizes the importance of community involvement, and by partnering with several organizations in the community, the program was strengthened. LEA Earth Force, a national organization that promotes environmental stewardship by training and educating teachers and students, was one of our partners. LEA Earth Force enriched the curriculum during the school year by providing many educational activities. MRCS allowed students from Gannon University and Edinboro University access to the classrooms in order to increase the understanding of Montessori methods.

In 2007-08 the Montessori Regional Charter School maintained a professional relationship with the Montessori Children's House of Erie. As a result of our joint efforts, enrollment for both schools grew to the point of capacity.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

The fund-raising aspects of the school were primarily accomplished by the PTO through a variety of activities including an art auction, jazz night, and cookie sale. Total funds raised totaled over \$3,000. Fundraising activities for the 2007-2008 School Year will include the previous fundraisers, as well as, additional activities to be determined by the PTO.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The board has undertaken the challenge to oversee and to ensure that there are adequate resources for the continued operation of the school and that the resources are utilized effectively and efficiently. The Principal/CAO consistently reviews the financial reports to ensure the fiscal solvency of the organization. Monthly, the board reviews financial statements and itemized reports at the board meetings as presented by the Treasurer. The Treasurer also reviews monthly bank reconciliations and estimated cash flow projections.

In preparing the budget, the finance committee reviewed the prior year's actual expenditures to ensure that all anticipated revenues and expenses were included in the current budget and that there was an adequate unreserved fund balance surplus for any unforeseen cash flow needs. The Estimated Ending Unreserved Fund Balance for the 2007-2008 Budget passed June 11, 2008, is \$268,796.

All budgets and financial records will be audited by a Certified Public Accountant by October 31 (in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards) and a report provided to feeder school districts and the PDE.

Accounting System

MRCS uses QuickBooks Pro to keep all budgeting and accounting records. This information is backed-up daily. The PDE was consulted in the initial set-up of the chart of accounts and continues to be consulted as new accounts are added. Also, MRCS contracted with a local CPA firm, Felix & Gloekler, P.C. for annual audits and other consulting work.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachments

- 2008 Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances
- Preliminary Statements with signature

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

The 2006-2007 audit was dated June 30, 2007, and was completed by Felix & Gloekler, P.C., a local CPA firm. The firm's opinion was that the financial statements presented fairly, in all material aspects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, general fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of MRCS as of June 30, 2007. The current year's audit is expected to be completed by the end of August 2008. A report will be issued at that time.

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

- Auditor's Annual Report

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

MRCS has no citations or follow-up actions for any State Audit Reports.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

On June 28, 2006, MRCS purchased the building located at 2910 Sterrettania Road, Erie, PA that was previously being leased. This purchase ensured a future location for the charter school, as well as, positively affecting cash flow.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

As the charter school continues to grow per the charter application, the needs for additional physical space increases. The current location as it stands today is adequate, but not ideal.

The Board of Trustees is in the process of evaluating the renovation options. Renovations would be scheduled to begin after the renewal of the charter. Other capital needs were included in the 2007-2008 Budget.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

MRCS complied with all health and safety requirements including holding one fire drill per month. As previously mentioned, to ensure the safety of all who are at the school, MRCS used grant funds to purchase a keyless access security system.

The school employs a certified school nurse for approximately 16 hours per week who monitors and ensures that all health and immunization requirements are met for each student, maintains all health records, and performs vision, hearing and height/weight testing. In addition, MRCS has contracted with a local dentist and doctor who are available to fulfill required commitments.

MRCS will submit the Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services to the Department of Health within the required 90 day deadline.

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

- 2008 Wellness Policy

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

Health insurance is provided by UPMC, dental insurance is provided by Delta Dental and other employee insurances including LTD, STD, vision and life insurance are provided by Met Life all through the Manufacturer's Association Insurance Plan. Liability and Directors and Officers insurance is provided by Selective Insurance and workman's compensation insurance is provided by the State Workers Insurance Fund both through the Loesel-Schaaf Insurance Agency, Inc.

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachments

- D&O Declaration Page
- Liability Declaration Page
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Workers Compensation Coverage

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

There are currently 37 full and part-time positions available at the Montessori Regional Charter School comprised of the following: 10 head teachers, 10 teaching assistants, 2 special education teachers, four “specials” teachers, art, music, physical education and French, a librarian, a maintenance man, a CAO, a Business Manager, two administrative assistants one nurse, one speech therapist, one IT coordinator and one psychologist.

It is likely that turnover will continue primarily in the part-time positions including the teaching assistants and the "specials" teachers. These are teachers who hold the appropriate certifications and many would like to be full time teachers.

At MRCS, the strong sense of community that is prevalent in many Montessori schools plays a major role in retaining staff. A competitive pay scale and benefits package with other public schools also helps. MRCS is committed to proper staffing and materials for the classrooms when determining the budget.

The ultimate goal is to have all head teachers both certified in Montessori and holding a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate in their individual instructional areas. MRCS met the charter school requirement of having over 75% of our teachers certified in their instructional area.

Professional Development

MRCS is committed to ongoing professional development for staff members. Professionals have participated in programs designed to fulfill Act 48 Credits and enhance their professional growth through programs sponsored by Earth Force, NIE, the Northwest Tri-County IU #5, PASBO and PDE sponsored workshops. MRCS provided trainings and professional growth opportunities on the following topics:

- 8/07 — 5/08 Montessori Curriculum Alignment Project (MCAP)
- 8/21/07 Curriculum Alignment — Capitol IU 15
- 3/20/2006 Abuse/special education/PSSA
- 10/17/2005 Teacher to teacher Math from 3 to 12

- 9/12/2005 Evaluation and testing
- 8/12/2005 Introduction to Montessori

Three teachers and the CAO attended CMTE/NY for Montessori Training to attain AMS teaching credentials. In May 2008 the CAO completed his certification in the Superintendency from Edinboro University of PA. The three teachers completed their Montessori training at CMTE in 2007 and received their credentials in the spring of 2008. Six teachers and the CAO attended the annual American Montessori Society annual conference from March 5-9 2008 in Washington, D.C. In addition, the Business Manager presented at the Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools Annual Conference in May 2008.

Teacher Induction

All teachers at the Montessori Regional Charter School are “Highly Qualified” instructors even though the Pennsylvania Charter School law requires only 75%. In addition, all new teachers at MRCS are required to be PA State certified and attend Montessori Training leading to their certification through the American Montessori Society.

For the 2007-2008 School Year, orienting new teachers and assistants to the Montessori Regional Charter School is focused on helping teachers and assistants who had not completed their Montessori training to become more familiar with the Montessori Method of classroom instruction. At every grade level, MRCS utilizes experienced Montessori-certified teachers to mentor their fellow colleagues. Also, they will be observed by the curriculum coordinator. Montessori schools stress the importance of community, thus, Montessori teachers are encouraged to build communities that are strong and responsive to the needs of every member.

In Montessori education the teacher starts a "three period lesson" by giving the student all the information they need; showing them and sharing their knowledge with them to get them started before they explore on their own (See Section V, 3.a). Similarly, the MRCS Induction Plan is our “period one” of the three-period lesson for new teachers. Knowledgeable teachers are presenting this lesson to their colleagues in an effort to give them what they need to progress towards being more independent and self-sufficient.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- 2008 PDE Verification Form
- LEA Staff Profile - ESPP from PIMS

Student Enrollment

Enrollment Procedures and Policies

Students wishing to enroll in MRCS were required to complete the PDE Enrollment Notification Form and submit a copy of their birth certificate along with proof of residency. Enrollment for the 2007-2008 School Year began in February 2007 during the two weeks of “Open Enrollment.” All completed enrollment forms from “Open Enrollment” were accumulated and organized by grade. Per the charter application, founding families were enrolled first. Next, children residing in the chartering school districts were enrolled. Finally, remaining students were enrolled.

This year, there were more applications than spots available in all grades. The Board of Trustees conducted a lottery. Any subsequent enrollment forms received after the “Open Enrollment” period were placed on the waiting list in the order received. As spots became available, the next student on the waiting list was notified.

The Board of Trustees passed a motion that a child needed to be five by September 1 in order to enroll in Kindergarten.

The following is an enrollment history:

	Initially Enrolled	Withdrew	Added
Kindergarten	32	2	3
1 st Grade	24	0	2
2 nd Grade	28	1	1
3 rd Grade	22	0	1
4 th Grade	28	0	0
5 th Grade	19	1	0
6 th Grade	10	0	0

There were 169 students at the end of the 2007-2008 School Year. Of that number, 10 graduated and 200 are enrolled for the 2008-2009 School Year. There were no students who were required to leave.

Enrollment Trends

Of the 169 students enrolled at the end of the school year, 10 were 6th graders who will move to other schools. Of the remaining 159 students, 145 will be returning to MRCS. That is a 91% retention rate. This trend is due to many factors including the community atmosphere, the quality of the staff and the Montessori Method of education.

MRCS was under-enrolled per the charter due to the sixth grade not filling. This was expected by the Board of Trustees. In future years when lower grade students move up to the higher grades, it is anticipated that the school will run at full capacity per the charter application.

Transportation

The students' home districts, per charter school law, provided transportation for those students wishing to be bussed. MRCS paid for a transportation aid for one student having an IEP to ensure the safety of that student and others on the bus.

Food Service Program

For the 2007-2008 School Year, MRCS had no formal food service program. The children brought a lunch from home and ate in the classrooms true to the Montessori Method. MRCS does not participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

Student Conduct

Student Conduct

Code of Conduct:

The "Discipline at the Montessori Regional Charter School" is the guiding document regarding the students' expected code of conduct. The underlying premise of the code of conduct is one of discipline, not punishment. This discipline code was updated in February 2008.

Disciplining children begins with recognizing helpful and positive behaviors and providing an engaging and challenging learning environment. Within this model, children know what they have done that is not helpful but is hurtful and are taught better ways of behaving/responding; the children's dignity is left fully intact. The overarching goal of our discipline model is to assist children in developing an internalized sense of responsibility and feelings of worth (Funk & Fay, 1995).

Although the learning environment at the school reduces many common causes for behavior difficulties, it is recognized that not all students are able to achieve these expectations for behavior. The teachers work as a team and make referrals to the Building Level Support Team to discuss any persistent behavioral problems that disrupt the learning of the student or the other students in the school. The teachers determine ways to assist the student who is experiencing these problems; adapting the environment when the child is having difficulties within it. Parents are asked to support the teachers in their efforts with the student. If behavior presents a continued problem, the student, parents, and teacher meet to discuss options that may include evaluation by the school psychologist. Every effort is made to avoid out of school suspensions because it is the belief that in most cases the behavior in the school environment must be addressed in that environment.

When excessive behaviors create a physically and/or emotionally dangerous situation for our students and teachers, suspensions are sometimes unavoidable. The parent is properly notified in writing when a suspension is given. In addition, teachers and administrators keep parents aware of the child's behavior after the suspension by various means including phone calls, emails, notes and daily behavior charts.

Number of suspensions:

Three students were suspended during the 2007-2008 School Year. No students were expelled.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- 2008 Discipline Policy

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2008

The Montessori Regional CS within Northwest Tri-County IU 5 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
2008 - 2009 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 Anthony Pirrello

Title CEO/Principal

Phone 814-833-7771

Fax 814-833-1838

E-mail apirrello@mrcserie.org

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

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

Name Leesi Warren

Title President

Phone 814-835-1218

Fax 814-833-1838

E-mail lleslbob@adelphia.net

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name Terri White

Title Special Education Coordinator

Phone 814-833-7771

Fax 814-833-1838

E-mail twhite@mrcserie.org

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date

Signature Page

Signature Page - Attachment

- 2008 Signature Page