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: Philadelphia Montessori CS

Address: 2227 Island Rd Philadelphia, PA 19142-1009

Phone:

Contact Name:

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2008 - 2009

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: 3 yrs thru 6th grade Hours of Operation: M-Th: 8:30 - 3:30; F: 8:30 - 2:15

Percentage of Certified Staff: 75% Total Instructional Staff: Teachers, not assts: 12

Student/ Teacher Ratio: Teachers, not assts: 18:1 (counts special ed). We also have 11 FT, highly qualified assistants. Total student:adult ratio is 9.5:1. **Student Waiting List:** Over 600 students

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 93%

Second Site Address, Phone Number and Site Director:

NA

Enrollment: 168 (K-6); 48 (Head Start & PreK Counts) Per Pupil Subsidy: \$7,708.33 (for

regular ed)

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%
Black (Non-Hispanic): 90%
Hispanic: 1%
White (Non-Hispanic): 3%
Multicultural: 6%

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: 40

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	170	170	0	0	170
Instructional Hours	0	0	976	976	0	0	976

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School (PMCS) is currently the only public Montessori school serving children from preschool through sixth grade in the city. A Montessori is a childcentered educational approach which highlights student autonomy and problem-solving skills, hands-on learning, and student initiated learning. The curriculum emphasizes topics which are of interest to the students, with subjects studied in depth. 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 The school opened in 2004 with preschool through third grade, and has added a grade each year. Â During the 2007-08 school year, PMCS graduated its first class of sixth graders. A PMCS is located near the corner of two busy streets in Southwest Philadelphia — Island and WoodlandAvenues — less than ten minutes from the Philadelphia International Airport. A During the 2007-08 schoolyear, PMCS enrolled 216 students ages three years through sixth grade, while maintaining a sizable waiting list. The majority of our students come from thefollowing zip codes: 19142, 19143, 19151and 19153, although we do attract studentsfrom throughout the city. A The student population is 80% low-income, 90% African American, 3% White, 1% Hispanic, and 6% 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. 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. 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) à â â â â â â â â â â â â â â Focus on Education for Life:

The purpose of PMCS goes beyond helping students to acquire basic academic skills. A 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) â â â â â â â â â â â â â â â 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) â â â â â â â â â â â â â â â â 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.Â

4) â â â â â â â â â â â â â 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) Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â E 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) Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â A Â B 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.

Page 4 of 51

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.Â

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. Â There are three documents attached to our annual report entitled (3-6 Montessori PA 2003 Correlation; 6-9 Montessori PA 2003 Correlation; and 9-12 Montessori PA 2003 Correlation). Â For the 2008-09 school year, our new Director of Academic Achievement is refining and focusing this voluminous alignment document by connecting state anchors in math and reading at third - sixth grades with our written Montessori curriculum.

A brief synopsis of the minimum requirements of our school in order to be promoted from one grade level to the next is included in this section of the report. 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). A 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. Â During the 2007-08 school year, this document was shared with and actively reviewed by all instructional staff on numerous occasions, during professional development meetings on topics of monitoring individual student progress, portfolio assessment, and student promotion and retention. Â As a result, several children will spend an additional developmental year in kindergarten and third grade during 2008-09. Â We chose not to retain any of our sixth graders as this was our first ever graduating class, however we will retain sixth graders next year if these benchmarks are not reached. Â We will also be revisiting these criteria this year to ensure students meeting our promotion standards will be successful in the next grade. Â In addition, these criteria are tied to the Montessori curriculum. Â When revisiting the criteria, we will also take into consideration how the criteria compare to state anchors in math and reading.

Because of the increased attention to the following criteria, we are confident that our rising first grade students have mastered 80% of the the items listed below. Â Fewer children leaving third and sixth meet the criteria, therefore we are building it into our 2008-09 plans to meet with parents of students who are performing below standard to

alert them of the situation and to share with them how best to support their children's skills throughout the coming year.

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:

- •A A A A Beable to read phonetic words, identify a variety of sight words and recognizeconsonant blends in words. A
- Â Â Â Â Beable to read level one easy readers. Â
- •A A A A A Beaware of the function of words and describe them as action, descriptive, naming, connective or positional words (i.e. verb, adjective, noun, etc.)
- •A A A A Beable to express his/her thoughts in writing and have the hand and fingerdexterity to use pencils as instruments for writing.

Mathematics

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Beable to count from 1-100 or beyond
- Â Â Â Â Beable to identify tens and teens
- Â Â Â Â Beable to identify units, tens, hundreds, thousands
- A A A A Beable to add and subtract (with concrete materials) single digit problems
- •A A A A Beable to add and subtract (with concrete materials) complex numbers up to 9,000
- •ÂÂÂÂÂ Beable to count by 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's, 9's, 10's up to 100.

• Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of addition and subtraction

Geography

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Havesome knowledge of the 7 continents; their names and locations
- •Â Â Â Â Knowsome simple facts about the people, their houses, common customs, commonreligions and livelihoods
- Â Â Â Â Willhave a developing concept of land and water forms

Nonacademic Areas

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Havea sense of process (be able to follow multi-step directions)
- •A A A A A Havea well-developed sense of order (organization) and control of movement (fine and gross motor skills)
- Â Â Â Â Beable to concentrate on a task for at least 45 minutes
- Â Â Â Â Â Havedeveloped 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 childwill be proficient in the following areas:

Academic Areas

Language

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Bereading at or above the grade level appropriate for his age
- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of and ability to apply the rules of grammar and syntax

•A A A A Beable to produce a finished piece of writing having gone through rough draft, editing, polishing the piece.

Mathematics

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Beable to count from 1-1000 and beyond
- •A A A A Beable to use math operations in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division using complex numbers
- •A A A A Beable to read and solve math word problems and describe the process used
- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of squares and cubes of numbers, multiples of numbers
- Â Â Â Â Ûnderstandbasic geometric principles

Geography

The child will:

- •A A A A A Havein depth knowledge of the 7 continents; comparing them in size and population
- Have begun to study a particular continent in depth, including its countries
- Â Â Â Â Â Havemade a state book for each of the 50 states
- Â Â Â Â Haveidentified land and water forms on various maps of the world

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

Nonacademic Areas

The child will:

• Â Â Â Â Â Havea well-developed sense of process

- Â Â Â Â B Havea well-developed sense of right and wrong
- Â Â Â Â Beable to accept responsibility for his behavior
- Â Â Â Â Beable 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 ableto:

ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂACademicAreas

Language

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Bereading at the appropriate grade level or above
- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of noun and adjective classification, compound and complexsentences
- Â Â Â Â Thechild will have completed an in-depth study of literature and have developed anappreciation of style
- •A A A A Beable to express thought through various forms of writing: persuasive, expository, narrative, poetry, etc.

Mathematics

- Â Â Â Â Â Thechild will:
- •A A A A A a Havean understanding of squaring and cubing, negative numbers, powers of numbers, nondecimal bases, ratio and proportion, and algebra.

Geography

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of the nature of the elements
- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of the relationship between the sun and the earth
- Â Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of the work of air and water

- Â Â Â Â Havean understanding of the interdependencies of people
- Â Â Â Â Haveknowledge 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. Â

Nonacademic Areas

The child will:

- Â Â Â Â Beable to work independently
- Â Â Â Â Beable to help younger children organize a project
- Â Â Â Â Beable to mediate problems between other children

ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ

Strengths and Challenges Strengths:

- Commitment of staff and leadership to the integrity of the Montessori model. A A The foundation of the school is based on this coherent philosophy and pedagogy. A During the current year, we held in-house training on Montessori principles and materials to support several statecertified teachers who did not hold the Montessori certification. A
- During the current school year, the Montessori curriculum was supplemented with a balanced literacy program that we are continuing to strengthen through professional development of teachers and purchasing new materials.
- The school continues to utilize our signature peace education model that emphasizes conflict resolution, logical consequences, and alternatives to suspension. We continue to share our Code of Responsibility, Respect and Self-Control (or code of conduct) with parents, teachers and students as we work to build a culture of peace in the school. Staff members have shared our approach to peace education at state and local education forums.
- Our students are developing the ability to work independently, resolve conflicts peacefully, and understand their responsibility to their community and the larger world. Â
- The school's Board of Directors has made strides during the school year, bringing on new members with a diversity of experience and expertise and

- with a renewed sense of energy and commitment. The board initiated a strategic planning process and will provide support and guidance to meet higher standards.Â
- After the school's facility was purchased by the Montessori Initiative in Education in 2006, lending stability to the school, Â the building was given a facelift (upgrading floors, painting hallways and classrooms, etc.) in the Summer of 2007. In addition, after the school complained about a nuisance property adjacent to our playground, the city demolished the house in question. A generous donor offered to buy the now vacant lot for the school. Negotiations are in progress, and this creates the potential to expand and improve our facility and grounds in the future.
- The school finished the year in a solid financial position.
- The school was able to provide a number of special services to children and families including: the YET after school reading enrichment program, art therapy, evening parenting classes, social work services, and the SKIP program for children of incarcerated parents.Â
- In addition, children participated in enrichment activities including: body
 movement (yoga), physical fitness; art; music; drama; etiquette/grace and
 courtesy; fabric arts (quilting, batiking, knitting, etc.); and ballroom
 dancing. We also ran a summer camp with a strong academic
 component. Both the YET program and the summer camp are targeted
 to children who are performing below grade level (although they are open
 to all students).

Areas needing improvement:

- Need to significantly improve reading and math achievement at all levels, especially in the elementary grades. Â
- Need to improve instructional leadership. Â A Director of Academic Achievement has been hired for the 2008-09 school year to focus on improving students' learning and teacher development. Â In addition, PMCS purchased a variety of literacy support materials (SRA reading labs, guided reading and 100 book challenge leveled readers) and the Study Island online test preparation (math & reading) program. Â
- Need to lower class size, especially in the primary grades. Â In 2008-09, we are adding a fourth primary classroom to ensure that preK - K classes will be limited to 20-21 students.
- Recruitment and retention of teachers that hold both the appropriate state certification as well as Montessori certification is a challenge. Â Many Montessori certified teachers come from the independent school world and are not state certified. Â Adding to this challenge is the fact that Montessori training is not offered for elementary teachers in the Philadelphia region. Â Finding a state certified teacher who is willing to travel to another locale for the summer, even if the training is subsidized by the school, has been difficult.

- Because the school operated this school year with several non-Montessori teachers, we faced the challenge of ensuring that all teachers are teaching the same curriculum. Â We did provide in-house training in Montessori philosophy, pedagogical and use of the Montessori materials as well as buying commercially available Montessori "worksheets" to support these teachers.
- Making a relatively small facility meet the needs of a growing and evolving school. Â
- Improving technology. Â PMCS started the school year with classrooms that had few or no working computers and some staff who brought their own laptops to work. We are beginning to improve and foresee that this area may be a strength in the coming year. This spring the school purchased new computers such that every elementary classroom has at least two working computers, a working printer, and internet access. Administrative & leadership staff all have computers and printers and a shared staff computer & printer are now situated in the staff workroom. We also purchased Microsoft Office software and a Study Island test prep license. Â We also applied for and received e-rate funding, which will allow us to purchase school cell phones for our teachers and administrative staff to improve communications with parents. Â We need to improve our use of our website and email as communication tools this coming year. Â

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process |StrategicPlanning Process

In2006-07, the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School(PMCS) began a strategic planning process. A strategic planning committee wasconvened and met with representatives of the Philadelphia Foundation (whoprovide support to non-profit organizations that wish to improve organizationaleffectiveness). PMCS school leadership (board members and administration) thenfilled out a school governance self-assessment available as a strategic supportto non-profits from the Philadelphia Foundation. This was helpful in ascertaining strengths and weaknessesand capacity in terms of leadership, management, operations, andimprovement. Â Thisprocess showed us that the organization was weak in terms of strategicplanning, performance measurement, board involvement, fundraising, andtechnology. Because the evaluationtool was geared toward non-profits and not schools, there was not a specificsection on academic achievement, but our review of both mathematics and readingtest scores over time showed that was also an area requiring improvement.

In addition to participating in the Philadelphia Foundationself-assessment process, board members have had a chance to review sections of the PMCS annual reports for the schools first 3 years, as well as the school'saccountability plan and progress to date, and the school's School Improvement Plan(which uses PDE's "getting results" framework).

Strategic planning continued during the 2007-08 school year. A new board chair was named to head the school, and she brought in aconsultant with expertise in both non-profits and schools, who assisted in thestrategic planning process. The board chair as well as several otherboard members and key administrators were interviewed to get feedback on schoolstrengths, weaknesses, goals and priorities. In May, staff came togetherto plan around key topics of concern: Montessori training for non-Montessoricertified staff; special education and how to successfully move to a moreinclusive environment; and how to grapple with the issue of very limited spacein our facility. Staff feedbackwas then used to inform a group of staff, board members, and former boardmembers with a continuing interest in the school. This group worked to articulate strategic priorities for theremainder of 2007-08 and for the 2008-09 school year. Â It was decided thatsince the school was entering a renewal year, not to try to conduct a three tofive year plan at this time. Â Short-term priorities were set as a resultof discussion at this meeting. Â

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	Administrator	Kathleen Dzura
Dean Michelson	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	Board Member	Sue Manix
Kathleen Dzura	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School CEO	Administrator	Caitlin Wood Sklar
Laura Willner	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	Regular Education Teacher	Kathleen Dzura
Nicole Walker	PMCS - Board member, parent	Parent	Sue Manix
Sue Manix	Philadelphia Montessori Charter School	Board Member	Kathleen Dzura
Regina Delaney	PMCS - Former Acting Chair w/Montessori expertiseof Board	Board Member	Kathleen Dzura
Colleen Mele	PMCS - Founder and former board member	Board Member	Kathleen Dzura
Anne Arfaa	PMCS - Founder and former teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Kathleen Dzura
Stephanie Schull	PMCS	Board Member	Kathleen Dzura

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - MATHEMATICS (3rd - 6th grades as measured by PSSAs)

Description: At least 56% of all students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments. In the event that we have not achieved 56% proficiency, our secondary progress goal will be at least a 10% reduction each year in the percentage of these students not proficient in math as measured by PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Begin thinking about (planning, fundraising) an after-school program to promote math skills to parallel YET reading program.

Description: YET (4 day a week highly structured reading after school program, funded by a grant) has been highly effective in bringing up participants' reading levels. Begin to plan to see if this year or next school year we can implement a similar program to improve math skills. Would need to find grant funding as YET's success is tied to the fact that there is no charge. *Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Initiate planning meeting for after-school math program		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Begin utilizing Study Island test prep software (math & reading) Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Conduct professional development to familiarize staff with use of Study Island and to set expectations for student use and teacher monitoring.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Purchase and network computers to support Study Island in every elementary classroom		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Enhance instructional leadership and teaching Description:

Activities:

Activity Description

Academic Achievement	Hire Director to focus specifically on improving math and reading achievement. Director will enhance professional development, coaching teachers on how to track individual student progress as well as in literacy armath instructional strategies.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Plan professional development schedule that emphasizes instructional strategies in math and reading as well as how to monitor progress and differentiate instruction		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - READING (3rd - 6th grades as measured by the PSSAs) Description: At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments. In the event that we have not achieved 63% proficiency, our secondary progress goal will be at least a 10% reduction each year in the % of students not proficient in reading as measured by PSSA.

Strategy: Begin utilizing Study Island test prep software (math & reading)

Description: See Study Island strategy under Academic Achievement - Math for more details. Activities:

Activity	Description	
Train teachers on use of Study Island		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Continue YET After-School Reading Program for 1-6 grades.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Hire new YET Director		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Enhance materials available for teaching literacy.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description
,	•

Distribute high quality literature from our school library to each classroom.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Purchase leveled libraries (100 Book Challenge) for every elementary classroom.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Purchase SRA Reading Libraries for independent student work on reading comprehension.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	ì
Set up staff development before the start of school on the proper use of each of these literacy resources.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Update guided reading library if needed; ensure teachers are fully utilizing this resource.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT - SPECIAL EDUCATION

Description: Continue to improve programming available to students with special learning needs.

Strategy: Continue to work towards creating the most inclusive environment possible for students with special learning needs.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Continue training staff on inclusive practices		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Plan for enhancements to Child Find and Response to Intervention initiatives. Description:
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Meet with leadership team with regards to Child Find/RTI		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: ASSESSING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Description: Schoolwide improvements can be made in how we monitor progress and use date to inform instruction. Also need to help teachers see the link between authentic assessment (observations, portfolios) and summative assessment (such as standardized tests). If done well, these two types of assessment should be complementary, not mutually exclusive.

Strategy: Further refine alignment of the Montessori curriculum with state anchors in math and reading in grades 3-6

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Align with anchors		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Improve use of performance-based assessment (portfolios)

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	n
Purchase Work Sampling (commercially available structure to tie portfolio use with improved progress monitoring and instruction)		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: FUNDRAISING & GRANTWRITING

Description: Add Goal Statement here...

Strategy: Active Fundraising Committee (Board)

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Create fundraising plan		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: RECRUIT AND RETAIN MONTESSORI & STATE CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Review content and implementation of New Teacher Induction Plan

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Review content and implementation of New Teacher Induction Plan		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Review salary scale and benefits package to ensure competitiveness.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
review salary scale		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: REDUCE CLASS SIZE

Description: Reduce class size, beginning with primary grades (PK-K) in 2008-09.

Strategy: Add an additional primary class in order to lower class size to no more than 21.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description
Hire new teacher (ECE/Montessori certified)	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation Resources

Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00	
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Activity	Description	
Purchase furniture and Montessori materials for new classroom.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Goal: STRENGTHEN AND DEVELOP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Ensure the effective functioning of committees.

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Hold a board orientation and training with clearly articulated expectations.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Involve board actively in strategic planning and decision making..

Description: Activities:

Activity	Description	
Board involvement in strategic planning		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Caitlin Wood Sklar	Ongoing	\$0.00

Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has not met AYP.

Charter school has created a School Improvement Plan.

Charter school has submitted and reviewed its School Improvement Plan with the Intermediate Unit designee.

Intermediate Unit designee met with and when meeting occurred:

Cheryl Mason Dorman, Philadelphia IU on November 15, 2007 at Philadelphia School Dist.

Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

Statement of Quality Assurance

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

1. Rigorous Instructional Program

What curriculum does your charter school utilize?

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School uses the Montessori curriculum. Â A balanced literacy instructional approach is also utilized to promote literacy among all students.

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

The Montessori curriculum meets and often exceeds the Pennsylvania State Standards. PMCS has attached documents labeled Correlation of Montessori with Pennsylvania State Standards below. Â 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.

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."[1][1]

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

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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.

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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. Â 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 3to 6) and Elementary (ages 6 to 12).

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The Primary Curriculum (Ages 3 to 6)

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Dr. Maria Montessori noted 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.

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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.

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

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- 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.)
- 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)

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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:

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- ÂÂÂÂÂThe Storyof the Universe (General Science) The origins and development of the universe are explored through this theme.
- 2. ÂÂÂÂÂLife onEarth (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 anunderstanding of the interdependencies of the Earth and life upon it.
- 3. ÂÂÂÂHistory of the Civilization of Humans (History) Social Studies is introduced togive an understanding of human beings' relationships to the development of the universe.
- 4. ÂÂ ÂÂHistory of Written and Spoken Language (English/Language Arts) Children are introduced to the concept of the development of spoken and writtenlanguage. They also learn important functional aspects of grammar that are appropriate for children from 6 to 12 years of age.
- ÂÂÂÂHistory 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.

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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. Â (Although with annual testing, this puts the school at a disadvantage).

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

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School promotes cross-curricular learning. Â The intent behind this approach to teaching and learning is described quite articulately by Angeline Stoll Lillard in her recent book --Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius.Â

"Dr. Montessori believed interest comes in part through integration and interconnection, and the Elementary curriculum is taught with an eye to making connections across disciplines in what she called Cosmic Education. Â As the Montessori trainer Phyllis Pottish-Lewis described it to me, 'Cosmic Education is a way to show the childhow 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 apart 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."Â 1[1][1][2]

Elementary research projects, a regular part of the daily curriculum, are intended to inspire an individual child or a small group of children develop and pursue an area of research based on their own individual interests, carry it out over a few weeks, and then write a report or choose another type of culminating project. These research projects cover topics ranging from science to social studies and projects range from reports to computer generated comic books to three dimensional art projects. Â Students present their research findings to their classmates and are also permitted to visit other school adults (the CEO, administrative assistant, etc.) to practice conducting oral presentations of their work.

Our annual schoolwide science fair is another example of inquiry-based learning. Children at all grade levels begin to learn about the scientific method (in a manner that is developmentally appropriate) and begin learning to ask questions and think scientifically about how they might discover answers to their questions. In the primary grades, teachers guide students in whole class projects, such as watching celery "drink" water with food coloring in it, while individual students test scientific concepts such as which objects will sink or float and which objects are magnetic or non-magnetic. In the elementary grades, children begin to conduct more complex experiments. For several weeks prior to the fair, elementary students work individually or in small groups to develop and test a question of inquiry and then spend considerable time and energy on how that information will be presented during our science fair. Science fair projects are shared with students during the day and with parents and guests in the evening.

^{1[2][2]} The preceding paragraphs are all from: Lillard, Angeline Stoll. (2005).Montessori: the science behind the genius. New York: Oxford University Press. p.130-132She continues to describe the other four Great Lessons.

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?

 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 limited time spent in whole group instruction, instead instruction is differentiated based on the needs and interests of each child. 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. A Because the Montessori materials are self-correcting, most children recognize their own mistakes and "teach themselves." The teacher's job is to record whats/he observes, and then to remain vigilant to ensure that the childis progressing in a manner appropriate for his or her developmental age. During the 2007-08 school year, not all of our teachers were Montessori trained, which meant that we had to spend more time during professional development on how to monitor individual student progress and differentiate instruction to children in a three year continuum. Â Despite our excellent teachers, this was very challenging. Â We actively recruited Montessori teachers for the 2008-09 school year to ensure that the strengths of the Montessori instructional methods and hands-on materials will be maximized.

Teachers at the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School maintain detailed observational recordson 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 students participated in a schoolwide screening using the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT). Students who initially tested far below average were watched more closely, and different interventions were attempted to help the struggling students make progress toward grade level performance. Â Because so many children are not performing at grade level, many of our interventions are schoolwide. Â Only a few (such as the Wilson Reading Program, the after-school YET reading program and our summer academic enrichment program) are targeted specifically to the lowest performing students. Â

Additional strategies which were used in 2007/08 and selected strategies that will be implemented beginning in 2008-09 to address the pervasive problem of below average academic achievement at our school include: \hat{A} \hat{A} \hat{A}

- In some cases, these students were included in daily small group remedial instruction designed to support children with special learning needs and conducted by special education staff.
- Guided reading was introduced during the 2007-08 school year with an entire set of guided reading books purchased from Scholastic and several professional development workshops on this topic.
- Inviting children who are behind grade level to participate in the Youth Education for Tomorrow (YET) after-school reading program. This program is a four day a week intensive reading support program using the 100 Book Challenge/American Reading Company series, 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 included two classes, one of first to third graders and one of fourth to sixth graders. Our summer camp was also based on the YET structure (adding in remedial math support, special ed extended school year support, and field trips).

- YET has been so successful in improving student progress that we have purchased \$20,000 worth of 100 Book Challenge books and we are mandating that there is at least a 1 hour literacy block following the YET model where all children are participating either in guided reading using the scholastic books or in independent reading using the 100 Book Challenge books.
- Our school also continued using the Wilson Reading Program with small groups of children needing remedial help with word attack skills during the 2007-08 school year.
- Each week, all of our elementary students select and memorize a poem to recite in front of their classmates on Friday during poetry circle. Â The culminating event is an "open mike" Poetry Cafe where parents and students are invited for dinner and any student or parent who so chooses, may take the microphone and recite a poem. Â This is one of most well attended events.
- SRA Reading Labs (that allow children to work independently on reading comprehension skills in a self-paced program) have been purchased for each elementary classroom and will be used during the 2008-09 school year.
- A set of workbooks was purchased which provided the paper and pencil follow up
 to the hands-on Montessori curriculum. This was very widely used by teachers
 who did not have the Montessori training, and especially to support math
 instruction. Â Although it was a useful tool and was more comfortable for nonMontessori teachers, it will be more effectively used as a support to Montessori
 trained teachers where students are also being presented with the hands-on
 materials prior to using worksheets.
- Computers were installed in each elementary classroom and a license with Study Island was secured, and students will start working with this test preparation program in 2008-09. Study Island is an online program which supports both math and reading skills and which prints regular reports on student progress toward proficiency.
- For the 2008-09 school year, Montessori albums (akinto teacher textbooks) will be purchased for non-Montessori teachers. Â This is a helpful tool which instructs teachers in how to use the Montessori math manipulatives and materials in other curriculum areas. Â Actually, only one classroom will have a non-Montessori trained teacher during the 2008-09 school year, but these albums will also be a valuable resource for our special education team, none of whom are Montessori trained.Â
- Finally, in 2008-09, we will refine our use of portfolios as a record-keeping tool by purchasing the Work Sampling portfolio assessment program for use with all grade levels.

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

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"Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is self-motivation of the child. Children must move themselves toward learning. Â 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."Â

— From the PMCS Charter Application

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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. Â

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.

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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 (or a designated student in the case of peer instruction); 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.

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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.

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Other strategies for engaging students:

This year, all classrooms held hold weekly poetry circles and monthly student reports (when students can present results of their research projects or stories to the group). Â In addition, we held a school-wide science fair and all students (either individually or in groups) were eager to be involved in demonstrating their knowledge of the scientific method. All of these strategies are described in more detail earlier in this report.Â

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Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

Montessori3-6 Curriculum correlation

A Montessori6-9 Curriculum correlation

A Montessori9-12 Curriculum correlation

A Induction Plan Letter

Â Act 48 Letter - Please note: Â I spoke with Dolorez Cobb-Jones regarding our Act 48 plan. Â We are working on our revised plan and will submit it via the estratplan system next week. Â At that time, she will send me an email approval. Â I will forward that email to the recipients of our annual report.

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Montessori 3-6 Curriculum correlation
- Montessori 6-9 Curriculum correlation
- Montessori 9-12 Curriculum correlation
- Induction Plan Letter
- Act 48 Letter

English Language Learners

Please see attached English Language Learners Plan. Â We do administer a home language survey each year, and to date, we have not enrolled any students who qualify for ELL services. Â However, as the attached plan shows, we are ready to offer a thorough program to support English Language Learners when that time comes.

Please also see attached ELL Report.

English Language Learners - Attachments

- PMCS ELL Plan
- LEP Accuracy Certification Statement

Graduation Requirements

Not applicable - we only go through sixth grade.

Special Education

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School provides Learning Support and Emotional Support to students who are in need of Specialized Services. There are three teachers and two instructional aides to provide specially designed instructions and services. The goal is educate our special education students in the least restrictive environment. Self-contained classrooms will be used only for students who require intensive level of services that cannot be provided in the regular education classroom. Placement in the self-contained classrooms is not permanent as the placement of students is determined by individual progress on IEP goals and objectives. The Wilson Reading Program has been implemented for the Learning Support and Emotional Support. Â 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 students with behavioral needs. The Learning Support and Emotional Support students receive one to one or small group instruction. There is ongoing collaboration between regular education and special education teachers to ensure that modification and adaptation of instructional material is done as per IEPs. The Special Education team consists of Special Education Director, LEA, Regular Classroom teacher, School Psychologist, Speech and

Occupational therapist, parent and Special education teacher. Â These individuals work together to provide exceptional service to our special needs students.

Special Education - Attachments

- PMCS Special Education Policies
- Dec. 2007 Penn Data, p.1
- Dec. 2007 Penn Data, p.2
- Dec. 2007 Penn Data, p.3
- June 2008 Penn Data

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

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Teacher	FTE Type of class or support		Location	# of Students	Other Information	
Hillary El	1.00	Learning Support	PMCS	11	Ms. El also serves as Special Education Director.	
Julie Viercinski	1.00	Learning Support	PMCS	11	NA	
Leslie Alexander	1.00	Emotional Support	PMCS	11	NA	

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Academic support	1.0	Inclusion support in reg. ed. classrooms	PMCS	10	Ms. Shabazz is a long term substitute spec. ed. teacher who provides additional instructional services to special ed. students in their regular education classrooms.

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Special Ed Assistant	PMCS	1.0
Special Ed. Assistant	PMCS	1.0
Behavior Support Staff	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 wkly
Therapy Source	Physical Therapist	2 hrs weekly

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	No	No	No
Terra Nova	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Student Assessment - Secondary

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

2007-08 was the fourth year of operations for the Philadelphia Montessori CharterSchool. 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 of our academic progress. 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. Â We have this data entered over time in an excel spreadsheet, and are working with a professor from the University of Pennsylvania, Henry May, and a graduate student, to attempt to analyze this data more thoroughly in a way that is statistically accurate, valid and reliable and in a way that provides useful information to teachers in order to inform instruction. Â Â What we want to see is at least a 10% improvement each year.

Standardizedtests (PSSA and Terra Nova) showed that the majority of children entered theschool 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 three years (based on PSSA scores), we have improved 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 andreading. Using the Developmental Reading Assessment, we tracked the percentage 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).

Our annual measurable goals in reading or math have increased, primarily due to changes in state targets. We are more concerned to ensure that students improve by at least 10% each year in reading and math skills as compared to state and national norms. Â We also want to see children who are behind make more than one year's progress in one year. Â That is the only way they can catch up. Â Rather than lowering our goals, we put in place a number of intervention strategies to help students meet these goals. Â

These interventions include: Â

- Study Island online test pre software (to be implemented in 2008-09)
- YET after-school reading program
- Wilson Reading Program
- Improved literacy for all students (guided reading, leveled libraries).

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, TerraNova, 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. \hat{A} \hat{A} The challenge comes when children are tested annually, rather than at the culmination of the three year curriculum. \hat{A} This puts our fourth and fifth grade students at a disadvantage during state tests. \hat{A}

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 beingreviewed. The Montessori teachermust choreograph lessons that reinforce skills that are weak while at the sametime inspiring a child to spend time in repetition because they are so engrossed in the task.

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

Montessori teachers record 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 theappropriate level or is the child confused? Are they distracted by some otherfactor? Does the lesson need to bere-presented at another time?), when the child practices with the material, andwhen 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. Â

Each child has a portfolio that follows them throughout their time at the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School. Â 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. Â 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.Â

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 thatstudents 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.

Specific academic strategies for supporting at-risk students:

 \bullet Online test prep program will be available on our newly purchased computers. \hat{A}

- Over the past year, we conducted professional development on the Wilson Reading Program;
 Using DRAs and Dibels to inform reading instruction; how to use guided reading in the classroom;
 Using Portfolios; and working with special education students
- 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.
- The YET after-school reading program, targeted for children who are not reading at grade level, doubled in size and added grades 4-6 (previously only offered to 1st - 3rd grades). A This grant funded program teaches specific reading strategies, reviews vocabulary, playsreading "games," and provides time for independent reading using leveled readers. A

Specific strategies for supporting students whose risk of school failure is based on socialemotional 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 more common for children to come to school carrying significant burdens. Â Â At PMCS, these include losing a parent to violence, illness and accidents; losing a parent to incarceration; or dealing with the alcohol or drug use of a parent of family member. Â For the past three years, we have had students lose a parent during the school year. Â Suicide threats occur quite often considering how young our students are.

In 2007-08, we hired a part-time social worker. Â In addition we engaged the SKIP program, a program for children with incarcerated parents. Â For several children, positive behavior changes following participation in the SKIP program allowed the child to begin learning. Â In addition, in 2007-08, we 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 kindnes at our school.

As a school, while we maintain high expectations for academic achievement, we also work to develop relationships with childrenand 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 ofschool know that we work to find a solution, not to place blame. Â 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)2[1]

Student Assessment - Attachments

- PMCS (AYP) data
- Local Test Data used to monitor progress

Teacher Evaluation

a.) List the main features of the school'steacher evaluation plan.

During the 2007-08 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:

- â â â â Planning and preparation
- â â â â Classroom environment
- â â â â Înstructional delivery
- â â â â Professionalism

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

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

- A A A A Teacher demonstrates ability to observe each student's learning needs and responds appropriately.
- \bullet à à à à Teacher demonstrates a broad repertoire of teaching strategies that honor varied learning styles. A TheA à Â Â Â

^{2[1]} Data obtained from Research for Action, a Pennsylvania non-profit advocacy group that analyzes the quality of public school education.

 $\hat{A} \; \hat{A} \;$ strategies effectively meet the developmental, cognitive, emotional and social needs of children.

- •A A A A A Teacher demonstrates ability to give meaningful individual, small-group and/or large-group lessons.
- â â â â Teacher has appropriate expectations for quality and quantity of work.
- A A A A A Children demonstrate decision-making, problem solving, and responsibility for their learning.
 AÂÂÂ
- A A A A Teacher gives clear and consistent verbal and nonverbal messages to children. ÂÂÂÂ
- â â â â Teacher models and facilitates positive techniques for conflict resolution.
- â â â â Teacher models and facilitates egalitarian interaction.
- â â â â Teacher voice level and tone is appropriate.
- Â Â Â Â Children demonstrate an appropriate level of independence.
- â â â â Children demonstrate pro-social behavior.
- Â Â Â Â Children participate in the care of the environment.
- A A A A A There is evidence that children have internalized the ground rules and absolute limits of the classroom community.

 A
- b.) List entities/individuals who are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation.
 - â â â â Â Dr. Frances Connolly was contracted to conduct formal evaluations of teachers.
 - A A A A A 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. Â 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. Â 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. Â She also supervised Student Teachers for Penn State University which included extensive teacher training and evaluation. Â She has participated in the MDE/IEP teach. Â 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. Â This included representing the school district in legal proceedings.

Ms. Dzura is a life-long educator with more than 43 years of education experience in the Montessori tradition. Ms. Dzura has been the Head of School at three 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. Â In addition, Ms. Dzura has been involved in teacher training in programs accredited by both the American Montessori Society and the Association Montessori Internationale (the two most credible accrediting bodies). Â In this capacity, she observed, counseled and evaluated teachers. Â She also sat on AMI's pedagogical committee.

Teacher Evaluation - Attachments

- Employee Evaluation Form I
- Employee Evaluation Form II

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

This was a year of transition and growth for the Board of Directors. Â After the founding Board chair retired in 2006 due to health reasons, the vice chair served as interim chair. Â Many of the other founding board members, who have devoted substantial time and energy to the success of the school, also decided that it was time for a transition. Â In September of 2007, a new Board chairwas elected and charged with recruiting new board members with experience in avariety of professional areas. Â Substantial time and effort has been devoted to identifying specifics kills/experiences needed, identifying and interviewing potential candidates and preparing necessary support materials (e.g., board member responsibilities, school overview, board strategic priorities). During the year, five new membershave joined the board (including the new board chair) and several additional candidates are under consideration.

A key position that remains unfilled is the boardtreasurer. While the new boardchair has taken on the treasurer's responsibilities (e.g., reviewing alltransmittals, conducting the review of monthly financials, leading the budgetreview process, etc), we are actively searching for a board treasurer. Given the school's solid financial performance during this year, it is anticipatedthat a treasurer will be elected soon.

The board members who retired this year have agreed to bemembers of a board advisory committee, ensuring continuity and reflecting their continued enthusiasm for and commitment to the school.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Susan Manix	Chair

Dean Michelson	member
Nicole Walker	Parent Representative
Patricia Sinnot	member
Jill Fisher	member
Jeff Macel	member
Bourne Ruthrauff	member
Stephanie Schull	member
Kathleen Dzura	CEO (ex-officio)
Laura Willner	Teacher Rep (ex-officio)

Professional Development (Governance)

The Board recently concluded an orientation sessionincluding the following topics: legal/fiduciary responsibilities of boardmembers; role of the board; charter school policy, the vision, mission and curriculum of PMCS; financial reporting and results. Â The board of directors and the school administration also communicates with counsel as needed on topics such as: special education, suspension/expulsion and facilities acquisition.

Once board recruitment is complete, a completeself-assessment will be conducted. As the school prepares to apply for charter renewal, it is an appropriate time for the board to evaluate the opportunities and challenges facing the school and the board's role in the school's continuing success.

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. Â 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 CEO; 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. ÂÂThe CEO is an ex-officio member of the board and attends all meetings.

Â

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

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment

· Board mtgs with quorum, dates & times

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:

- â â â â â Parent Meetings (school-wide and grade-specific)
- â â â â Parenting classes (run by Resources for Change)
- â â â â â Recruiting parents to serve as staff and volunteers
- A A A A A Soliciting feedback and suggestions through an annual parent satisfaction survey
- Â Â Â Â Â Home and School AssociationÂ
- Â Â Â Â Schoolwide events/celebrations such as: Second annual Poetry Cafe a night where students served their parents appetizers and then took the microphone to recite poetry; second annual science fair; volunteer school clean up days (including MLK, Jr. Day of Service) and our first ever graduation ceremony.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

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

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School has raised funds to supplement funds allocated to the school based on the number of enrolled children. Â During the 2007-08 school year, the school raised the following grants and donations from individuals, private and public foundations, corporations, and non-profit sponsors. Â

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 2007-2008 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.

2007-08 Fundraising Revenue

IndividualDonations/Fundraising Events ÂÂÂÂÂÂ Â Â\$14,148

Public/PrivateVentures (YET program grant) Â Â\$33,000

Hoxie Harrison Smith Foundation Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â S7.500

Many of the individual donations listed above were tied to several large fundraising events. Â The first was a wine tasting party. Â The second was a fashion show, where our students modeledclothes donated by the Good Lad Company.

In addition, the school receives significant funding (over \$250,000) for Head Starts and Pre-K Counts students, which is expected to continue in 2008-09.

Â

2008-09 Â Anticipated Fundraising Revenue

Public Private Ventures (YET)Â Â ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ ÂÂ 33,000

The Hoxie Harrison Smith Foundation ÂÂ Â ÂÂ\$7,500

Sisters of the Assumption Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â \$10,000

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).

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachments

- Fund Balance (without signature)
- Fund Balance signature page

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, 2008. The audit report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 is expected to be completed in October 2008. 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, 2007. The Independent Auditor's Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2007 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.

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

• 2006-07 audit.

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

The School did not undergo a state audit conducted by the Auditor General in 2006-2007 or, to date, for 2007-2008. In 2007-2008, the School forwarded our Financial Statements and Supplementary Information for the year ended June 30, 2007 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.Â

In August 2006, the school leased a modular building from General Electric in order to house the additional children registered as the School expanded to add a fifth grade.

In August 2007 the school leased a second modular building from ModSpace (which purchased General Electric Modular) in order to house the school as it expanded to sixth grade. Â

The school anticipates expanding from three to four early childhood classrooms during the 2008-09 school year, but will not add a modular building for this purpose. Â Instead, a multipurpose room is being converted to a classroom. Â This is an effort to reduce class size at the pre-K and K levels to ensure our students' educational foundation is strong before entering the elementary grades.

The School also purchased furniture, fixtures and equipment (including new computers) 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. Â These include additional furniture and equipment to equip an additional early childhood classroom in an effort to reduce class size. Â In addition, we leased new computers in 2007-08 and we will seek grant funding to continue to expand our students' access to technology. Â

The school would eventually like to renovate our existing building and/or build on our existing property in an effort to enhance our abilities to offer subjects such as physical education and simply to support our growth and expansion. Â This is not planned during the current (2008-09) school year however.Â

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Safety

Inaccordance with the Philadelphia Fire Prevention Code, fire drills are conducted throughout the year for the charter school (in accordance with TheSchool 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. \hat{A}

The date and time of fire drill will always be announced in advance. Every student and employee of the school is instructed as follows:Â 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. Â The Philadelphia Fire Department is free to inspect this logbook and typically inspect it annually. Â

Health

During the 2007-08 school year, the school contracted with a part-time CertifiedSchool Nurse (CSN), who provided oversight to a school nurse who was in attendance at least one day per week. A This on-site nurse helped us to improve all of our health procedures. A She was responsible for keeping physicals and 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, and handling minor illnesses and accidents at the school. A Head Start nurse also came in and supported with this process for our preschool age students.

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 the physical, a copy of immunization records, screening results, pupil medical history, emergency control form, any professional observations, progress notes, problem list with follow up and a copy of any extra 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. Â Â

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

- PMCS Wellness Policy
- Updated school health report

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

All full time employees receive health, dental and vision coverage through Keystone Health Plan East. Staff are enrolled in the Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System as well. The school has purchased life and disability insurance for its employees.

Our insurance is through Hartford Insurance Company as brokered by Boardman Hamilton Company in Philadelphia. Please see attached listing of amounts and types of coverage.

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachments

- PMCS Insurance Coverage
- · Per your request, updated insurance coverage

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

During the 2007-08 schoolyear, the total number of full-time and part-time staff (including hourly) employed was 56 (includes long term subs/excludes other employees who act more as consultants/under contract). Â This total includes:

CEO - returning staff, stayed entire year

Associate Director - returning staff, stayed entire year

Administrative Assistants (2) -1 returning staff, stayed full year; 1 new staff - left in Spring

Facilities Director - returning staff, stayed entire year

Food Service Manager - returning staff, stayed entire year

Special Education Director/Teacher (2 - reflects turnover) - New Special Ed Director left in Fall and was replaced before December.

Special Education Teacher (2) +1 long term sub - All three were new teachers. Â Sub started mid-year to meet increasing caseload needs. Â All stayed entire year.

Special Education Assistant (2) - 1 returning, 1 new - both stayed all year.

Fourteen lead classroom teachers (nine classrooms, one with two teachers - the remainder reflects turnover). Â Of the four teachers who left mid-year; three were state certified but not Montessori certified. Â Â Five of the teachers who stayed the entire year also returned from the previous year.

13 Classroom Assistants (nine classrooms, 3 with two assistants) 1 long term sub came to replace somebody who went out on disability. Â Six of our assistants were returning from the previous year.

Art Therapist - Returning from previous year.

Admissions/Enrollment/Testing Support (hourly)

10 PT Classroom Aides (hourly)

2 Bus Aides (hourly)

1 Hall Monitor/Bathroom Aide (hourly)

1 Maintenance Aide (hourly)

Contracted: PT Nurse; PT Social Worker; PT Psychologist; PT Speech/PT/OT

Staff turnover and retention:

We lost a Special Education Coordinator, 4 teachers, and a secretary mid-year. Â Of these, only one individual with Montessori training left us, and she was commuting over 2 hours each way. Â The remaining teachers who left either were not comfortable with the Montessori approach or were not comfortable teaching in an urban environment. Â Another (Montessori trained) assistant went out on disability. Â

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.). \hat{A} 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. \hat{A} This requires effort on our part to find new aides mid-year, but these are not essential positions. \hat{A} \hat{A}

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.

We have been able to recruit 5 Montessori trained teachers for the 2008-09 school year. Â

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

81% of our teachers (including special education & Pre-K long term subs) 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. Â Â

For the 2008-09 school year, all new teachers hired either have PA State certification or are applying this summer for emergency certification based on reciprocity with another state (NJ, Delaware) or if they are finishing graduate school and taking their second Praxis.

Our CEO is certified to teach and the Board member who conducts teacher evaluations is a certified principal. \hat{A} \hat{A}

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

Please note: we have had trouble accessing the PIMS system, primarily because the new computers we purchased were Apples and the PIMS requires a database that can only be opened on a PC. Â We had to purchase a computer and software. Â Therefore, we are still in the process of completing our PIMS uploads, including the ESPP. Â The PDE 414 is attached.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachment

• PDE 414 2007-08

Student Enrollment

Student Enrollment

1. Describe the charter school's student enrollment procedures and policies, including the admissions policy. \hat{A} Describe how all policies and procedures comply with state law. \hat{A} 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. $\hat{\mathbf{A}}$

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. Â

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. Â Students are placed on the waiting list, by grade level, in the order that applications are received. Â Applications can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from our website: www.philadelphiamontessori.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 or around April 1st of each year.Â

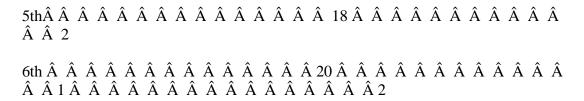
The cut off for birthdays is September 1st (i.e. to be eligible for enrollment this year, the youngest children must turn three by September 1, 2007; to be eligible for fifth grade, a student must turn ten by September 1, 2007).

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 listand contact the parent.

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

Providean enrollment history for the past year, by grade level, including the number of students initially enrolled, number dropped, and number added. \hat{A} For students who transferred out, indicate the school(s) to which they transferred, if known.

Â	Initial Enrollment*	Number Dropped	Number Added	Schools Transferred
				То
Pre-K (3 & 4 yrs)	48			Unknown
K	26	2	1	Unknown
Â	33 Â Â Â Â Â Â Â	5	4	Unknown
	ÂÂÂÂÂÂÂÂ			
	ÂÂÂ			
2nd	27		1	Unknown
3rd	21	2		Unknown
4th	21		1	Unknown



Provide the number of students who completed the 2007-08 year who are currently enrolled to return in September.

 \hat{A} \hat{A} \hat{A} \hat{A} 210 returning students, including Head Start and Pre-K Counts

Provide numbers of students who were required to leave the school (expulsions, other), and the numbers who left voluntarily. \hat{A}

No students were expelled. Â Nine students withdrew. Â We did initiate expulsion proceedings with one student, whose mother chose to remove him from the school. Â Two other parents withdrew after disciplinary incidents, in one case a sibling was also withdrawn. Â Four students moved out of state mid-year. Â One child moved to live with her mother on the other side of Philadelphia.

 $2.\hat{A}$ Discuss any trends in enrollment includingstudent turnover and retention data. Drawing upon exit interviews and othersources, explain why students choose to, or not to, return to the school. \hat{A} \hat{A} If the school is under-or over-enrolled based on the charter, provide an explanation.

 $\hat{A} \hat{A} \hat{A}$ Our school maintained full enrollment throughout the year.

Transportation

The School District of Philadelphia provides transportation to our students in grades 1-6. Å 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. Å In 2007-08Å 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. Å

Food Service Program

The Philadelphia Montessori Charter School offers all students the option of school breakfast and/or 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. Â Some parents choose not to participate and send bagged lunches. Â We contract out to Linton's Managed Services which prepares the food off site and brings it to us in temperature controlled containers. Â We are very pleased with this vendor because they serve fresh fruits and vegetables and the food seems to be less processed and healthier than the typical school lunch. Â Milk is delivered each morning and we have a milk refridgerator in our food preparation area. Â

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

In an effort to reduce our school's impact on the environment, in 2006-07, the school switched from paper, plastic and styrofoam to real dishes and utensils. Dishes are washed in a three partition sink and we have staff who wash and sterilize many dishes each day. 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 policycomplies with Chapters 12 of the Public School Code, particularly with respectto due process.

For a full copy of the Philadelphia Montessori Charter School Code of Responsibility, Respect and Self-Control, please see attached. Â 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 allclassroom 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 herto 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 2007-08, expulsion proceedings were initiated for one student. Â There was a hearing with a hearing examiner, as per our policy. Â The child's parent, the victim and the victim's parent, and a number of

students participated as witnesses. Â After the hearing, his parent withdrew him rather than waiting to learn the hearing results.

Six children were suspended, and three of these were in-house suspensions. Â

54 discipline notices were sent home, but these were handled with parent conferences, peace conferences between students, minor consequences such as losing recess, and community service to the school. Â The overall social-emotional climate of the school is positive.

Student Conduct - Attachment

• 2008 Updated Code of Conduct

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2008

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 2008 - 2009 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter S	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 Susan Manix Title Board President Phone 215-365-4011 Fax 215-365-4367 E-mail susan.manix@verizon.net Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name Hillary El

Title Special Education Coordinator

Phone 215-365-4011 Fax 215-365-4367

E-mail hilkam2@yahoo.net

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date

Signature Page

Signature Page - Attachment

• PMCS Signature Page - 2007-08