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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
**Department of Education**  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

**Charter Annual Report**  
**Monday, February 14, 2011**  
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# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

### Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2010 - 2011

**Name of School:** Bucks County Montessori CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** Initial Start> [4 year] Initial Charter starting in 2000-01 School Year -- [5 Year] Renewal Approved in 2004-05 -- 2nd Renewal [5 Years] Approved for 2009-10 School Year

**Length of Charter:** Current Charter> 5 Years, Starting SY 2009-10    **Opening Date:** September 2000

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

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 92.3%    **Total Instructional Staff:** 13

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 13.5:1    **Student Waiting List:** 98

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** Kindergarten 95.7% Elementary 96.1%

## Summary Data Part II

**Enrollment:** 176 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Pennsbury: \$10,858.58 Reg & \$25,580.21 SPED; Bensalem \$10,111.54 REG & \$24,515.05 SPED; Bristol \$11,914.00 REG & \$30,136.00 SPED; Morrisville \$12,523.13 REG & \$34,293.29 SPED; Neshaminy \$11,463.40 RED & \$29,372.14 SPED; Council Rock \$9,610.00 REG & \$27,039.00 SPED

### Student Profile

<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</b>	0
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander:</b>	27
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic):</b>	4
<b>Hispanic:</b>	7
<b>White (Non-Hispanic):</b>	138
<b>Multicultural:</b>	0

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:**  
0.0%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 19

## Instructional Days and Hours

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>K (AM)</b>	<b>K (PM)</b>	<b>K (F.Time)</b>	<b>Elem.</b>	<b>Middle.</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Instructional Days	0	0	178	178	0	0	178
Instructional Hours	0	0	1023.50	1023.50	0	0	1023.50

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Educational Community

Montessori principles are the basis of the Bucks County Montessori CS portrayal and description. The Montessori pedagogy and ideology is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician in Italy at the turn of the Twentieth Century, who believed that children learn best by doing. Just as Confucius professed, if you merely 'Tell' a learner, he will forget, and if you 'Show' a learner, he may remember; but only by 'Involving' a learner will true understanding be achieved. To that end, Bucks County Montessori Charter School focuses on addressing student understanding. This is achieved through the use of Montessori kinesthetic materials that make real connections to concepts. We incorporate cooperative learning settings that utilize a unified curriculum--where teachers act as facilitators, leading the learners toward independent discoveries. In addition, students work within an uninterrupted scheduling sequence that affords each student the ability to advance at his/her own particular pace. Learning persists through the active pursuit of many integrated learning experiences: physical, social, emotional, kinesthetic, as well as cognitive. The learning environment provided at BCMCS facilitates such, thereby empowering the students to become responsible, confident and caring global citizens. The goal of the school is to enable students to become young adults possessing strong, independent and analytical thinking skills,

as well as an enduring love and passion for life-long learning. This concept is emphasized, reinforced and supported by a highly trained, committed Montessori staff that helps maintain high achievement levels of the students on all Pennsylvania and other standardized assessments.

BCMCS continues on its quest of becoming 'a model Montessori school' and true learning community, where learners explore, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand within the Montessori ideology, with this past year being no exception. The precedent 2009-10 school year was the tenth successful year of operation for BCMCS.

Our chartering District, Pennsbury, is sub-urban community located in the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania, along the great bend of the Delaware River. In 2009-10, an average of 176 students attended BCMCS, ranging in grades K through 6th. The students were all from our host district, Pennsbury, as well as local surrounding districts: Bristol, Bensalem, Centennial, Council Rock, Morrisville and Neshaminy. These districts include the surrounding communities of Lower Bucks County including Falls Township, Bristol Borough & Township, Langhorne, Lower & Upper Makefield, Tullytown, and Yardley Borough. These communities comprise a broad range of racial, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic households. The region itself is a mix of small towns and suburban locations, having a variety of residential, commercial and light industrial sectors.

BCMCS has maintained a full enrollment, with a sizable waiting list, since opening in 2000. In addition, BCMCS consistently meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, as it has been a multiple recipient of the "Achievement Recognition" [awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education] for attaining AYP Standards every year since 2004. Public confidence is affirmed through these and other achievements, as enrollment projections and early test data, both remain consistent with past practices.

In 2009-10, enrollment figures by grade level remained fairly steady throughout the year, with the May 2010 figures as such:

- 25 kindergarten students
- 30 first graders
- 23 second graders
- 26 third graders
- 16 fourth graders
- 34 fifth graders
- 22 sixth grade students.

Each year BCMCS conducts a lottery to select new students as there are continually more applicants than open spaces. In order to be considered for the kindergarten class, a child must be 5 years of age by September 30th. Children who are between 6 and 9 by September 30th are considered for our Lower Elementary program. Those children between the ages of 9 and 12 by September 30<sup>th</sup> are then eligible for our Upper Elementary program. Upholding to our school's philosophy, students are primarily selected at the lowest possible grade level so as to best formulate Montessori responsiveness. For the 2009-10 school year, 25 kindergarten students were selected for admission, which left an original kindergarten wait list of fifty (50) students, thirty-three (33) by year's end; and a total school original wait list of ninety-eight (98) students, sixty-nine (69) by year's end.

Each member of BCMCS family, staff, parent, student, and community endorses its mission. The teachers, administrators, students, parents and the surrounding community continue as integral parts of its structure.

## **Mission**

### **Bucks County Montessori CS Mission Statement:**

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

We remain faithful to our mission by providing a quality Montessori program for all who attend BCMCS. Our program is centered on a continuum of developmental stages clearly observable in all our programs and activities.

### **Bucks County TECHNOLOGY MISSION STATEMENT:**

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

The technology lessons and activities at BCMCS foster the pursuit of abundant integrated learning experience. Our technology program's central purpose is to empower students to locate information that they can use for knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis in order to synthesize and evaluate their learning and overall understanding.

To physically achieve this purpose, BCMCS supplies, provides and makes available apparatus such as computers, networks, secured connectivity to the Internet, scanners, digital cameras, and appropriate software applications.

## **Vision**

### **Bucks County Montessori CS Vision Statement:**

The vision of the founding coalition was that the Bucks County Montessori Charter School will be a model Montessori School, providing a superior learning environment for its students through implementation of an individualized Montessori curriculum. The BCMCS community is committed to this vision. The school functions as a learning community, where children are encouraged to reason, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand. Our teachers,

students, parents, board of trustees and surrounding community are collectively an integral part of the school's structure.

### **Bucks County Montessori CS TECHNOLOGY Vision Statement:**

BCMCS educators, administration, BOT, parents, students and community recognize that technology and improved learning are inseparable. Our school facility currently has a computer lab where computer classes take place and where students have access to the internet for research. There are also at least two computers in each classroom connecting to a robust infrastructure which enhances immediate learning needs.

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

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

Administratively, the objective is to branch all elements of the school's infrastructure into a programmed system that includes progress reports and purchase order forms, student and staff attendance records, alpha list directories, teacher lesson plans, calendars and behavioral reports through a centralized processing unit. We continue to make great strides in fulfilling our objectives.

## **Shared Values**

### Shared Values:

Montessori education integrates the interaction between a child and a learning environment that is conducive to developing a resilient mind-set that encourages the child "...to come to a true understanding of himself, his world around him, and the limits of his universe so as to achieve an integration of his most pure personality." (Montessori, 1948) This wide-ranging declaration involves numerous components that embrace our school's shared values, with the following listed principles intended to ensure the previous statement's vision into fruition.

#### 1. Ultimate Goal: To Promote Life-Long Learning:

The intention of BCMCS goes beyond helping students to obtain basic academic skills. Our school believes that students should acquire academic skills in addition to attaining the ability to act independently, think analytically, resolve conflicts peacefully, and recognize their responsibility to others and to our world. Each student is given an opportunity to express strengths that allows "the child the freedom to make use of his powers so that he will show himself capable of success." (Montessori, 1948)

## 2. Focus on a Student-Centered Curriculum:

Montessori education believes that each child is an individual, who learns and grows at different rates and in different ways. Following the Montessori Method, BCMCS offers children the freedom to select, within a set work plan, their own academic 'works.' It relates to the belief that children learn by doing and requires components of spontaneous investigation. Individualized "academic aims" are developed for each child founded by observations of the child's previous skill ability. Each child is given prearranged lessons at his/her own developmentally appropriate level in all subject areas while employing uninterrupted work cycles intended to allow the child to complete tasks before moving on to the next. Our students learn that not everyone succeeds in a universal fashion. The pace at which a student completes a task is often irrelevant because the class is a heterogeneous mix of learning styles and age groups. Children's individual needs are carefully calculated with daily expectations orchestrated by the teacher, as classroom demands are adjusted for children with learning differences. Students feel free to gravitate toward the activities with which they are most comfortable. Successive approximations to a larger goal can easily be built while encouraging a child to take the risks necessary for success.

## 3. Utilization of a Specialized Montessori Trained Staff:

Since students in a Montessori classroom are actively engaged in a unique individualized Montessori curriculum, a specialized teacher is required to make certain that appropriate Montessori pedagogy and corresponding ideology are being followed. Our Montessori teachers are equipped to handle this unique responsibility, as BCMCS requires its teachers to obtain specific Montessori training from an accredited AMS/MACTE training program. Montessori teachers are trained to observe, through individualized interpretation, unique strengths in students as a basis for further achievements. BCMCS functions as a learning community with the entire staff committed to high achievement fostering children to have a love of learning. BCMCS teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community are all integral parts of this structure.

## 4. Belief in Multi-Aged Class settings:

BCMCS arranges children in multi-age class groupings that correspond with the developmental plains of development (ages 6-9 and 9-12, with a stand alone Kindergarten). In this design, 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, as students are often willing to aid, support and assist one another.

## 5. Idea of a Prepared Learning Environment:

Montessori saw the prepared environment as a key to reaching the full potential in children. With an abundance of opportunities available for students to pursue their interests, the path to competence is a broad one, accommodating different approaches. Our specifically designed Montessori classrooms provide children with an inherent feeling of ownership. Order is maintained with everyone's cooperation. Individual work spaces are often designated with the intention that each individual is responsible for its accessibility. BCMCS has carefully arranged each classroom setting to maintain supportive learning 'opportunities,' as each learning 'environment' is set up to facilitate student discussion and stimulate collaborative understanding.

## 6. Realization that Montessori Materials create an understanding of abstract concepts:

Children learn best by doing, so BCMCS utilizes hands-on Montessori learning materials that are intended to encourage the child into reasonable reflection, understanding and discovery. Materials are stimulating, inspiring and meant to 'paint' a concrete impression; each material is carefully designed to appeal to the learner at a certain level of development, as the greater part of learning comes from a child's own discovery with the materials themselves. Because Montessori materials are set up to support the development of competence for students, it is easy for teachers to help them learn from their mistakes, as the materials have built in 'controls of error,' further designed to lead the learners to apply their reasoning power to their work.

7. Endorsement in Disciplining that Promotes Self-Discipline:

Each classroom is seen as community where children are taught to respect other's needs. The development of a sense of ownership and responsibility for one's behavior is the ultimate goal at BCMCS. Children learn to reflect on their actions and foresee likely consequences of their behavior through group meetings and classroom discussions. Our Student Code of Conduct has detailed components that enable the children to develop independence toward problem solving. From peer mediation to teacher and parent arbitration techniques, it is always the intent to enable the children to develop mediation strategies on their own. Peace education is intertwined through the interactions between teacher and child, child and child (ren), and children and their use of the materials in the environment.

8. Importance of technology in the learning process:

BCMCS recognized that computers and their technologies will be a vital part of each student's future educational setting, so it is our belief that technology and improved learning are inseparable. Therefore, it is the instructive goal to provide our students with a technological experience consistent with Montessori pedagogies and principles which support 'learning' by 'doing.' In the technology sector, computer equipment and related skill based programs relate to our core principles and methodologies, presenting various opportunities for our students to participate in activities in agreement to applied experiences in the classroom. The technology lessons and activities at BCMCS foster the pursuit of abundant integrated learning, making our technology program's central purpose that of empowering students to locate information that they can use for knowledge; comprehend that knowledge in technological manner; properly apply the information; to finally to analyze the information in order to synthesize and evaluate their learning and overall understanding.

## **Academic Standards**

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

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

support the developmental characteristics of the age level and the unique personality of each child, we follow Dr. Maria Montessori's plea to "follow the child."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **(2) Mathematics and Geometry**

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

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

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

## **(3)History**

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

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

## **(4)Geography**

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

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

### ***(5)Biology***

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

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

### ***(6)World Languages***

All of our students were afforded the opportunity of an indirect computerized foreign language program application via the Rosetta Stone web-based system. With such, learners had the ability to utilize its application at school during weekly 45 minute computer sessions, with the guide of a specialized teacher, as well as having the opportunity to work on the program at home. The array of language options were numerous, with most students enrolling in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French and German.

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

Music is as much a part of the classroom environment as pictures on the wall. Most settings have classical music playing in the background, enabling the children to discover the aspects that music brings.

The work with ear training with both the diatonic and chromatic scales begins in Kindergarten. In the elementary we build upon these experiences, taking children into the beginnings of reading and writing music. Instrumental lessons are also offered to any Upper Elementary student who wishes to enroll.

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

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

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

## Strengths and Challenges

*Montessori education integrates the interaction between a child and an environment that is conducive to developing a resilient mind-set that encourages the child "...to come to an understanding of himself and the limits of his universe and thus achieve an integration of his personality" (Montessori, 1948).*

**Listed below are components of BCMCS's method of instruction that continue to propel our school's program strengths, while encompassing our quality learning institution:**

- **Opportunity for the Learner:** Each student is given an opportunity to express strengths in a prepared environment that is full of opportunities. The materials, the furniture, and the architecture are all designed to provide maximum opportunities to release potential. "Leave the child free to make use of his powers and he will show himself capable of success," Montessori wrote (1948). Montessori teachers look, through individualized observations, for unique strengths in students as a basis for further achievements.
- **Developing a sense of community:** Our specifically designed Montessori classrooms provide children with an inherent feeling of ownership. Order is maintained with everyone's cooperation. Each student plays an active role in keeping the classroom neat and presentable. Individual work spaces are often designated with the intention that each individual is responsible for its accessibility. Not only is this fostered in the classroom, but in our school community as well. Each month, the PTA offers an activity that brings the community together in a social setting.
- **Development of success:** Our students learn that not everyone succeeds in a universal fashion. They can see that some of their peers pick up new concepts with ease, while others struggle and may need follow-up lessons. In our Montessori classrooms, the pace at which a student completes a task is often irrelevant because the class is a heterogeneous mix of learning styles and age groups. Children's individual needs are carefully calculated in daily expectations orchestrated by the teacher. Collaboration between two or slightly more students is fostered. Throughout the day, students are encouraged to ask their peers for assistance in figuring out a problem. Classroom demands can be adjusted for children with learning differences without others noticing; and students will still meet the same objectives. Our students feel free to gravitate toward the activities with which they are most comfortable. Successive approximations to a larger goal can easily be built while encouraging a child to take the risks necessary for success. In teaching a child how to write a paragraph, for example, focus begins at the sentence level where attention is paid to the mechanics as well as to the content. Writing sentences can begin at the most basic level with a minimal number of words and can be increased to include a more complex structure over time. As soon as the student demonstrates competence at the sentence level, the notion of building a paragraph can be introduced. Failure and humiliation are minimized in a classroom where children learn through peer collaboration or private tutorial and feel no different from anyone else.
- **Learning from mistakes:** Because our Montessori classrooms are set up to support the development of competence for students, it is easy for teachers to help them learn from their mistakes. Most lessons have a built-in "control of error," brilliantly designed by Dr. Montessori to ". . . lead the child to apply his reasoning power to his work" (Montessori, 1948). Children who go to Montessori schools learn over time that mistakes are not to be feared; they are not criticized or ridiculed by others when they do something wrong. Mistakes may often go unnoticed by others or might even be corrected quietly by peers in

collaborative engagement. Montessori saw the prepared environment as a key to reaching potential in children. With an abundance of opportunities available for students to pursue their interests, the path to competence is a broad one, accommodating different approaches.

- **Disciplining in ways that promote self-discipline:** Each classroom is seen as community where children are taught to respect others' needs. Circle time affords teachers opportunities to discuss conflicts and model problem-solving techniques. The development of a sense of ownership and responsibility for one's behavior is the ultimate goal. As each year progresses, children learn to reflect on their actions and foresee likely consequences of their behavior through group meetings and classroom discussions. Our Student Code of Conduct has detailed components that enable the children to develop independence toward problem solving. From peer mediation to teacher and parent arbitration techniques, it is always the intent to enable the children to develop mediation strategies on their own.
- **Creating an alliance between home and school:** Because students in a Montessori classroom are actively engaged in different ways all day long, the teacher has an opportunity to witness growth in several areas. Often, students are asked to join in on a conference, which allows the parent-teacher team to demystify the alliance and send a message of consistency to the student. Armed with an abundance of information about students, coupled with an empathic response, our Montessori teachers are equipped to handle parental concerns in a proactive manner. It is exactly this positive, respectful relationship between parents and schools that sets the stage for success in developing a resilient mind-set.

Much of our school's strengths are directly tied to its method of instruction. However, due to the complexity of its pedagogical structure, and the progressive nature of our ideals, complexities related to staffing, student transitioning and educating our community continue to be areas in constant needs of address. Listed are these issues of concern and the approach that our school continues to make toward solutions:

- **Finding qualified Montessori Credentialed Teachers:** Finding Montessori trained teachers that also have valid PA Teaching Certificates continues to be difficult task. BCMCS remains steadfast in affording opportunities for our staff to be sponsored for either Montessori Training or course work to acquire appropriate PA Certification/Montessori Credentials.
- **Transition for our students into local school districts:** Socially and academically, our students transition quite well in the local districts. However, Montessori methods of instruction differ in delivery and distribution. Students, therefore, who leave our program [through promotion] at 6<sup>th</sup> grade [or at other varying levels], adjust differently than typical transfer students. One of the main deviations occurs at the level of instruction. The vast majorities of our students typically work and learn at levels beyond expected aims as those in the varying transitional settings. Because of this, past students from our school are placed in settings which are not as academically challenging, leading to boredom and intellectual complacency. BCMCS continues to work with our families and local school districts, educating them to look into varying options offered [such as advanced placements] so as to ensure the most efficient transition possible. This area continues to show improvement

as we have been able to collect more data and experience with this process. During the 2009-10 school year, an alliance was made with our host district [Pennsbury] which was intended to ensure that future 6th Grade students from our school transition with greater ease into their perspective middle school environments. Noted actions to achieve such were: (1) Representation at a BCMCS meeting for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduating Class Parents, as a Pennsbury Representative attended so as to answer pertinent parent questions related to the transition, (2) A 'Special' Orientation geared toward our Promoting Class, (3) Revision of Placement testing, where the location and timing were switched to our environment during the school year, and (4) record transfers modification, as such was set into a group collection as opposed to the piecemeal system that was prepared in the past.

- **Universal meaning of Montessori pedagogy:** One version or universal interpretation of Montessori ideology can be difficult to find, as its ideology has been and remains to be interpreted in a multitude of ways. We, as a school, continue to offer workshops for our parents that are intended to convey our school's elucidation of Montessori interpretation so that our entire school community is in accord. As well, workshops offered by the school, as well as those attended at the national level for the staff, are intended to further unify its interpretation and understanding.

## SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### Strategic Planning Process

Back in 2005, it was determined that Bucks County Montessori Charter School [BCMCS] would pursue dual accreditation through both the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools and the American Montessori Society [AMS]. BCMCS made application to both organizations and was accepted into membership as a Candidate for Accreditation on December 19, 2005, and has continually kept candidacy status on a yearly basis since.

Initially in the process, BCMCS began researching a variety of self-study options, settling on a computer based program called the **On-line School Assessment School Improvement Process**, or **OSASIP**. This program was developed by Foundations INC, a non-profit organization providing support services to charter schools and matched very closely the standards developed by the Middle States Association.

Throughout the subsequent school years, selections of the **OSASIP** Building Blocks or standards were assessed, befitting our current statuses—with action plans being created and timelines assigned. These were all standards that primarily addressed the educational program. The self-study process involved teachers, parents, board members and ancillary staff, who were divided into teams and assigned to Building Blocks. During the 2008-09 school year, however, a decision was made to extend the time line for pursuit of Accreditation while we pursued charter renewal and planned upgrades to our IT and Administrative Support Systems.

Subsequently, in planning for the upcoming school year, BCMCS recognizes that a good strategic plan should provide a clear explanation of how strategic goals are to be achieved by an organization or program. Long-term goals and details of the specific strategies and programmatic goals that need to be pursued, with risks that are analyzed and specific strategies to overcome those risks, need to be adopted. The strategic planning process that maps a clear path between a present condition and a vision for the future is paramount. Therefore, BCMCS has decided to revisit the Strategic Plan to review accomplishments against documented objectives bases on the

OSASIP study, establishing a feedback loop that can then influence future planning and decision making. As a result, a number of Self Study models will be analyzed during the summer of 2010, with the chosen model followed for the Fall of the 2010-11 school year.

This baseline template provides the suggested process for BCMCS in creating Strategic plans. Initially, the plans will take shape through an iterative process of facilitated group discussions, research, drafting, and review. The questions incorporated into the template will pertain (in one form or another) to broad strategic concerns, though some are quite specific. The broader strategic concerns are:

- Who are we?
- Where are we?
- Where do we want to go (or not go) and why?
- How do we get there?
- How do we know when we get there?

The Strategic Plan template, then, will be broken down into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Strategic Planning Methodology
- Current Situation
- Target End-State
- Requirements
- Implementation Program
- Appendices

In completing this strategic planning process, BCMCS will have a consistent framework for articulating its purpose, values, roles, objectives, strengths, and weaknesses. This effort is intended to provide a roadmap to our future where the needs of the school and its constituents [primarily the students] are better served. For each section, a list of questions will be provided so as to facilitate the planning process and yield content for the plan itself through the answers and discussion.

A Strategic Planning Process Map has been developed as a separate flow chart and check list for facilitating the planning process. The purpose of this approach is to establish a consistent framework for strategic planning related matters across all mediums, with the following timeline of events intended to lead to the ultimate goal of dual Middle States and AMS Accreditation:

- Summer 2010, Self Study Chosen
- Fall 2010, Complete Self-Study
- Spring 2011, AMS and Middle States Site Visits
- Summer 2011, Dual AMS and Middle States Accreditation

## Strategic Planning Committee

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
DeNofa, Debbie	Fund Raising Chair	Board Member	BOT
Doran, Jason	IT Admin.	Administrator	COO/CAO
Fogal, Jeff	BOT member	Board Member	BOT
Heath, Tim	Business Manager	Business Representative	BOT
Long, Brian	CAO/Principal	Administrator	BOT

Lutz, Chris	Testing Coordinator	Elementary School Teacher	CAO / Principal
Sissom, Shari	Montessori Team Leader / Department Head	Elementary School Teacher	CAO / Principal
Smith, Dori	Administrative Assistant	Administrator	COO / CAO / BOT
Snyder, Ray	Curriculum Chair / HR Committee Chair	Board Member	BOT
Stango, Tony	Operations Manager / COO	Administrator	BOT
Tenaglia, Al	BOT President	Board Member	BOT
Triebley, Lori	School Nurse	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	CAO / Principal / COO
Walter, Sherry	SPED Supervisor	Special Education Representative	CAO / Principal

## Goals, Strategies and Activities

### **Goal: PSSA Mathematic Scores**

**Description:** In adhering to Montessori Testing data, BCMCS will strive for 100% Proficiency or above scoring for all 6th Grade Students, and support appropriate ranking scoring for the lower grade levels.

### **Strategy: Improving 3rd Grade Math PSSA scores**

**Description:** To improve consistency of instructional techniques

### **Activity: Improving PSSA Scores**

**Description:**

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

None Selected	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

### **Activity: Provide more opportunity for grade level planning**

**Description:** Teacher preparation time to be scheduled in back to back block sections in accordance with special area subject schedule

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

---

None Selected	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

## **Goal: PSSA READING Scores**

**Description:** At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

**Strategy:** Introducing higher level thinking skills into the lower elementary

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

**Activity:** Workshop on Bloom's Taxonomy and its implications in the classroom

**Description:**

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

---

None Selected	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Complete

## **Goal: READING**

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

## **Strategy: Phonetic skill based reading improvements**

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

### **Activity: Improve phonemic awareness across all curriculum areas**

#### **Description:**

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

None Selected	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

### **Statement of Quality Assurance**

Charter school has met AYP.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

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

### **Rigorous Instructional Program**

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School adopted the principles developed by Maria Montessori as the essential components of its set curriculum. Fundamentally, this is achieved through the use of Montessori kinesthetic materials that make actual connections to concepts, in conjunction with appropriated aims attached to each of these workable materials.

In two separate installments, BCMCS has aligned the set Montessori curriculum aims to that of the set PA State Standards, creating a combined curriculum that entails both ideologies, thus creating its own *BCMCS Curriculum Standards Manual*. BCMCS has worked diligently to infuse and juxtapose Montessori aims with that of the PA State Standards into such. The *BCMCS Curriculum Standards Manual* is designed in a fashion matching the PA Chapter 4 categorization related to subject [ex. Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening] and subcategory [ex. Learning to Read Independently]. From there, Montessori Aims were listed both in a sequential and scoping fashion, true to the set Montessori curriculum aims in a checklist fashion, with identified related PA State Standards attaching those standards which correlate to such. Detailed rationale explanation pages [BCMCS Curriculum Rationale Pages] for both curriculum installments, as well as sample curriculum pages [BCMCS Curriculum Standards Manual (sample)] are attached to the Annual Report's document repository. As outlined in the 'rationale explanation pages,' the BCMCS

Curriculum has been aligned with the Pennsylvania Standards so as to ensure that, although Montessori ideals remain the strength of character to our school's curriculum, identifying and addressing related state standards ensure the most functional curricular design--encompassing our school's unique identity as both a Montessori and PA public school.

The most pressing difficulty juxtaposing the PA State Standards with Montessori Scope and Sequence Aims was that the Montessori curricula (which Maria Montessori developed in 'aim' arrangements) were in age range formats. For example, the Montessori Standard for the understanding of the dynamic stamp game material ranged for ages from 5 to 7 1/2 years. To fit this ideal into a PA Standard format, it was necessary to realign the Montessori 'aims' to match the grade level format. Consequently, the BCMCS Curriculum Aims can be thought of as being baseline standards by which the school and state believe a student should be able to comprehend, understand and master such materials or lessons. Montessori Aims containing vital linear and beginning stages not included in the PA standards were also incorporated in the BCMCS Curriculum.

Since BCMCS is a true Montessori environment, with a key component that students have the ability to move at their own rate and pace, created an initial predicament for the curriculum's functionality. This is true for both advanced and basic level children, as our program is completely individualized for each child. The standard criterion, therefore, are useful in that it enables students to achieve particular goals. However, it is also likely that students will be working with materials and concepts two or more grade levels above their own. It is up to the teacher in each of the above circumstances to support each child with a program that meets that student's level of understanding.

Teachers in a Montessori environment tend to be more of a facilitator, as their role is to guide, support, tutor, demonstrate and instruct their students. Montessorians believe and use instructional best-practices (Differentiated Instruction, Understanding by Design, etc) whose ideals are inherent in Montessori pedagogy. Large group instruction, small group instruction, cooperative learning and independent study are other teaching styles that are intrinsic to Montessori methods of instruction, and have been for the last 100 years.

## **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- Rigorous Instructional Program - Professional Development Approval Letter
- Rigorous Instructional Program - Teacher Induction Approval Letter
- Original Curriculum Rationale
- Original Curriculum Rationale
- Sample Curriculum Page: 3rd Grade 2.3
- Updated Curriculum Rationale
- Updated Curriculum Rationale

## **English Language Learners**

There were no English Language Learner needs identified at Bucks County Montessori Charter School during the 2009-10 school year; however, BCMCS has developed a plan to evaluate potential students' language proficiency and provide services if needed.

The administrative and teaching staff has been informed of the needed protocol and appropriate documentation for services if a student were to be identified by teacher concern or other evaluation or IST process. In addition, a home survey is sent to the entire school population, yearly, as related below:

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

- *What was the first language your child spoke?*
- *Does your child speak a language other than English? If so what is that language?*
- *What language is spoken in your home?*

If one of the three questions above is not answered as English, a language proficiency assessment is administered which follows all state regulations and is performed by the BCMCS SPED department. In the event that a student were identified as needing ELL, BCMCS would initiate a partnership with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit to provide instructional services.

As there is no ELL population, an ELL report is not applicable.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

## **Graduation Requirements**

BCMCS is an elementary school; therefore, graduation requirements are not applicable. As an elementary school, there is no graduation requirement for students exiting sixth grade.

The decision to promote a student to the next grade or level is based on a satisfactory level of progress in all academic and social areas. This progress is assessed through standardized test performance using both PSSA and Terra Nova results, performance on the Albanesi assessments, Montessori classroom work, the BCMCS Progress Report, student portfolios, behavioral documentation, attendance records, and teacher/parent observations.

Students with special needs who receive special education services are promoted to the next grade/level based on adequate yearly progress toward goals identified in and with their IEPs. While their instructional level may be below their chronological grade level, retention/promotion decisions are based on individual levels of academic progress each year, meeting all state mandated guidelines related to retention.

A student may be retained at his/her present level of achievement that differs from the traditional pattern of retention. Since a Montessori curriculum is based on mastery at a level rather than in a grade (and if the teacher and parent feel that additional work is needed to master the curriculum and/or social skills needed), a student may be retained, **though** remain in the same classroom, since BCMCS implores multi-age classrooms. This form of in-class retention is available to 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th grade level students. If satisfactory progress is made, the child may move to the next designated level during the school year. Because of the multi-age classroom, and the Montessori philosophy of individualized instruction and planning lessons for each child at their own level, retention is being used less and less. Conversely, the significant progress a student can initiate an advanced grade level move from one grade level to the next, in compliance with any/all state regulations.

## **Special Education**

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

During the 2009-10 school year, BCMCS continued to adhere to a full Inclusion Program model, assigning one lower elementary classroom and one upper elementary classroom as Inclusion settings. As each of our BCMCS classrooms support a Lead Montessori Teacher and an Assistant Teacher, the Assistant Teachers in the Inclusion Classrooms are dual certified in PA Elementary and Special Education.

The results from three years of implementation continue to show that the Inclusion Program is more effective, efficient and cost effective than pull-out programs that we had instilled in the past. First, the children do not identify the assistant Inclusion Teacher as one who is there to instruct only children receiving services, but as another teacher there to assist everyone in the environment. Of course identified students are a priority for IEP students, addressing each of the IEP goals; however, it is fostered in a way that does not place a stigma on the child as it would in a pull-out program system. In addition, the support the IEP children need is available the entire day and not just for a segment of time [in accordance to the NOREP] that they would have received in a pull-out program.

We will continue this model for the lower and upper elementary classes for the 2010-2011 school year. The Special Education Coordinator will continue to service children who are in non-inclusion Montessori classrooms in the upper elementary and lower elementary settings in a 'pull-out' fashion in situations where the IEP states such.

Services will also be available in a pull-out program for a very small number of children who have more serious disabilities. Their level of inclusion will, in every attempt, be above 70%. Speech, Language, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy will continue to be contracted through the Intermediate Unit on an 'as needed' basis. Any additional time in the special education staff's schedule is used to address remediation for children needing temporary support. Evaluative services for the purpose of identifying children with disabilities are provided by a private contractor.

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

## Special Education - Attachment

- Special Education Policy and Procedures--abbreviated

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Sherry Walter	.50	Learning Support	BCMCS	19	Inclusion and pull out support
Christine Mahan	.50	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	4	Inclusion and pull out support Teacher
Katie McDevitt	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	3	Inclusion Classroom Teacher

Jean Duffner	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS 3	Inclusion Classroom Teacher
Michele Freiling	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS 5	Inclusion Classroom Teacher

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Bucks County IU 22	.2	Speech/PT/OT	BCMCS	21	Services are provided as a combined pull-out and in-class support based on child's needs
Barbara Nobel and Associates	as needed	Psychological / Academic Evaluations; Emotional Support	BCMCS	8	Evaluations and reevaluation services as needed

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Paraprofessional	BCMCS	1.0

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
BCIU 22	Speech Therapy	7.5
BCIU 22	Occupational Therapy	7.5
BCIU 22	Physical Therapy	1.5
Barbara Noble Psychological Services	Psychological Evaluation and Support	As needed
BCIU 22	Vision Support	.01

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
TerraNova	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Albanesi Montessori Assessments Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes

## Student Assessment - Secondary

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

## Student Assessment

### I. Student Assessment Procedural Statement and Support:

BCMCS operates an extensive and didactic student evaluation and assessment procedure, integrating (1) Baseline [i.e. Albanesi Tests, Dibbles Assessments, etc.], (2) Standardized [i.e. TerraNova & PSSA] and (3) Internal Analysis [i.e., M.O.E. (moving on exercises), etc.] processes. Through this three-part structure, each student's academic placement first and foremost identifies the individual student. Then the child's academic accountability is validated through a standardize assessment, focusing on the school's initiatives to address and formulate individual goals/accomplishments/needs [as well as group devised based on grade, level, classroom, etc.]. Progress and growth is then maintained through continual analyses and advancements.

Through this initiative, BCMCS students continue to make marked progress in nearly all measurable features. The first two evaluation process, as they involve attached supporting data, will now be further examined:

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

Through this baseline performance, teachers identify the specific level of each student, and plots the student into the appropriated Montessori 'Scope and Sequence' of study. Subsequently, the teachers make a derived effort to identify students whose 'standardized' [from PSSA, TerraNova] score is uncharacteristic of their performance in the classroom or at a level that is not 'proficient' per PA State guidelines. Support documentation, progress reporting grades, teacher observation notes, classroom assessments and/or portfolio works are used in these juxtaposed measures to best formulate a plan for the individual learner, befitting of the learner's strengths, weaknesses, preferred mode of instruction, apposite pace, etc. Each teacher then monitors the progress of

these identified students carefully, keeping communication with our school's department leads, SPED staff, parents and administration.

This individualized approach has provided early diagnosis of BCMCS students who test at or below basic range levels, allowing us to monitor student learning and development so as ensure growth. From this forum, individual students are screened, closely observed, and tracked for possible SPED identification, which would follow our IST process. Our school's certified SPED administrator serves as the intermediary for these identified students. Each identified child has an Instructional Support Team (IST) Plan developed using this set procedure:

1. The resource teacher observes the student in the classroom.
2. The resource teacher and classroom teacher confer to review all available formal and informal data.
3. A conference is held which includes the parent(s), resource teacher, classroom teacher, and/or Principal or Vice Principal.
4. All available data and assessment information gathered is studied and evaluated. Strategies for intervention and support are planned.
5. Additionally, through the use of a combination of multiple assessment measures (standardized tests, Albanesi tests, classroom participation and performance, writing activities, teacher observation, etc.), the staff identifies those students who consistent score below a proficient level in reading and math. Students who fall in this range in two or more of these measures begin to go through our school's Instructional Support (IST) process and are set to receive intervention services.

The classroom teacher and resource teacher(s) or inclusion teacher(s) are actively involved in remediation and support. The resource teacher provides lessons, either in or out of the regular classroom setting, one or more times a week, depending on the degree of remediation required. Close attention has been placed on this individualized track in grades K through 2, where it is our objective is to identify possible 'at risk' students during these early years, when proposed and detailed learning strategies and interventions prove most productive. In our program, it is typical for students to remain with the same teacher for three consecutive years. Recognizing the need for a centralized school-wide system for tracking individual pupil progress from year to year, BCMCS began a longitudinal study of achievement with the early data input coming from the initial testing year. An internal record keeping system been developed to enable BCMCS to carefully monitor individual pupil achievement and provide information necessary for accountability issues and school improvement.

**(2)** Next, each student's academic ability is validated via the standardized assessment(s). Individual teachers report their classroom scores with the administration noting student and classroom strengths and needs. From this forum, strengths are supported by the teachers & administration, and the information is utilized and shared with the rest of staff during Staff Learning Days. In addition, each teacher looks for trends by select groups or levels, paying special attention to the concurrence of subsequent years of data. Classrooms are then adjusted for a proportioned emphasis of needs, so as to improve overall student understanding and performance. Weaknesses are noted as well, and support is offered via material needs and/or instructive assistance. Instructive assistance, peer coaching, team leader modeling, material purchases and/or administrative monitoring are all utilized as measure to improve classroom performance. Finally, data that relates specific and identifiable school-wide areas of strengths, common standard data and a need assessment are created and discussed during Staff Learning Days. As the Montessori classroom consists of multi-age levels, student data is places into grade levels, as is consistent with traditional forms and the NCLB model that now exist. Data that relates to district comparison are placed into PowerPoint presentations that chart our school's results to those of our host and local districts.

Listed below is each grade level, with standardized results (when necessary) and summaries. The grade levels will be further broken into two parts that related to the respective standardized administered test.

**A. TerraNova Test Score Tabulation: (data representing GME [Grade Mean Equivalency]**

Kindergarten: 5 year longitude data since initial collection date

<u>Kindergarten</u>	Reading	Language	Math	Average Total SCORE
2009-10	1.4	N/A	1.7	1.55
2008-09	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.4
2007-08	0.9	N/A	1.1	1.0
2006-07	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.4
2005-06	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.3

First and Second Grades: Nine (9) year longitude data since 2001-02 school year

<u>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</u>	Read	Voc.	Reading Composite	Language	Math	Math Computation	Math Composite	Total Score
2009-10	2.8	2.8	2.8	N/A	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.7
2008-09	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.9
2007-08	2.6	2.7	2.7	N/A	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.5
2006-07	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.9
2005-06	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.1
2004-05			2.7	2.7			2.1	2.4
2003-04			2.4	2.0			2.4	2.6
2002-03			2.4	2.2			1.9	2.0
2001-02			2.5	2.2			1.8	2.2

**Second Grade:**

<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</u>	Read	Vocab.	Read Comp.	Lang.	Lang. Mech.	Lang. Comp.	Math	Math Compu.	Math Comp.	Spell	Total
2009-10	3.3	3.5	3.4	N/A	2.6	N/A	2.8	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.0
2008-09	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.7	3.2

2007-08	4.8	4.9	4.8	N/A	4.7	N/A	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.9	4.1
2006-07	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.7	3.2
2005-06	4.5	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.8
2004-05			3.6	3.2					3.0	2.9	3.5
2003-04			3.6	3.5					3.0		3.5
2002-03			4.6	3.6					3.2		3.7
2001-02			4.2	4.0					3.0		3.7

Summary and Analysis of K — 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade TerraNova Results:

Just as in past years, results of the Terra Nova Tests were first reviewed, analyzed and evaluated by the staff per the Student Assessment Procedural Guidelines [by student, by classroom, by school], with individual reports given to the parents at the end of the 2009-10 school year.

As these results indicate, grades K - 2 Terra Nova scores continue to be at or above grade level. The grade mean equivalent overall scores [listed above] represent an average performance of students in each grade in/at the sixth month of school. For example, students taking the test in March of their first grade year would be expected to be achieving at a 1.6 grade level in each subject area to be considered “on” or “at” grade level. In addition, the total grade equivalent scores for each grade level indicate that BCMCS students continue to perform at grade level or above their current grade in all academic areas measured on this test. Results from each year are fairly consistent for each grade tested.

For the 2009-10 school year, most of the scores remained consistent within a ‘common’ standard deviation from the prior year. Kindergarten scores displayed an all around improvement in each of the content areas. In First Grade, Math scores were consistent, with the Reading areas showing notable improvement. In the second grade, language related scores were consistent, with mathematic scores showing varied levels of decline. Possible reasons for the decline were explored by the curriculum committee toward the end of the school year, with a stricter teacher accountability system [primarily peer and administrative coaching] being initiated, with a slight staff reshuffling for next year to be implemented. Nevertheless, these scores still indicate above grade level achievement in all grades tested.

**B. 3<sup>rd</sup> — 4<sup>th</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade PSSA Data:**

Since PSSA testing began, BCMCS has annually met the state mandated AYP requirements.

As will be observed in the following charts, PSSA scores will be listed in *grade* levels and *subject* compartmentalized sections. In the first chart of each section, NCLB baseline standards will be stated and, when applicable, notable measures will accompany in the top information section. The charts, themselves, reflect BCMCS scoring as tabulated by percentage of Proficient/Advanced scoring, set along side our host district school [Pennsbury] as well as other local serving districts.

Not only have basic NCLB and AYP requirements been met, but our PSSA testing scores are quite competitive, out-performing many our host and other local district scores for which we

serve. The chart information will reveal such, as each has been desegregated with a juxtaposition of our scores in relation to our host district [Pennsbury] and our surrounding serving districts. The highest and lowest district scores have been taken from our host district, Pennsbury, as well as other serving districts, including Bristol Township, Bensalem, Bristol Borough, Centennial, Council Rock, Morrisville and Neshaminy. High and low scores were the solitary score that corresponded to any of the listed districts.

For grades 3<sup>rd</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>, subcategories of Reading and Math will be abridged to the data that reflects any/all improved scores, or in need of improvement data reflected by the year-by-year comparison academic performances, and will be followed with summaries that relate features of school-wide student achievement plans as well as indicate significant improvement and/or continued strong student performances.

### 3rd Grade PSSA [2008-09]



*~With the NCLB Reading AYP target set at 63%, BCMCS was 22% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*



*~With the NCLB proficiency Math AYP target set at 56%, BCMCS was 24.5% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math/Language Anecdotal Assessment:

After the 2007-08 Assessments, the school persisted in a more robust manner to implore more Montessori components [and scoping of such] into the formed BCMCS Curriculum. Driven from Curriculum and Staff meetings, our school's need to better align the internal Montessori Scope and Sequences of materials and lessons, from level to level as well as class to class, became apparent. The administration, board personnel and team leaders of the school felt that the best manner in which to accomplish this would involve acknowledged staff leaders to identify particular areas of need, present such in a training format, and then create a monitoring form to be used to help guide and supervise the identified sets of instruction and materials.

Subsequent to meetings that had taken place between UE and LE representatives, identified math needs were noted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade curricula. Workshops commenced during the summer of 2008, to not only list and train varied sets of materials, but also to corroborate, design and recognize material needs required to fully implement a unified and cohesive BCMCS Montessori Curriculum in all classes and levels. The required time for the Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary conversion constituted a three (3) day workshop involving nine (9) key staff members and teachers.

The newly developed "Scope and Sequence" initiative has shown early indications of progress, as tabulated 2008-09 PSSA 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math scores of 80% [a 13% increase from the previous year].



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Procedural Evaluation:

The data in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading precedent yearly scoring displayed declining scores for the school years 2005-2008. Subsequent to internal information gathered in our school's Student Assessment Procedural Guidelines, the school identified an obvious area of need in the Reading and Math sort. It first determined that a multifaceted reading program, which encompassed individual, small and large group learning settings, be created within the school's Reading curriculum.

The specifics of the program basically related to the identified enhancement needs in Learning to Read Independently (developing purposes for reading, increasing word recognition skills, vocabulary and comprehension) and Reading Critically in all Content Areas (reading to relate details, recount inferences, differentiating fact from opinion). Once identified, the school piloted a program intended to manage all comprised basic reading elements. Since our Montessori curriculum had already integrated areas with a direct focus on lower level receptors [i.e., to arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, and repeat]; and the comprehension section [i.e., to classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate] had as well been supported by our basic reader and SRA Individualized Reading Programs, a new reading program, combining the group directed Making Meaning program (of which the school received through a grant) with the Great Books series was initiated to extend and enhance the Reading program in the lower elementary 3<sup>rd</sup> grade settings.

## 4th Grade PSSA



*~With the NCLB Reading AYP target set at 63%, BCMCS was 25% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*



*~With the NCLB proficiency Math AYP target set at 56%, BCMCS was 7% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading/Math Anecdotal Evaluation:

After the decline in Reading scores from the 2006-07 assessment, the Curriculum Committee, a collaboration of staff, board, parent and administrative personal, identified that the decline was due to major needs in Analyzing Literature, and minor needs in Critical Reading. The major needs in Analyzing Literature related to the inability to recount literary elements and devices in poetry, drama, and within fictitious stories connected to details, inferences, comparisons, as well as differentiating fact from opinion and evaluating written work. It was proposed that all of the Upper Elementary grades utilize a system that encompassed more of an emphasis on the critical and analytical components of literature, something the past dominating Making Meaning program was not able to accurately address. The intent was to create students who were efficient in the Analytical [analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test] Synthetic (arrange, assemble,

collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write) and Evaluative [appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate) aspects of true Literature.



#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Score Procedural Assessment:

Subsequently, a similar initiative developed from the 2008-09 Math scores as to that of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Initiative in the preceding school year. Special workshops and meetings transpired between administrative personnel, team leaders and Upper Elementary Teachers, with the focus to first, account rationale for the decline, to then set procedures to make improvements. Determinations revealed staff/teacher discrepancies in the order, set and administration of school approved curricular lessons and works. Therefore, staff adjustments were made.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade PSSA



*~With the NCLB Reading AYP target set at 63%, BCMCS was 16% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*



*~With the NCLB proficiency Math AYP target set at 56%, BCMCS was 33% percentage points above the baseline objective. To date, our school continues to meet its internal yearly objective goals [i.e. those corresponding to our long range planning] in order to reach 100% Proficiency by 2014.*

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Score Procedural Evaluation:

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

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

Making Meaning in Kindergarten, with moderate transitions that converts into a 75/25 split in favor of the Great Books series by the end of the 2007-08 school year.

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



#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Score Procedural Evaluation:

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

#### 5th Grade Writing Score Analysis:



*~As there is no set NCLB benchmark for the Writing sort, BCMCS's goal is to attain 100% proficiency. As the charts indicate, both the comparison scores and the year to year progression scores indicate strong performances.*

#### 6th Grade PSSA



#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Anecdotal Assessment:

Obvious strengths are noted in all 6th year scores. This concluding 6th year data, in particular, constitutes a phenomenon that is unique to our school, in that our PSSA scores actually increase from one grade level to the next. These results have followed a pattern throughout our school's history, as proficient/advanced student scores have consistently displayed increases as students pass from grade to grade, which is unlike any other PA state school pattern.

Through analyzing this phenomenon over the past years, BCMCS has developed its own theory for this trend--in that BCMCS promotes itself as a constructivist learning environment where students learn (1) through a concrete understanding, and (2) at their own

individual/unique pace. As such, (1) many lower grade assessed students [i.e..3rd Grade] at BCMCS continue to utilize materials and manipulatives as they continue to formulate concepts of understanding in a didactic fashion, different from the 'abstract' manner in which the PSSA tests are set and that of which most other traditional education models follow. Moreover, (2) some material presentations are not sequenced in a fashion related to the state benchmarks. For example, the Montessori curriculum introduces the operation of multiplication after addition, since the two share similar patterns. Since state benchmarks differ, our younger student population is more prone to focus on concepts at varying intervals. Both of these rationales [in addition to others noted throughout this report] represent concepts which we believe account for the differing sub-par scoring in the lower grades; however, we also feel that these 'constructionist' approaches are also constitute the rationale for the higher level scores in the upper grades. Through true understanding in a concrete fashion, and pacing that builds upon it through individualized learning patterns, we believe our students are able to make these better connections and understandings in later grades.

### **Highlights of the PSSA 2008-09 Results:**

- AYP Math benchmarks met at all grade levels, with current NCLB target at 56%
- 93% of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in 6th grade Math; 0% Below Basic in 5th & 6th Math
- AYP met at all Grade levels in Reading, with NCLB target set at 63%
- 80% of 6th year students testing Proficient or Advanced in Reading
- No 6th year student testing Below Basic in Reading
- No Below Basic score in writing, with 93% Proficiency
- 85% of Students testing in Advanced or Proficient range in Science and Technology
- No Below Basic Score in any 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Subject Area
- Head to head score with local serving districts yield BCMCM supremacy in 6 of the 10 categories.

## **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- TerraNova Results for SY 2009-10
- PSSA 2008-09 Power Point Presentation

## **Teacher Evaluation**

*“The learner and the learned need to focus, first and foremost, on the process of understanding as opposed to the product of what is understood -- for if the process is fully developed the latter will naturally follow.” ~M. Montessori*

It is always BCMCS's attempt to go with the educational best practices, as it is the intent of the Teacher Evaluation Processes, consisting of Formal and Informal Methods [both announced and unannounced], to be a productive and useful progression and course of development for helping teachers become more effective in their teaching and profession.

The **Informal Evaluation Process** is a constant and ongoing practice, being documented and noted on an occurring basis. Informal evaluation observations will be added to appropriate BCMCS evaluation forms in accordance to instance, observances and

occurrences in performance comprise a portion of the summative evaluation(s) at the end of each school year.

The **Formal Evaluation Process** will be completed in accordance to the following:

Formal Evaluation Process:

There are three main steps that comprise the BCMCS formal evaluation process:

1. Determination of Documentation Form
2. Pre-Observation
3. Formal Observation
4. Post-Observation

Determination of Documentation Form:

All BCMCS instructional staff will utilize one (or multiple, if having multiple certification and/or credentials) of the listed Observation Forms:

- ***PDE-426*** for all PA/State Certified staff
- ***BCMCS Montessori Evaluation Form*** for all Montessori Credentialed
- Staff
- ***BCMCS Teaching Assistant/SPED/Specials/Intern/Emergency***
- ***Certified Form*** for all other teaching and or instructional staff members.

Pre-Observation:

In order to best facilitate the observation process, the Principal/CAO and the teacher will meet sometime before the planned lesson occurs. They will discuss the particulars of the lesson so that both parties are very clear as to what will occur.

The Principal/CAO will be afforded with content that will be covered and the methodology that will be used to cover it. An objective must be clear and also align with Montessori Aims or State Standards.

The dialogue that ensues is designed to bring about clarity for both parties. It is also an avenue to address the teacher's areas of concern, to which the Principal/CAO would offer helpful ideas. The more clarity achieved during this process will translate to greater gains

as a result of the observation and post-observation process -- making the final write-up during the post-observation piece of the process easier to perform.

#### Observation:

The Principal/CAO will document what actually occurs, noting both quantitative and qualitative evaluation performance indicators. As well, the content that the teacher addresses and the methodologies used will be noted. The administrator will also document other issues, such as the procedures used in the classroom, how the teacher handles student questions, and whether or not Montessori ideologies and/or school policies are upheld.

The Principal/CAO will use this information to develop a post-observation write-up in the comment sections of the evaluation form, which will be electronically emailed to the teacher for viewing prior to the post-observation/cumulative evaluation process.

#### Post-Observation:

As the activities that occurred for the Formal Observation, the Principal/CAO will document and present the final write-up process which comprises the Summative Evaluation. Let it be known that the final report is not the true goal of the process.

The review is only a tool for helping teachers grow. It instills growth by providing both an honest and fair feedback method for the teacher. The Principal/CAO will reflect on the lesson via the notes that were taken and develop a list of teacher strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, the Principal/CAO will include suggestions for growth. These suggestions are vital for helping the teacher overcome obstacles and reaching his or her highest teaching potential.

#### Summative Evaluation:

The Summative Evaluation essentially comprises the completed evaluation form(s) for the academic school year, all of which will be placed in the permanent file of the teacher on an annual basis. A copy/copies of which will be supplied for teacher verification and signature. Summative evaluations can be used to validate teacher candidacy, verify teacher placements and/or status, as well as to be utilized for ongoing contract stipulations as the BCMCS Board of Trustees determines.

## **Teacher Evaluation - Attachments**

- Teacher Evaluation Plan
- Assistant Teacher / Intern / Assisting Teacher Evaluation Form -- BCMCS

- Montessori Evaluation Form
- PDE-426 Teacher Evaluation Form

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

There were no changes to the BCMCS Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees during the 2009-2010 school year. Al Tenaglia served as President, Ray Snyder as Vice President, Debbie Denofa as Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Tenaglia served the school board as Vice President for two years before taking on the role of President in 2007. Mr. Snyder is an original founder who has served on the board since November of 2004 and Mrs. Denofa, is a founder who has held the position of Secretary/Treasurer since June of 2006.

Also serving on the board during the 2009-10 school year was Jeff Fogel who has served as trustees since July 2005. Jeff Fogel will remain as a trustee for the 2010-11 school year and the Executive Committee will also remain intact for the upcoming school year.

Brian Long, who has taught at BCMCS since it's opening in 2000 and served as Vice Principal during the 2007-08 school year, assumed the role of Principal in July of 2008, when John Funston retired. Mr. Long has his Administrative Certification and is well respected by the board, teaching staff and parent community. During the 2009-2010 school year Mr. Long served in a dual capacity as Principal, and Lead Upper Elementary Teacher. For the upcoming 2010-11 School Year, Mr. Long will serve as the school's Principal, CEO and Chief Academic Officer.

Tony Stango continued to serve as the Operations Manager of the school during the 2009-2010 school year and will serve in an expanded capacity in the upcoming school year as Operations Manager and Chief Administrative Officer. Mr. Stango is part of the Leadership Team of the Bucks County Montessori Charter School and as such will oversee operational performance at BCMCS through undertaking or managing administration and general school operations, in order to support school achievement. Mr. Stango also serves as an assistant and adviser to the Bucks County Montessori School Board of Trustees, the school's Business Manager and Principal.

Level Head Coordinators, Shari Sissom and Lori Carpenter, who are from the teaching ranks will continue to hold important positions of leadership and responsibility within the school in areas of curriculum/program planning and development, and resource management. Also serving on the Leadership Team during the 2009-10 school year was the existing Business Manager who oversaw all facility and financial needs.

The above leadership model proved very successful during the 2009-2010 school year and will remain intact for the upcoming 2010-11 school year as it is one that the school is committed to.

## Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Albert Tenaglia	President
Raymond Snyder	Vice-President
Debbie DeNofa	Secretary/Treasurer
Jeff Fogel	Trustee

## Professional Development (Governance)

All members of the BCMCS Board of Trustees have served the school for at least four years and have a full understanding of the school's charter application and by-laws. Each board member has also been provided with a School Documentation guide that includes a copy of the Sunshine Law, Right to Now Law, Act 22 Charter School Law, and the school's Policies and Procedures, Bylaws, Crisis Prevention Plan and Technology Plan. The Principal, Operations Manager and Business Manager, also served as a resource to the board on a regular basis and the school's legal counsel has also made himself available to the board to consult on all relevant sections of the school's charter and public school code.

During the upcoming school year, the Board of Trustees and Administrative Team will participate in an updated board training session facilitated by the school's solicitor, Robert O'Donnell. The content of this training may include such topics as:

- The non-profit corporation law generally, governance and conflict of interest specifically.
- The Pennsylvania Ethics Act including frequently encountered issues.
- Fiduciary duties of board members.
- Governance responsibilities including relationships among Board, administration, and staff.
- The Charter School Law (Act 22 of 1997) and usual issues.
- Sunshine Act.
- Conduct of meetings and record keeping.
- How to deal with advisers, vendors, the school community, and the public at large.

## **Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School**

The BCMCS Board of Trustees functions primarily as a policy-making body. The board exercises legal power and responsibility for the school. Its roles and responsibilities include: financial development and management, fiduciary oversight, and programmatic oversight. The board is responsible for: coordination of long-range planning and resource development; overseeing and evaluating the work of the Administrative Team (Principal, Operations Manager, and Business Manager); 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.

BCMCS does not utilize an external management organization to oversee and manage the day to day operations of the school or provide a curriculum for our program. All such functions are delegated by the Board of Trustees to the Administrative Team, and other professionals retained for specific functions, (e.g.... legal services). This internal management system has been in place and operational since the inception of our school. Periodically, BCMCS may engage outside temporary support services on an as needed basis, to assist in certain school functions; however, the support is limited and any costs associated with it is accounted for in our operations budget. When such services are engaged, the Board assigns certain specific tasks for completion and monitors the personnel through on site observation and/or the completed work products.

The BCMCS Board of Trustees meets once a month for their scheduled public meeting, which is on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Additional round table meetings may also be held to review specific topics that are relevant to the school. 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; appointing or dismissing school administrators 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 major contracts; fixing salaries or compensation of administrator, teachers, or other employees of the charter school; and, entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical school for the Pennsbury Areas Charter School's

proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.

The Board President meets with the Administrative Team at least once a month. Board Committees for curriculum, finance, fundraising, human resources and facilities meet regularly and the Executive Committee meets on an as needed basis. Financial accounts are reviewed monthly by the Business Manager and Board Treasurer. Day to day management of the school is handled by the Principal/CEO, Operations Manager/CAO and Business Manager. The board members are aware of their role and are very professional and conscientious as they carry out their responsibility.

Communications between BCMCS and our host district, have been handled by the schools' respective administrators and has been very productive. During the 2008-09 school year the host district's board of trustees unanimously approved the five year renewal of BCMCS's charter.

A list of the Board of Trustees meetings for the 2009-2010 school year is attached.

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

- 2009-2010 BOT Meeting Schedule

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

The BCMCS Board of Trustees is composed of parents, and founders from the community. At the beginning of each year teachers are directed to have students fill out an expectation form to elicit input on their anticipated outcomes. During student lead conferences, students share their expectations with their parents to elicit parental input and buy in.

In the past, survey forms were distributed at the end of each school to provide parents the opportunity to elicit responses regarding the perceived success or lack thereof of key elements of the educational program, communication, and overall experience at the school. This year, a web based parent survey was posted on the school's web site and a communication sent to each family requesting that they participate in the survey. Results of the survey are gathered and reviewed prior to the start of the new school year as a self assessment and improvement planning tool.

Prior to each Board of Trustee Meeting an agenda is posted on the school's website to inform parents and the community on topics to be discussed and to invite them to participate during the Open Floor Forum.

During regularly held monthly Board meetings the Principal and Operations Manager provide updates concerning any special happenings that have taken place at the school or that are planned for the near future, committee chairs provide pertinent updates regarding committee activities, and an open floor forum is reserved for the public to raise questions and/or suggest topics for inclusion in the agenda of future board meetings. Quarterly Round Table Meetings are also held at which announced presentations on relevant topics are made. Teachers and parents are invited to attend and discussion is encouraged.

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

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

BCMCS maintains open communication with parents. All teachers receive a laptop which enables parents to have constant access to their child's teachers. This frequent email and phone communication allowed parents to hear regularly about their child's progress at school, not just their problems. The School's website also keeps our community well informed of upcoming events as well as school accomplishments. Utilization of the One Call Now Communication System has also allowed the school to have important announcements and/or reminders sent via a voice mail message to all or pertinent sectors of our school community. For the upcoming school year we plan to broaden the One Call network to include e-mail communications as well.

A Back to School Night is held in September, and Parent/Teacher conferences were held following the first and third report card period. Conferences were scheduled to accommodate as many parents as possible, as evidenced by our 99% parent attendance at these conferences. For the 1% of the parents that did not attend the conferences, accommodations were made to review their student's progress with them prior to release of the student's report card.

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

able to raise concerns and ask questions. The Principal and a member of the teaching staff attend all meetings.

BCMCS actively seeks opportunities to participate in community service activities. Some examples are: sponsoring food and clothing drives, participation in the local St. Patrick's Day parade, partnering with the Bucks County Technical High School in recruiting prospective interns, an end of the year play held at the Bristol Riverside Theater and numerous fundraisers coordinated with various local businesses.

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

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Major fund-raising activities**

During the 2009-2010 school year, BCMCS and/or the School's PTA offered the following Fundraising Opportunities:

SCRIP PROGRAM  
SCHOOL STORE  
BURGER KING NIGHT  
SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIRS  
RAFFLE BASKET EXTRAVAGANZA  
INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING PROGRAM  
CELL PHONE RECYCLING PROGRAM  
BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION  
LABELS FOR EDUCATION:  
SHOPRITE AND MCCAFFREY'S CASH REGISTER RECIEPTS:  
TYSON A+ LABELS  
KIDSTUFF COUPON BOOKS  
TARGET  
BCMCS FLEA MARKET  
SQUARE ONE ART  
SPRING CLOTHING DRIVE  
CORBI'S FUNDRAISER.

TERRA CYCLE  
SCHOOL CLOTHINGS - BCMCS SPIRIT WEAR  
YEARBOOK SALES  
VALENTINES DAY CANDY GRAM  
PTA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

In addition to the above fundraisers, the school also offered a pledge drive alternative. The idea behind the Pledge Drive was to make raising funds for the school as simple as possible. Instead of enlisting the students in fundraising efforts that involve “door-to-door” sales, the Pledge Drive eliminates the need to spend precious family time selling fundraising products that carry high overheads. This proved to be a welcomed alternative to our school community.

The funds raised last year supported enrichment programs such as Star Lab, classroom Montessori materials and books, as well as landscaping and maintenance of the school grounds. The Fundraising efforts of our PTA have also raised funds needed to provide our school community with special events and activities such as:

Picture Day  
Harvest Day Hayride and Bonfire  
Ice Cream Social  
Ice Skating Social  
Family Dance  
Teacher/Staff Appreciation Luncheon  
Back to School Celebration  
Lunch Program  
Holiday and Year End Gift Program  
PTA Family Directory

## **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

The School Law of Pennsylvania requires that public school districts provide an annual operations budget prior to the start of the fiscal year (July 1). BCMCS makes this budget available to the public for review and comment before adopting same by June 30th for the fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30th of the subsequent year. The board is committed to adopting a budget each year which projects an operating surplus of at least \$100,000. The budget also contains contingencies which more than adequately provide for fiscal solvency. The school maintains more than sufficient fund balances and adequate resources are available to assist in the achievement of the school's mission, goals and academic standards.

All budgets and financial records are audited by an independent Certified Public Accountant firm in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and a report provided to Pennsbury and PDE accordingly.

## **Accounting System**

The accounting system used at Bucks County Montessori Charter School is a Quick Books Pro accounting system loaded with a Chart of Accounts that mirrors that of the Pennsylvania Chart of Accounts for Pennsylvania Public Schools. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles are followed for accrual based budgeting, accounting and reporting. The school's financial and budgetary reporting is prepared in accordance with GAAP and applicable standards set by the Governance Accounting Standards Board. All budget and financial reporting requirements are completed in a timely fashion and delivered to the appropriate state departments. Additionally, the school has an outside independent accounting firm perform a full financial audit on an annual basis. The audit also includes a review of policy and procedures. Checks are presented monthly to the Board of Trustees. The BOT approves all checks written on behalf of the school. The school has always maintained a policy prohibiting school issued credit cards. Bank accounts are reconciled on a monthly basis. The school is solvent.

## **Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances**

### **Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment**

- 2009-10 Revenues - Expenditures

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

Siegel & Drossner, PC., Certified Public Accountants, served as the school's audit firm. They audited the financial statements, each major fund and the aggregate fund information of the Bucks County Montessori Charter School, as of and for the school year ended June 30, 2009.

The audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government*

*Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Attached is a copy of the audit for the 2008-2009 school year. The 2009-2010 audit is in the process of being completed and results of same will be forwarded to the host district once completed.

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

- 2008-09 Audit

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

No deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting, considered to be a material weakness, was identified in the audit and the school has not received any citations.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

During the 2009-10 school year BCMCS leased space located at 219 Tyburn Road in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania. This facility located at the site provides spacious well maintained grounds, as well as large interior classrooms, more than adequate lighting, administrative offices, library, multi-purpose room and nurse's office. This facility also allows for flexible scheduling and creative science programs, and provides opportunities for the school to host school and fundraising activities on site. It also impacts favorably towards our pursuit of Middle States & Montessori Accreditation.

Furniture and equipment needs are identified and acquired through compliance with any bidding requirements and the established purchasing procedures. The following are a list of the acquisitions and upgrades made during the last year:

- \* Memory upgrades to all of our lab computers;
- \* Ten new desktop towers for classrooms;
- \* Seven net-books for the lead teaching staff.
- \* New Microphones for each lab computer.
- \* 8'x4' classroom white boards.
- \* Mobile coat rack for one Upper Elementary classroom

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

BCMCS leases the facility at 219 Tyburn Road under a long term lease agreement which provides for a permanent location until the end of the existing charter. The facility has expansion capabilities, should additional space be needed. Last year's plan to add New Desktop Computers for the classrooms has been completed. Instead of adding 8 New Lap Top Computers it was decided that 7 Net-Books would satisfy the needs of our lead teaching Staff. The MMS Administrative Software System was also purchased, installed and utilized with much success.

For the upcoming 2010-2011 school year the bulk of our capital expenditures are earmarked for Information Technology upgrades which include:

- \* 7 classroom projectors
- \* 1 mobile screen
- \* 1 Flat panel TV
- \* 1 TV Monitor- Cart
- \* 1 Blue Ray Disc 40" Player
- \* Server Memory Upgrades
- \* 8 Black & White Laser Printers for the classrooms
- \* Desktop Memory Upgrades
- \* 6 Think Pad Computers for use in the UE Classrooms
- \* 1 Lap Top Computer for use by the school's Principal

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

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

#### Student Health and Wellness:

Bucks County Montessori Charter School employs a full-time nurse who is on site during school hours. She is responsible for oversight of the health and immunization records for

students and staff, which are copied and maintained in the school office. The nurse's responsibilities also include maintaining all health records, dispensing appropriate and documented medications, conducting health screenings and provision of first aid treatment. A doctor is under contract to approve standing orders, sign off on reports, provide physicals and write prescriptions for allergy antidotes. BCMCS receives reimbursement through the PA Dept. of Health for school health services--this information is provided to the state via the SHARRS Annual reporting service.

Since BCMCS does not provide lunch and/or breakfast programs, nor is a wellness policy applicable. However, the school does provide a litany of health services that educate and foster proper nutrition, hygiene and safety through programs such as DARE, Human Growth and Development seminars, and various medical and dental/fluoride workshops. Internally, the school's curriculum and 'snack' program has portions that address proper nutrition as well as listed benefits from physical exercise and activity.

#### Safety Standards:

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School has a fire inspection certificate on site. A complete listing of the year's fire drills are maintained in the school office and sent to PDE upon completion of the school term. BCMCS is required to maintain this record of monthly fire drills, which also lists observed dates, evacuation times, safety routes and gathering points.

The Safety Plan/Emergency Handbook is designed to provide a "best practice" response to any number of potential crises. The plan will assist in making the best decisions and take the most important steps for safety and security until administration, emergency staff, and/or local authorities arrive. Copies will be kept in an accessible location in all instructional areas, offices and large group areas. The Bucks County Montessori Charter School Safety Committee should review the document thoroughly and familiarize themselves with the procedures to be followed in each of the scenarios.

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

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

- Safety Plan
- Wellness Letter
- Immunization Report-2009-10

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

BCMCS strives to provide an excellent benefits package for all eligible staff while also being cost conscious. During the 2009-2010 school year, 100% of our participating staff elected the school's Core Plan, which was a Keystone Direct POS & Met Life Dental Plan. The school covered 90% of the cost of these plans and also helped fund an S-125 Plan.

In addition to providing an excellent employee benefits package, BCMCS also carries Workers Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance through The Hartford, and Commercial General Liability and Educator's Legal Liability Insurance with Property Contents Coverage Limits of \$250,000, Commercial General Liability Limits of \$1,000,000 and Educator's Legal Liability (Errors and Omissions) coverage of \$1,000,000.

There are presently no liability claims pending against the school.

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

- 2009-2010 Insurance Documents

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

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

The staff retention pattern at The Bucks County Montessori Charter School has remained steady since the school opened in SY 2000. At BCMCS, the strong sense of community, common in many Montessori schools, plays a major role in retaining staff. A competitive pay scale and benefit package, similar to that of other local public schools, assists in this outcome.

BCMCS remains committed to finding and keeping the most productive and quantifiable staff constituents. The school is committed to hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers, making it clear that having and retaining a valid teaching certificate for ALL

staff remain a priority. To aid in this attempt, the board of trustees followed a policy incorporating a salary matrix that rewarded highly qualified staff and longevity to the school and profession.

Staff has continually been added to meet the needs of the school, whether for student population shifts or for certification requirements [particularly those in the area of special education, as BCMCS evolved into a 'true' Inclusion setting]. The following highlights staffing patterns in 2009 -10:

- 14 Professional Staff members were accounted for the 2009-10 school year; 13 of which were teachers.
- 43% of 2009-10 Professional Staff members held either Dual or Permanent PA Certifications
- 100% of the lead teaching staff hold Montessori Credentials
- 100% of Professional Staff who began at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year fulfilled the entire school year.
- 86% of the Professional Teaching Staff returned to from the 2008-09 school year, with attrition of staff from the prior year due to propinquity of living status.

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

- PDE 414
- PIMS HQT Staff Report [2009-10]

## **Student Enrollment**

### **I. Enrollment Process:**

Bucks County Montessori Charter School follows all of the set guidelines to enrollment as noted in SECTION 1723a of PA Act 22 related to charter school law. To begin the procedure, BCMCS conducts an Open House for the community which is intended to set all the criteria and guidelines of set enrollment procedures. The processes, thereafter, are as follows:

- Development of Application packets
- Advertisement/Legal ad noting dates and notification for/of founder status
- Distribution of application packets and open enrollment period
- Lottery

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1. Development of Application packets
2. Advertisement/Legal ad noting dates and notification for/of founder status
3. Distribution of application packets and open enrollment period
4. Lottery
5. Issuance of admission letters and confirmation of enrollment

There are two requirements for admission in to kindergarten: (1) The child must be 5 years of age by September 30th for kindergarten, 6 years for grade 1, etc. and (2) all required immunizations must be current. For the 2007-08 school year, the admission process was conducted as followed:

1. The children of the families listed as founders of BCMCS were afforded preferential admission to the charter school in accordance with Act 22. Notification was made through the placed legal ad. There were no students who qualified for this status.
2. Siblings of students currently enrolled at BCMCS were given the next preferential admission. Letters were sent to families for intent to return as well as notification of sibling's intent for which we made our collection. There was room for all siblings, leaving one (1) opening.
3. Children of families who reside in BCMCS's host school district, Pennsbury, were next selected via a lottery process conducted in April. The lottery was conducted in an open setting, whereas all of the applicant names were placed on cards and set in a box to be randomly selected. A list was then compiled and place in a numerical fashion. The first selection was made, and then a list of students within the district was assembled.
4. Next, children outside of the host district were selected using the same process.

A full documented procedural guideline of the BCMCS Admission policy is attached.

## II. Student Enrollment for 2008-2009 School Year:

Grade Level Chart from May, 2010:

Grade Level	Student Population
Kindergarten	25
1st Grade	30

2nd Grade	23
3rd Grade	26
4th Grade	16
5th Grade	34
6th Grade	22

The total number of students for the 2009-10 school year remained consistent at 176 for the majority of the school year.

Enrollment changes during the instructional year generally relate to family relocation, philosophical differences, or a need for a more restrictive or tightly structured classroom setting. Conferences are held with parents who are considering withdrawing their child. Some parents are unable to attend a conference and opt to fill out an exit survey requesting the reasons for the transfer. It is important to note that parents' decisions to choose a traditional, charter, Montessori, or other type of setting are driven by what they believe is best suited to the particular needs and temperament of their own child.

### III. Future Student Enrollment:

BCMCS continues to maintain full enrollment with a waiting list of 98 students for the upcoming school year. Sources (self-studies, surveys, discussions, meetings, conferences, etc.) demonstrate strengths of the quality and integrity of education at BCMCS as its most appealing aspect. Public confidence is affirmed through achievement of enrollment projections and the constant, continual expression of high satisfaction with institutional effectiveness and student learning/achievement.

### IV. Waiting List Data:

Listed below are the figures relate to our school's wait list dating back to the school year 2001-02:

School Year:	# of Students
2001-2002	104
2002-2003	52
2003-2004	55
2004-2005	100
2005-2006	72
2006-2007	78
2007-2008	83
2008-09	88

## **Student Enrollment - Attachment**

- BCMCS Enrollment

## **Transportation**

Our host district, Pennsbury School District, provides bus transportation in accordance with their regular policy for private and secular schools. Students from other outside districts are provided bus transportation service by their home district as well, provided that their home district offers bus transportation. Currently, Morrisville School District is the only surrounding district that does not provide bus transportation for their students; therefore, Morrisville parents are responsible for 'to and from' school transportation.

There were no identified student(s) in need of special accommodations during the 2009-10 school year. If a student were in need of such service or accommodation, BCMCS would contract and provide a this set transportation through the Bucks County Intermediate Unit.

Bucks County Montessori Charter School's responsibility for transportation involves providing the necessary student data to the local districts and assuring acceptable student behavior on the school bus. Appropriate and applied bus safety issues are detailed in the BCMCS Student Code of Conduct, which states that the bus driver is responsible for discipline on the school bus. Misconduct by the student must be reported to the principal or designated school official, who is then to take the appropriate disciplinary action. Level 1 disciplinary guideline, as listed in the BCMCS Student Code of Conduct, would provide further information on appropriated disciplinary steps for bus incidences or misconduct. Servicing district codes and rules may supersede any/all BCMCS guidelines.

## **Food Service Program**

Bucks County Montessori Charter School does not operate its own food service program. Students are required to pack lunches. The lunches are kept in a section of the classroom that is set aside solely for that purpose. The lunches are most often eaten in the classrooms, or, when weather permits, outside in designated and appropriate areas.

In the 2009-10 school year, the PTA sponsored a hot lunch option in conjunction with Metz Food

Services. For students wishing to pay for this option, a hot lunch was provided three (3) days per week [Tues., Wed., and Thurs.]. For the food lunch menu option, the school provided students with the nutritional knowledge they need to make the right choices, so as to develop healthy eating habits. The menu plans and array of age-appropriate educational programs provided students with the tools they needed to make good decisions. The school is presently in the process of researching additional food service options which would provide hot/cold lunches on a more regular, daily basis.

BCMCS does not participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Programs nor Severe Needs Breakfast Programs, and is in compliance with all PDE Division of Food and Nutrition inspections, guidelines and reports.

## **Student Conduct**

At Bucks County Montessori Charter School, it is important that the students clearly understand the policy set forth by BCMCS and possible consequences for violating rules within our policy. We, at the school, adhere to the fact that our children are our most precious gifts. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to attain the highest levels of personal and social achievement so that they will become constructive contributors in our community and in future communities for which they will belong.

With this in mind, it is essential that our ultimate objective is reflected in the methods of discipline used at BCMCS. Our approach is to lead children towards self-discipline—and our intention is to avoid spending unnecessary time responding and reacting to behavior problems; but rather, to focus the attention on prevention and prepare independence in the children to handle circumstances themselves.

The Montessori Method addresses the need of change toward positive behavior through peer influences, lesson planning or instruction whenever possible—it is integrated within the Montessori philosophy. Maria Montessori stated that *Discipline*, therefore, needs to be more of a learning condition and less a punitive experience. The child is more interested in the process whereas the adults are typically more interested in the product. Montessori warned that if we judge children by our own measure, we will frustrate their efforts at self-development. If we recognize that the children's purpose is self-development and we respect their efforts, children will develop self-discipline through their work and, thus, obedience will follow.

In the Montessori class, the child's opinion is asked for and respected and the child is invited to share his/her view. Montessori students want to follow the rules when the rules are clearly defined. When prepared for in this manner, it invites the child to assume responsibility for his/her behavior. Assuming responsibility for behavior is to understand and accept the consequences for violating rules. In that instant, *as discipline being seen as a learning experience*, it will be executed by the staff and personnel of BCMCS in the above mentioned manner.

Extracted from the BOT approved BCMCS Student Code of Conduct is the following which denotes the compliancy with regard to Chapter 12 Public School Code related to due process:

1. *A Board decision is required to expel a student.*
2. *Expulsion is permanent exclusion from the school.*
3. *All expulsions will require a formal hearing.*
4. *Any student recommended by the administration for expulsion will be given notice of the hearing, an opportunity to hear the evidence against him/her, and present witnesses on his/her own behalf.*
5. *During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the Board of Trustees in an expulsion case, the student, unless on suspension, shall be placed in his normal class except:*
  1. *If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals or welfare of others; and*
  2. *If it is possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for no more than 10 school days, if the formal hearing is not unreasonably delayed.*

The complete and unabridged BCMCS Code of Conduct is an attached document that can be reviewed to further relate any/all compliance with Chapter 12 guidelines.

During 2009-2010 school year, three (3) students totaling five (5) days of suspension was recorded; there are no expulsions to report.

## **Student Conduct - Attachment**

- Discipline Policy

## **Signature Page**

## **Assurance for the Operation of Charter School Services and Programs**

### **School Year: 2011**

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

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

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

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**Board President**

**Date**

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**Chief Executive Officer**  
**2010 - 2011 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

**Date**

**Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are  
complete            YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_**

## **Assurance for Compliance with the Public Official & Employee Ethics Act**

The original Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the “Ethics Act”) was amended and reenacted in 1989 by Act 9 of 1989 and in 1998 by Act 93 of 1998. (See Act 9 of 1989, 65 P.S. §401, et seq. and Act 93 of 1998, Chapter 11, 65 Pa.c.s. §1101 et seq.) The Act provides that public office is a public trust and that any effort to realize personal financial gain through public office is a violation of that trust. The Act was passed to strengthen the faith and confidence of the people of the Commonwealth in their government. The Act established the State Ethics Commission to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act and to provide guidance regarding the standards established by the Act.

The Bucks County Montessori CS assures that it will comply with the requirements of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the “Ethics Act”) and with the policies, regulations and procedures of the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission. Additional information about the “Ethics Act” is available on the Ethics Commission's website at: <http://www.ethics.state.pa.us/ethics/site/>

**The assurance must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Trustees President of the charter school.**

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

**Name:** Brian P. Long   **Title:** Principal/CEO/CAO

**Phone:** 215-428-6700   **Fax:** 215-428-6702

**E-mail:** blong@bcmcs.com

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name:** Albert Tenaglia   **Title:** BOT President

**Phone:** 215-431-7671   **Fax:** 215-428-6702

**E-mail:** avtena2@verizon.net

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

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

**Name:** Sherry Walter   **Title:** SPED Administrator

**Phone:** 215-428-6700   **Fax:** 215-428-6702

**E-mail:** swalter@bcmcs.com

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

## **Signature Page - Attachment**

- Signature Page -- {SY 2009-10}