

---

# Pennsylvania Department of Education

---



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

**Charter Annual Report**  
**Tuesday, May 07, 2013**  
**(Last Accepted: Friday, May 25, 2012)**

**Entity:** Bucks County Montessori CS  
**Address:** 219 Tyburn Rd  
Fairless Hills, PA 19030  
**Phone:** (215) 428-6700  
**Contact Name:** Brian Long

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

### Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2012 - 2013

**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:** 93.3%    **Total Instructional Staff:** 17

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 11:1    **Student Waiting List:** 145

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 96.11%

## Summary Data Part II

**Enrollment:** 193 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Pennsbury: \$10,522.35 Regular & \$25,349.09 Special Education [138 & 19 students respectively]; Bensalem \$10,319.50 Reg. & \$26,893.09 SPED [1 & 0 students respectively]; Bristol \$11,694.36 Reg. & \$29,187.12 SPED [14 and 3 students respectively]; Morrisville \$12,025.62 REG & \$31,414.51 SPED [3 and 2 students respectively]; Neshaminy \$10,514.25 Reg. & \$26,662.44 SPED [7 & 2 students respectively]; Council Rock \$10,382.22 Reg. & \$28,543.11 SPED [3 and 1 students respectively]

### Student Profile

<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</b>	0
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander:</b>	41
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic):</b>	4
<b>Hispanic:</b>	3
<b>White (Non-Hispanic):</b>	137
<b>Multicultural:</b>	8

**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:** 27

## Instructional Days and Hours

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (F.Time)	Elem.	Middle.	Sec.	Total
Instructional Days	0	0	179	179	0	0	179
Instructional Hours	0	0	1029.25	1029.25	0	0	1029.25

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Educational Community

Montessori philosophy is the foundation of Bucks County Montessori Charter School's education principle. 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 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 maintains high achievement levels 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 school year being no exception. The precedent 2011-12 school year was the twelfth successful year of operation.

Our chartering District, Pennsbury, is a sub-urban community located in the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania, along the great bend of the Delaware River. In 2011-12, an average of 193 students attended BCMCS, ranging in grades K through 6th. Approximately 80%, or 157 students, came from our host district, Pennsbury; the remaining 36 students came from local surrounding districts, which include: Bristol, Bensalem, Centennial, Council Rock, Morrisville and Neshaminy. All these districts comprise communities of Lower Bucks County, including Falls Township, Bristol Borough & Township, Langhorne Borough, Lower & Upper Makefield, Tullytown, and Yardley Borough. These communities encompass a broad range of racial, cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic households. The region, itself, is a mix of small towns and suburban locations, having a variety of residential, commercial and light industrial sectors as well.

BCMCS has maintained a maximum 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 yearly recipient of the “Achievement Recognition” [awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education] for attaining AYP Standards since the program began in 2004. Public confidence is affirmed through these and other achievements, as enrollment projections and early test data, both remain consistent with past practices.

In 2011-12, enrollment figures by grade level remained fairly steady throughout the year, with the end-of-year figures provided below:

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26 Total Kindergarten Students</b>
<b>Lower El. 1</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>Lower El. 2</b>	<b>25</b>	
<b>Lower El. 3</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Lower El. 4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>98 Total Lower Elementary Students</b>
<b>Upper El. 1</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>Upper El. 2</b>	<b>23</b>	
<b>Upper El. 3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>69 Total Upper Elementary Students</b>

Each year, BCMCS conducts a lottery to select new students to the school, 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 the ages of 7 and 9 by September 30th are considered for our Lower Elementary program. Those children between the ages of 10 and 12 by September 30<sup>th</sup> are subsequently eligible for our Upper Elementary program. Upholding to our school's philosophy, students are primarily selected from the wait list at the lowest possible grade level, so as to best formulate Montessori responsiveness. For the 2011-12 school year, 26 kindergarten students were selected for admission, which left an original kindergarten wait list of 78—76 by year's end, with a total school original wait list of 176—with a total of 145 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 idea into fruition.

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

The intention of BCMCS goes beyond helping students obtain basic academic skills. Our school believes that students should acquire educational abilities in addition to attaining the aptitude 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 future 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. Befitting the Montessori Method, BCMCS offers children the freedom to select, within a set choice 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. Each child'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 standalone 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 toward 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 a community where children are taught to respect others' 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 students, teachers, parents, administration and through the use of the materials within 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 pedagogy and principles which support ‘learning’ by ‘doing.’ In the technology sector, computer equipment and related skill based programs relate to our core principles, 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 which they can apply toward knowledge, and comprehend that knowledge in technological manner--to then

properly apply the information so as to analyze the information in order to synthesize and evaluate the 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 their fullest, those strengths and interests most prominent at each particular stage of life.

The Kindergarten and Elementary programs at the Bucks County Montessori Charter School (BCMCS) are based on developmental 'highly individualized' needs common to 5-12 year old children. Our goal, is to help each child become an independent, inquiring and confident learner—and by supporting the developmental characteristics of the academic level and unique personality of each child, we pursue in Dr. Maria Montessori's plea to "follow the child."

In the Montessori elementary classrooms, 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 an interest and enthusiasm, rather than through external incentives and/or 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 matters we study. To take perhaps the simplest kind of example, a child's arithmetic problems will often deal with real questions arising in his/her own study from the 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 in **section 4.12 of 22 Pa. Code (relating to academic standards)**. However, documentation and verification of each subject can be defined in Montessori aims as follows:

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

Reading, writing, grammar, speaking and listening skills continue to 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 students in the classroom are highly motivated to perfect those language skills which require further work. With carefully structured presentations and appealing follow-up lessons, the teacher and child work together to accomplish such goals. This basic skill-building in reading is achieved individually or in small groups. In general, early language work in Montessori is something exciting, not merely 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 serves as the formal group based programs, where the children learn to have highly 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 a valuable tool for self-expression.

**Grammar** is made accessible to young children with the aid of colorful materials which employ symbols familiar from earlier works. 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 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 naturally give rise to topical, individualized spelling lists. In addition, the student'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, the students 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 experiences 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, each 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 work groupings 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. Students 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, children acquire knowledge which releases a whole field of creative work, preparing them 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 numbers. 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 the elaborate 'Timeline 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 reveal many fascinating connections and interdependence, 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 throughout the Montessori program is that, first and foremost, the "big picture" is given, and then answers to the fundamental why's and how's are explored—only afterward is work toward the more particular parts discovered.

#### **(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 further relates to the understanding of 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 in contemporary environments and throughout time. Children's observation and discussion of differences build up 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 have the ability to utilize its application 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 are 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. Formal instrumental lessons are also offered to Upper Elementary students who wish to enroll.

Rather than merely create art projects, we also 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 our 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 connect learned concepts as their own. Older students perform a large scale recital, yearly, that combines character performances, stage crews, and concessions so as to encompass the entire process of theater.

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.

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, so as to develop consciousness and control of movement, enhance personal confidence, and 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 methods 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 which is full of opportunities. The materials, the furniture and the architecture are all designed to provide maximum opportunities to release their full 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 individualize observations, for unique strengths and/or weaknesses 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, as the school's PTA offers an activity that brings the community together in a social setting on a monthly basis.

- **Development of success:** Our students learn that not everyone succeeds in a universal fashion. They notice 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 and/or goal 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. Small, intimate collaboration and instruction with one, two or slightly more students is commonly fostered by the teacher. Throughout the day, students are encouraged to ask their peers for assistance in figuring out a problem, finding a solution, or needing clarification. Classroom demands can be adjusted for children with learning differences without others noticing; and students 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 teacher facilitation along with peer collaboration.
- **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 independent reasoning power to his work." (Montessori, 1948) Children who go to Montessori schools learn, over time, that mistakes are not to be feared as students 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 the utmost potential in children. With an abundance of opportunities available for students to pursue their interests, the path to competence is broad, 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 the opportunity to discuss conflicts and model problem-solving techniques. The development of a sense of ownership and responsibility for one's behavior is the ultimate purpose. 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 our intent to enable the children to develop mediation strategies on their own. Our approach is to lead children towards self-discipline, as it is our intention 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.
- **Creating an alliance between home and school:** Because students in a Montessori classroom are actively engaged in different conducts, 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 the positive, respectful relationship between parents and the school 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 to 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 who also have valid PA Teaching Certificates continues to be difficult task. BCMCS remains steadfast in affording opportunities for our current 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 once leaving our elementary program. 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 2010-11 school year, an alliance was made with our host district [Pennsbury] 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 meeting for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduating Class Parents, (2) a ‘Special’ Orientation geared toward our promoting class, and (3) a record transfers modification, which was set into a group collection as opposed to the piecemeal system prepared in the past.

- **Universal meaning of Montessori pedagogy:** One version or universal interpretation of Montessori philosophy 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. We adhere to the standard version of Montessori as accepted by the American Montessori Society (AMS), for which we are a Full Member School. In addition, AMS workshops offered at the local and national levels are regularly attended by our staff so as to further unify our school’s interpretation and understanding of such.

•

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

### **Strategic Planning Process**

Bucks County Montessori Charter School [BCMCS] continues in its quest to pursue Full Accreditation through the American Montessori Society [AMS]. BCMCS made an application to AMS and was accepted as a Full Member School from July 1st, 2011 through June 30, 2012. It is the intention of BCMCS to continue its membership in the 2012-13 School Year.

Montessori schools, in general, are accredited by a number of national agencies that have updated, clarified and created research-based protocols aligned with on-going school improvement goals which AMS supports. AMS has also become increasingly aware of the need to be recognized by and work within the greater educational community in order

to increase awareness and respect for Montessori education. As AMS accreditation evolved, *The School Portfolio* protocol was introduced in 2000 to offer another protocol choice for schools that preferred a mission based approach to self-study rather a concept based process. Both protocols aligned with the protocols of other large, national school accreditation agencies.

Two years of surveys, research and cross-constituency discussions by a School Accreditation Task Force led to development of revised Standards and Criteria for AMS accreditation. These Standards were modeled after the widely utilized standards of the Commission on International Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) with permission and approved by the AMS Board of Directors in June 2008. Subsequently, a new protocol which integrates *The Authentic* and the *School Portfolio* was designed to align with the new Standards. The protocol highlights elements that truly define an authentic Montessori school as defined by AMS Standards.

The development of the self-study is a community process that identifies the strengths and areas that need improvement within the school. The school community accomplishes this by creating teams that gather stakeholders' input about the mission, practices, and vision of the school, resulting in a strategic school improvement plan.

A school must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible as a candidate for AMS School Accreditation.

- A school must be in its third year of operation or more, i.e., a school that has been in operation for at least two (2) years.
- A school must at least be in its second year of membership with AMS as a Full Member, i.e., a school that has been a Full Member of AMS for at least one (1) year.
- A school that has been in operation fewer than five (5) years and has been an Associate or Full member fewer than five (5) years is required to have a consultation visit. The consultation should take place no less than one (1) year before submitting an application for accreditation. An AMS consultant can be engaged by the school to determine the school's eligibility for accreditation. See the Consultants Directory on the AMS website.
- All lead teachers must meet minimum requirements (Please refer to the Teacher Requirement Verification Forms in the application.)
  - Credentials from distance learning (correspondence or online) teacher education programs do not meet AMS school accreditation requirements.
  - NCME diplomas receive the same number of points as AMS credentials.
- At the time of application, a school must be at minimum 80% in compliance with the AMS Standards. *School must be 100% in compliance with the AMS Standards before it submits its self-study report to the AMS Office of School Accreditation.*

The six sections of the AMS Protocol are:

- Profile of the School
- School's Guiding Principles and Mission
- Educational Nature of the School
- Learner Outcomes
- Effectiveness of the Program: Instructional and Organizational
- Strategic Plan

Initially in the process, BCMCS began researching a variety of self-study options, settling on a computer based On-line School Assessment School Improvement Process, or OSASIP. This program was developed by Foundations Inc., a non-profit organization providing support services for charter schools. This self study tool matches very closely to that of the standards developed by AMS.

Throughout the subsequent school years, selections of the OSASIP Building Blocks, or standards, were assessed befitting our current status—with action plans being created and timelines assigned. These were all standards which 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 certain 'Building Blocks' within the self study. 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, continue to be adopted and developed. 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 2012, with the chosen model followed for the 2012-13 school year.

This query below provides the suggested process for BCMCS in creating Strategic plans. Initially, the plans will take shape through an interactive 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 as a school?
- 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 best 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 which will ultimately follow.

A Strategic Planning Process Map has been developed 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 Accreditation, either dual AMS and Middle States, or only AMS:

- Summer 2012, Self Study Chosen
- Fall 2012, Complete Self-Study
- Spring 2013, AMS Site Visits
- Summer 2013, AMS Full Accreditation
- 

## **Strategic Planning Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Carpenter, Lori	Department Head	Elementary School	Teachers /

		Teacher	Principal
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
Kosmorsky, Melisa	School Nurse	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	CAO / Principal / COO
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
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 stive 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 instuctional 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 attack 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**

Montessorians believe and use instructional best-practices (ex. 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. The Bucks County Montessori Charter School [BCMCS], therefore, implements the pedagogical principles developed by Maria Montessori as the essential components of its Rigorous Instructional Program. Our school's underlining curriculum tool is established through the use of the Montessori kinesthetic materials which make actual connections to concepts; all in conjunction with appropriated 'aims' attached to each of these workable materials. Teachers, in the Montessori environment, tend to act more like a facilitator, as their role is to guide, support, tutor, demonstrate and instruct their students via the use of the materials and coordinating

objective, while following the 'aims' outlined in the curriculum, which follow a strict Scope and Sequencing format developed by BCMCS.

In two separate installments, BCMCS has aligned the Montessori curricular 'aims' to that of the set PA State Standards [attaching such to the Montessori Materials previously mentioned], creating a combined curriculum that entails both ideologies, thus creating our own BCMCS Curriculum Standards Manual. BCMCS has worked diligently to infuse and juxtapose Montessori aims with that of the PA State Standards. 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 in a 'scope and sequential' fashion, true to the set Montessori curriculum goals, in a checklist fashion, with identified related PA State Standards attached those standards correlated to such. Detailed rationale explanations [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 in our school's curriculum, identifying and addressing related state standards ensure the most assured 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 originally created in age range formats. For example, the Montessori 'aim' related to the understanding of the dynamic stamp game material ranged for learners aged from 5 to 7 ½ years. To fit this ideal into a PA Standard format, it was necessary to realign the Montessori 'aims' to match the grade level format. The BCMCS curriculum 'aims,' therefore, can be thought as 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 into the BCMCS Curriculum.

Since BCMCS is a true Montessori environment, with a key component that students have the ability to move at their own academic rate and pace, it created an initial predicament for our school's curriculum functionality. This is true for both advanced and basic level children, as our program is completely individualized for each child. The standards criterion, therefore, is 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 the actual. It is up to the teacher to support each child with a program that meets that student's level of understanding which supersedes those standards set by PDE.

As was listed in our Strategic Goal Planning from last school year, the activity related to the creation of a Montessori Monitoring System came to fruition during the 2010-11 school year and continued to be perfected in the 2011-12 School Year. Its intent was to document [on school-based excel spreadsheet with sharing capabilities] and track student progress of Montessori lessons, providing an analysis of lesson introduction, difficulty and mastery. The system is meant to follow the student throughout his/her tenure at BCMSC, making it an ideal tool for teachers to better know what level of lessons their students have attained, as well as to assist with transitions into differing classes. The system was effectively and efficiently utilized during this school year, with teachers tracking all students in grades K — 6<sup>th</sup> in the subject areas of Math, Language, Geometry, Zoology, Botany, History and Geography. Next steps involve unifying an assessment tool that will better document and validate each individual student's placement of mastery on the curriculum scope.

## **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 2011-12 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 and/or other evaluation and/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, with the following questions asked:*

- *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. {Rosetta Stone} In the event that a student was 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 Montessori assessments, Montessori classroom work, the BCMCS Progress Report, Scope and Sequencing documentation, student portfolios, behavioral documentation, attendance records, and teacher/parent observations. In cases that involve retention, where the teacher and parent feel that additional work is needed to master the curriculum and/or social skills required, agreement by and with all parties involved are required. It must be stated that student retention at BCMCS differs from that of the traditional pattern. Since the Montessori curriculum is based on mastery of a level range rather than by grade sort, a student may be retained, *though* remain in the same classroom, since BCMCS implores multi-age settings. 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 subsequent 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 seldom utilized at BCMCS. Conversely, it must be noted as well, a student can initiate toward an advanced grade level if agreement of such is validated, and in compliance with any/all state regulations.

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.

## **Special Education**

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

During the 2011-12 school year, BCMCS continued to adhere to a full Inclusion SPED Program model, assigning three (3) lower elementary classrooms and two (2) upper elementary classrooms as Inclusion settings. As each of our BCMCS classrooms support a Lead Montessori Teacher and an Assistant Teacher, at least one (1) of these designated teachers serves in an Inclusionary role, being certified in PA Elementary and Special Education.

The results from six (6) years of implementation continue to show that the Inclusion Program Model is more academically effective, professional and cost effective than pull-out programs that we had instilled in the past. First, the children do not identify the assigned Inclusion Teacher solely as one to instruct children receiving services, but rather to assist each student in the environment. Of course identified students are a priority for the designated Inclusion teacher, who addresses each of the IEP goals, fostered in a way that does not place a stigma on the child as it would in a 'pull-out' programmed system. In addition, the support the IEP students require is available the entire day, not just for a segment of time [in accordance to the NOREP] they would otherwise have received in a pull-out program.

We will continue this model for the lower and upper elementary classes for the 2012-13 school year. The Special Education Coordinators 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 where situations in the IEP warrant such, or as the classroom environment is not conducive for certain situational settings, such as speech requiring a noise free environment, computer programs that necessitate faint sound recognition, etc.

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 80% in the general education setting. 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 of our students in accord to the Montessori pedagogy for which we adhere—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	13	Inclusion and pull out support
Christine Mahan	.50	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	3	Inclusion and pull out support Teacher
Katie McDevitt	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	5	Inclusion Classroom Teacher
Jean Duffner	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	2	Inclusion Classroom Teacher
Michele Freiling	1.00	Learning and Emotional Support	BCMCS	3	Inclusion Classroom Teacher
Jordyn Fani	1.00	Learning and Emotional	BCMCS	1	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	15	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	7	Evaluations and reevaluation services as needed

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

There is currently no data saved for this section.

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
BCIU 22	Speech Therapy	9.75 hrs./week
BCIU 22	Occupational Therapy	1.25 hrs./week
BCIU 22	Physical Therapy	.25 hrs./week
Barbara Noble Psychological Services	Psychological Evaluation and Support	As needed

## 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
DRA [Developmental Reading Assessment]	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
DRA [Developmental Reading Assessment]	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

## Student Assessment

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

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School [BCMCS] operates an extensive and didactic student evaluation and assessment procedure, integrating (1) Baseline Measurements [i.e. Albanesi Tests, Dibbles assessments, DRA Evaluation, etc.], (2) Standardized Test Scores [i.e. TerraNova & PSSA] and (3) Internal Analysis [i.e., M.O.E. (moving on exercises), Mastery observations, 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 standardized assessment, focusing on the school's initiatives to address and formulate individual goals/accomplishments/needs [as well as appropriate academic group based on grade, level, classroom, etc.]. Progress and growth is then maintained through continual analysis and advancements. Through this initiative, BCMCS students continue to make marked progress in nearly all measurable features. The first two evaluation processes, as they involve attached supporting data, will be further examined.

First, (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 assessment tool utilized by BCMCS. 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 to the division of whole numbers, or listing parts of speech, or 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 same test being administered at the end-of-the-year so as to serve as the model demonstrating student progress throughout the school year. Not only can these scores help the teacher identify specific needs related to a particular content area, but can assist in this process throughout the year. Similar assessments are used in the beginning and the end of the school year, as well, to demonstrate progress.

Through this baseline performance, teachers identify the specific level of each student, plotting each 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 a juxtaposed measure to best formulate a plan for the individual learner, befitting of the learner's strengths, weaknesses, preferred mode of instruction, opposite 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/or administration if necessary.

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 to closely monitor progress. From this forum, individual students are screened, closely observed, and tracked for possible SPED identification, which would follow our school's IST process as listed in the SPED section of this report. Our school's certified SPED administrator serves as the intermediary for these identified

students. Each identified child will entail an Instructional Support Team (IST) Plan 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 are studied and evaluated. Strategies for intervention support and/or modifications are then 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.

The classroom teacher and resource teacher(s) and/or inclusion teacher(s) are actively involved in remediation and support. The resource teacher provides lessons, primarily within 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 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 has been developed to enable BCMCS to carefully monitor individual pupil achievement and provide information necessary for accountability issues and school improvement.

Second (2), each student's academic ability is validated via the standardized assessments. Individual teachers report their classroom scores with the administration noting individual student and classroom strengths and needs. From this forum, strengths are supported by the teachers and administration, plus 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 [i.e., peer coaching, team leader modeling, material purchases and/or administrative monitoring] are utilized measures meant to improve classroom performance. Finally, data that relates specific and identifiable school-wide areas of

strengths, common standards data and need assessments are created and discussed during Staff Learning Days. As the Montessori classroom consists of multi-age levels, student data is placed into grade levels, as is consistent with traditional forms and the NCLB model that now exist. 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: Most recent tests administered in March, 2012, with student age level at 0.6*

<u>Kindergarten</u>	Reading	Language	Math	Average Total SCORE
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.7</b>
2010-11	1.3	N/A	1.4	1.35
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 Grade: Most recent testing administered in March, 2012, with student age level at 1.6*

<u>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</u>	Read	Voc.	Reading Composite	Language	Math	Math Computation	Math Composite	Total Score
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>
2010-11	4.0	3.4	3.6	N/A	3.4	2.2	2.7	3.6
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:** *Most recent testing administered in March, 2012, with student age level at 2.6*

<b><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</u></b>	Read	Vocab.	Read Comp.	Lang.	Lang. Mech.	Lang. Comp.	Math	Math Compu.	Math Comp.	Spell	Total
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>
2010-11	4.0	3.8	3.9	N/A	4.0	N/A	3.1	2.7	2.9	3.7	3.4
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:**

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 in order to be considered “on” or “at” grade level.

Just as in past years, results of the TerraNova 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 2011-12 school year. As these results indicate, K - 2nd grade TerraNova scores displayed an overall impressive improvement from the past marks.

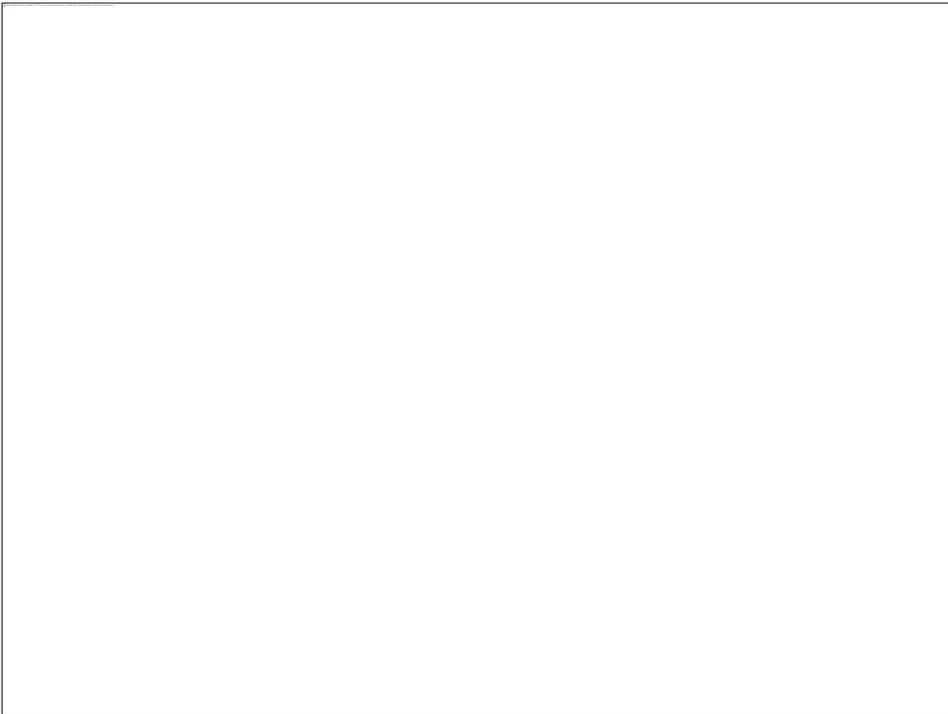
Kindergarten scores demonstrated an increase from the prior year student population. In 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, the improvements were enhanced from that particular group's performance when in Kindergarten, with each content area showing advance. Strongest increased performance was in the second grade, with amplified performances in each of the outlined areas. Possible reasons for the incline were explored by the curriculum committee toward the end of the school year, and were accredited to a stricter teacher accountability system, primarily peer and administrative coaching, as well as the utilization of the newly established Scope and Sequencing documentation recently initiated.

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

As an opening comment, since PSSA testing began, BCMCS has annually met the state mandated AYP requirements. After the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Assessments, the school persisted in a more robust manner to implore more Montessori components, and scope and sequencing 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 be to 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, all of which took place during the 2010-11 school year, and into the 2011-12 school year.

As will be observed in the following charts, PSSA scores will be listed in *grade* level 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 alongside our host district school [Pennsbury] as well as other local serving districts. As the test data charts will validate, not only have basic NCLB and AYP requirements been met, but BCMCS PSSA testing scores will be proven quite competitive in comparison to the host districts which we serve. The chart information will display such comparison as each district score will be desegregated and juxtaposed with our scores, involving our host district [Pennsbury] and our surrounding 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. Each will be followed with summaries that relate features of school-wide student achievement plans, as well as to indicate significant improvement and/or continued strong student performances. In addition, for grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>, year by year data will also be tallied so as to show progression [or regression] in a longitudinal sense.

3rd Grade PSSA [2010-11]



*~ 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 and Language Comparative Assessment:

Subsequent to meetings that had taken place between lower elementary representatives, identified math needs were noted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade curricula. Workshops commenced during the summer of 2009, 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. As the 2010-11 Math scores indicate a similar pattern, we, as a Montessori school that incorporates manipulatives within the curriculum, have come to the recognition that lower Math scores (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) will be commonplace due to the fact the our students typically persist in requiring material (Math manipulatives) to perform their math problems—with the inability to use such materials for the PSSA testing, this discrepancy is validated. BCMCS remains steadfast in the fact that we will not adjust our most fundamental Montessori ideology, that being to first have the students understand concepts and formulas with the use of materials, to then transfer that understanding to the abstract ideals. This concept does not have an impact, typically, in the Reading areas, as material usage is not paramount, at this grade level, with such required PSSA testing components.

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

As this is the first year of PSSA testing [3<sup>rd</sup> Grade], there is no longitudinal study for such. Students do take TerraNova standardized test and BCMCS does relate such data. For the 2010-11 PSSA tests, scores were consistent with expectations from the TerraNova scores when this group was assessed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade.

The pre-released data in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade for the most recent SY 2011-12 marked a substantial increase in scores from subsequent years. First and foremost, this was an identified group that performed well, in general, as previous TerraNova and Albanesi data show, document and support such. Data revealed this pattern for this group since their Kindergarten year. As such, and since following internal information gathered in our school's Student Assessment Procedural Guidelines for this group, the school will still continue to identify students in need of extra work in the Reading and Math sorts. To perform such, a multifaceted reading program, which encompassed individual, small and large group learning settings, will be created within the school's Reading curriculum for many of these identified students.

### 4th Grade PSSA:





*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 and Math Comparative Evaluation:

After the decline in Reading scores from previous yearly assessments, the Curriculum Committee, which consists 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. Since then, marked improvements have been quantifiable.

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.

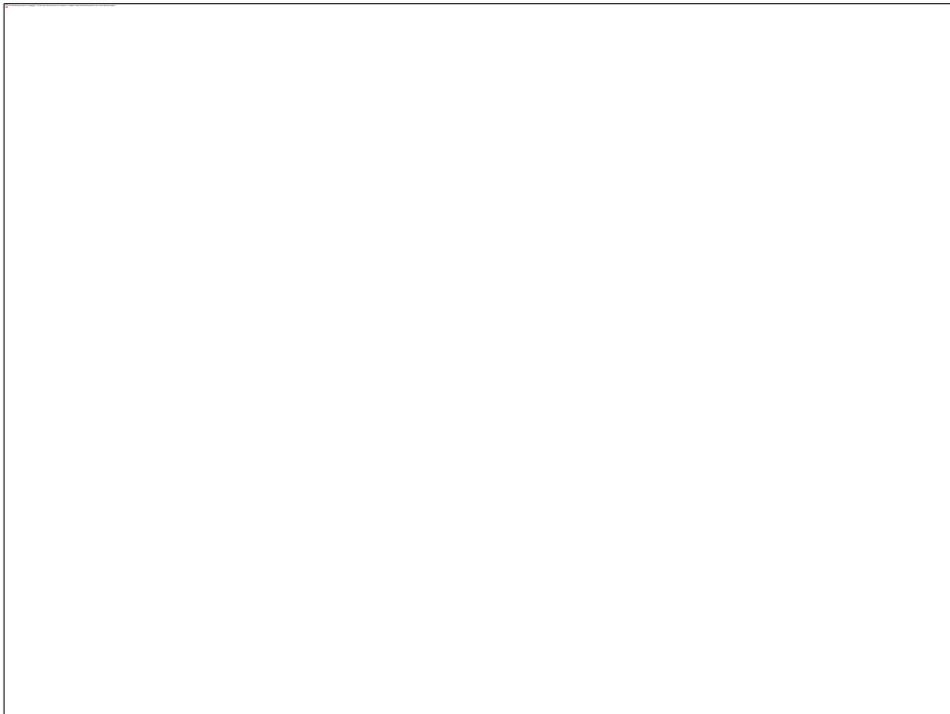
As discussed earlier in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade synopsis, early Math PSSA scores have traditionally struggled, as our students still utilize materials as the basis for their math studies. This

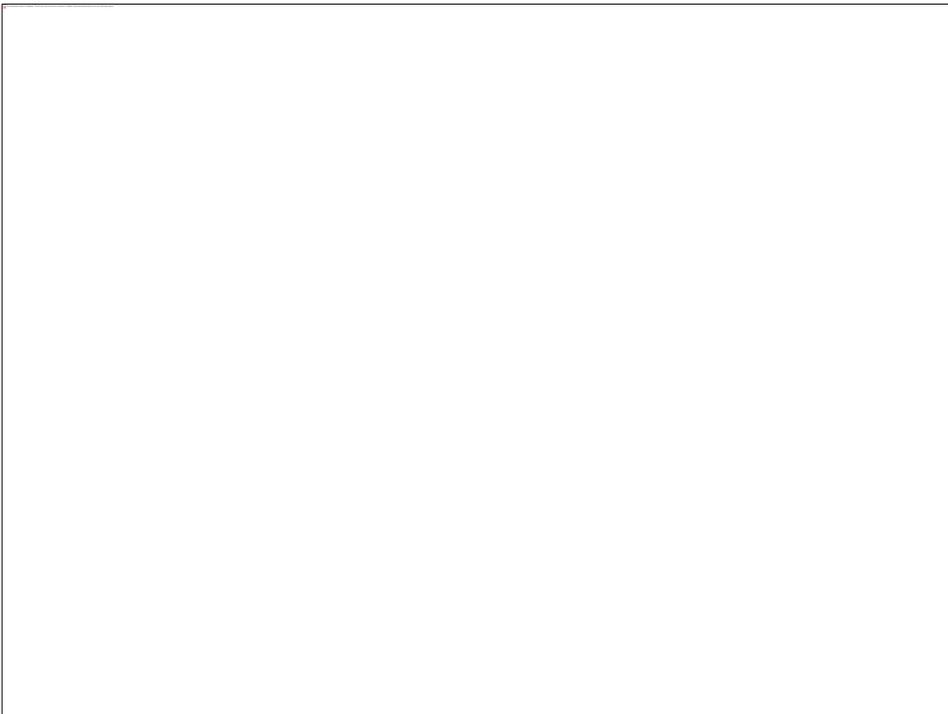
particular 2010-11 testing group, even though they continue to rely on such materials which are not allowed to be used for the purpose of PSSA or other standardized tests, performed quite well.

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Reading Score—yearly progression Assessment:

Subsequently, the initiative that was developed from the 2009-10 Math and Reading score in this particular grade group displayed tremendous results, particularly in Math, for the 2010-12 school year. The special workshops and meetings that transpired between administrative personnel, team leaders and Upper Elementary Teachers, with the focus to first, (1) account rationale for the decline, and then (2) set procedures to make improvements, had positive effects. Determinations from past practices revealed staff /teacher discrepancies in the order, set and administration of school approved curricular lessons and works—as such, staff adjustments were subsequently then made, which we believe accounts for the increased performance.

5th Grade PSSA:





*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 Comparative Evaluation:**

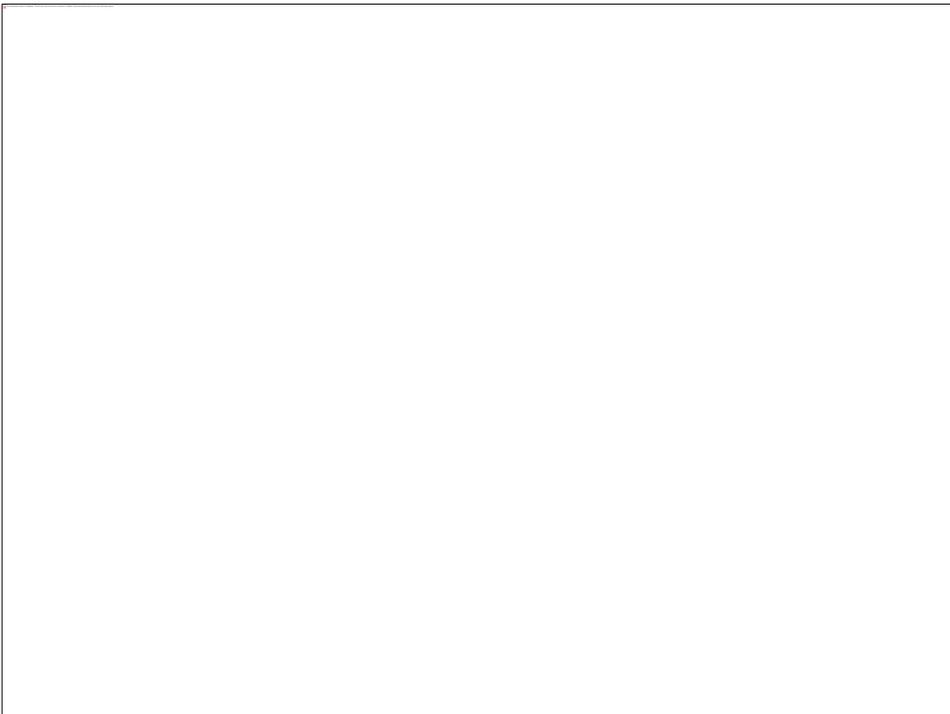
The proposed and adopted Reading program, which was set on a three year, full integration schedule, settled on the utilization of the Great Books series, which is touted to boast, at its core, a course outline that incorporates those identifiable areas specifically related to our needs. The goal was 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. Preliminary results show the new curricular initiatives have led to a success, with an major increases in the Proficient or above category in just its second year of initiative.

This particular year's PSSA Math data was typical of past year's scoring. Accommodations made from last year, which included more detailed Scope and Sequencing component, teacher Montessori workshops, and in-house training proved itself from the previous 2009-10 data.

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

PSSA testing has shown fairly consistent statistics the past three years; however, nothing that goes against standard deviations due to population shifts and the like. Overall, the Math scores display consistent student performances, with the lone decline in the 2009-10 testing year. This, the committee has attributed, is the direct result to the well-formed and highly comprehensive Montessori math curriculum for which we instill. Our students learn mathematics by doing, with hands-on manipulatives and materials. This enables math to be conceptualized rather than memorized, which creates true understanding. Formulas related to math are discovered, as opposed to being memorized by rote, allowing the students to perceive math as truly didactic in manner as well as approach. In Reading, however, validate inclines in the scoring from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 year; authenticate changes made to the curricula related to its goal in promoting depth in understanding.

#### 6th Grade PSSA:





*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.*

### **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, 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, 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 weakened scores in the lower grades; however, we also feel that these

'constructionist' approaches constitute the rationale for the higher level scores in the upper grades. Through true understanding in a concrete fashion, and pacing that builds through individualized learning patterns, we believe our students are able to make better connections and understandings in later grades.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade year to year Progression analysis:**

Individual student gains were noted from the 9-10 to the 10-11 school year, as this is typically the year that our students perform best. The integrated Montessori curriculum creates a deeper level of understanding in all subject areas that leads to higher achievement as the children's skills and world view as lifelong learners begins to coalesce in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. A byproduct of this is our consistently high scores on the PSSA 6<sup>th</sup> grade test.

### **Other PSSA Data to Note:**

- 4th Year Science and Technology Proficiency scores were at a 100% proficiency rate, making it the top ranking in comparison to local districts
- 5th Year Writing Proficiency Scores at 75%, making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest among local serving districts

## **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- PSSA 2010-11 PowerPoint
- TerraNova 2011-12 Scoring Summary

## **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 has always been BCMCS's attempt to go with the educational best practices, and it is the intent of the Teacher Evaluation Processes, consisting of Formal and Informal Methods [both announced and unannounced], peer mediation and coaching to be a productive and useful progressions and courses of development for helping teachers become most effective in their teaching and its 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, comprising a portion of the summative evaluation(s) at the end of each school year.

The **Formal Evaluation Process** is completed in accordance to the following manner:

Formal Evaluation Process:

There are three main steps that encompass 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 at least 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 content material that will be covered, and the methodology that will be used, to cover such. An objective must be clear and also align with Montessori Aims and 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 translates 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. 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.

Final evaluation ratings in all categorized areas need to be at least Satisfactory, as if any one area denotes less, the teacher will not qualify for the yearly percentage salary increase and, at the least, is placed on a Provisional status for the upcoming school year.

### **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 2011-2012 school year. Al Tenaglia served as President, Ray Snyder as Vice President, and 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 2011-12 school year was Jeff Fogel, who has served as trustees since July 2005. Jeff Fogel will remain as a trustee for the 2011-12 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. Mr. Long has his 6-9 and 9-12 AMS Certification, a Masters of Education and Principal's Certification. He served at BCMCS as a Lower Elementary Teacher during the 2000-2001 school year, and an Upper Elementary Teacher during the 2001-2002 to 2008-2009 school years. During the 2007-08 school year, Mr. Long served in a dual capacity as Vice Principal and Lead Upper Elementary Teacher and during the 2008-2009 school year Mr. Long served in a dual capacity as Principal, and Lead Upper Elementary Teacher. Since the 2009-10 school year, Mr. Long has served as the school's Principal, and Chief Academic Officer, a role he will continue to maintain for the 2012-13 school year. His experience as a Montessori Teacher, coupled with his hands on experience as Assistant Principal and then Principal, has garnered a great respect from the board, teaching staff, parent community, and students, as the school's Educational Leader.

Tony Stango served as Operations Manager and Chief Administrative Officer/CEO for the 2011-12 school year and will continue to serve in this capacity during the 2012-13 school year. Mr. Stango is part of the Leadership Team of the Bucks County Montessori Charter School, who has served as Operations Manager since the 2008-09 school year. The Operations Manager oversees operational performance through undertaking or managing administration and general school operations, in order to support school achievement. As Chief Administrative Officer/CEO, Mr. Stango also serves as an adviser to the Bucks County Montessori School Board of Trustees, the school's Business Manager and Principal.

Tim Heath served as the school's Business Manager for the 2011-12 school year and will continue to serve in this capacity during the 2012-13 school year. Mr. Heath has served in this capacity since the 2004-05 school year, overseeing school facility and financial needs.

Level Head Coordinators, Shari Sissom and Lori Carpenter, who are from the teaching ranks continue to hold important positions of leadership and responsibility within the school in areas of curriculum/program planning and development, and resource management. For the 2011-12 school year, Lower Elementary Teacher, Christopher Lutz served as the Testing Coordinator and Val Young as the Reading Coordinator. Each will continue to serve in these capacities for the upcoming 2012-13 school year.

The above leadership model has proved very successful over the past several years and will remain intact for the upcoming 2012-13 school year, as it is one that the school is committed to.

## **Board of Trustees**

<u>Name of Trustee</u>	<u>Office (if any)</u>
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 six years and have a full understanding of the school's charter application and by-laws. Each board member has also been provided 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, non-profit corporation law, Pennsylvania Ethics Act, fiduciary duties of board members, and governance responsibilities.

## **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 program 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/CAO, Operations Manager/CEO 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. Board Meeting Agenda's and Meeting Wraps are made available to the public on the school's website. 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 2011-2012 school year is attached.

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

- 2011-12 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 year 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. The past two years, 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 were gathered and reviewed prior to the start of each school as a self assessment and improvement planning tool. This past year, when considering future calendar changes, two online parent surveys were taken and community meetings were conducted to elicit input and opinion. Results of each survey were also shared with the school's Board of Trustees, and modifications based on the input received were made before new calendars were voted on and adopted.

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. Following each meeting a Meeting Wrap is posted on the website that provides a summary of the items discussed at the BOT Meeting and the resulting actions taken.

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 may also held for announced presentations on relevant topics. 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. A VOIP phone service is utilized with voice mailboxes set up for each classroom. Lead teachers also have access to a computer, which enables them to track student progress and communicate with parents of their students. This frequent email and phone communication allows 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. During the 2011-12 school year we broadened the One Call network to include text messaging, and e-mail communications capabilities.

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 are unable to 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 Drexel University in utilizing co-op candidates, 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/or Board of Trustee Meetings, 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 2011-2012 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

A welcomed alternative to the above Fundraisers has been acceptance of pledges from families who chose to make a simple voluntary monetary pledge to the school instead of participating in the above fundraisers.

The funds raised last year supported new after school clubs, classroom Montessori materials and books, and IT upgrades. 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  
Bounce U Social  
Family Dance  
Teacher/Staff Appreciation Luncheon  
Lunch Program  
Holiday and Year End Gift Program

## **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

Pennsylvania School Law 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 Principals 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**

- 2011-12 Revenue-Expenditures-Fund Balance

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

Siegal & Drossner, PC., Certified Public Accountants, served as the school's audit firm. 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, 2011.

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 2010-2011 school year. The 2011-2012 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**

- 2010-2011 Financial Audit Report

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

There were no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting, considered to be a material weakness, 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 2011-12 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 Montessori Accreditation.

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

- 1 projector screen
- 9 Think Pad Computers for use in the UE Classrooms
- 36 Five Unit Lockers
- 1 Work Station utilized by our IT Technician
- 3 Think Center desktop computers
- 1 Flat Screen Monitor

- 1 - High speed document scanner with feeder
- 2 - Color Laser Printers
- 1 - New Phone Switchboard and dedicated VCIP Phone Hardware

## **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. With the demand evidenced by our wait list of students wanting to enroll at Bucks County Montessori Charter School, consideration continues to be given to possible future expansion. Our present facility has expansion capabilities, should it be determined that additional space is needed and the school has budgeted for and has adequate financial resources to accommodate future expansion. At this point we are still in the exploration stage, with the hope of adding up to 7500 sq. ft of space to our present facility to accommodate additional classrooms and multi-purpose facilities.

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.

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. The computer lab is scheduled to be upgraded and expanded from 14 desktop computers to 26 touch screen All In One computers, for the 2012-13 school year.

There are also at least two desk top computers in each Lower Elementary classroom and five lap tops in each Upper Elementary Classroom, all connecting to a robust infrastructure which enhances immediate learning needs. For the upcoming school year we plan to pilot use of tablets in the classroom as as reading and research resource, with the planned purchase of six Lenovo A1 Tablets. An Asus Transformer Prime Tablet for

the Principal and New lap top computers for each Lead Teacher is also planned for the upcoming school year.

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, we continue to maintain our objective 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 this objective.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the bulk of our capital expenditures went toward the following purchases:

- 36 - five unit lockers
- 1 - Work Station utilized by our IT Technician
- 9 - Think pad lap top computers
- 3 - Think Center desktop computers
- 1- Flat Screen Monitor
- 1 - High speed document scanner with feeder
- 2 - Color Laser Printers
- 1 - New Phone Switchboard and dedicated VCIP Phone Hardware

For the upcoming school year, the following additional capital expenditures are planned in our continued effort to expand our IT infrastructure as per the goals of our Technology Plan, a copy of which is attached.

- 26 All In One Touch Screen Computers for the computer lab;
- 6 Lap Top Computers for Lead Teacher use;
- 6 Lenovo A1 Tablets for use by students as a reading and research resource;
- 1 Asus Transformer tablet to be utilized by Principal during daily teacher/classroom observations.

## **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.

BCMCS does not provide lunch and/or breakfast programs; therefore, a wellness policy is not applicable. 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 assists staff in making the best decisions and taking the most important steps for safety and security until administration, emergency staff, and/or local authorities arrive. Copies of the plan are kept in an accessible location in all instructional areas, offices and large group areas. The Bucks County Montessori Charter School Safety Committee reviews 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. The Safety Team is mobilized to make the necessary and appropriate decisions and/or recommendations. Key personnel carry cell phones, making instant communication possible. In case of an emergency, teachers use the classroom telephones to contact to the main office. Depending on the specific nature of the emergency, additional personnel can be mobilized and the appropriate intervention made.

The School Safety Plan is posted in the Main Office and in the Principal's Office. Additionally, each staff member has a copy in his or her school handbook

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

- 2010-11 SHARRS Report
- Wellness Letter
- 2011 Safety Plan

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

Bucks County Montessori Charter School offers benefits in accordance with the provisions of Act 22 of 1997 for all eligible employees. BCMCS strives to provide an excellent benefits package for all eligible staff while also being cost conscious. During the 2011-2012 school year, the school made available to all eligible staff, medical and prescription coverage through Independence Blue Cross and dental coverage through Met Life. For the 2011-12 school year, the health plans that we had in place through Independence Blue Cross were no longer available; however, comparable plans through IBC (Base Plan - Direct POS 5 and Optional Plan - PPO3) were made available and provided to all eligible staff, with the school covering 80% of the cost of the Base Plan as well as 80% of the offered dental plan through Met. Life. These same plans will

continued to be offered during the 2012-13 school year, with an increase in the employee paid contribution rate to at least 25% of plan costs.

Bucks County Montessori Charter School also offers a waiver of medical and dental health coverage to those eligible staff members as stated in the employment contract or agreement, who have alternate health insurance coverage (outside of BCMCS). BCMCS, upon proper proof of alternate coverage, will offers an annual prorated payment of:

\$1,850 Waiving of Single Coverage

\$4,250 Waiving of Husband/Wife or Parent Child Coverage

\$5,400 Waiving of Family Coverage

Eligible staff that chose this option waive only the medical and dental health coverage and are still eligible for PSERS, the school funded S-125 Plan, and other benefits as specified in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Eighty percent of our eligible staff selected the Direct POS 5 and Met Life Plan, and 20% of the staff, who had insurance coverage available through other sources, opted out of the medical plans offered, choosing the waiver instead.

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 & Omissions) coverage of \$1,000,000. There are presently no pending liability claims against the school.

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

- 2011-12 Insurance Docs

## **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 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 remains a priority. To aid in this attempt, the board of trustees rewards highly qualified staff with longevity to the school and profession with multi-year contracts.

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 2011-12:

- 15 Professional Staff members were accounted for during the 2011-12 school year, with two (2) members from our 2010-2011 staff not returning due to propinquity of living status. With such, one member of our staff was promoted from a Teacher's Assistant to a Lead Montessori Teacher and a Teaching Intern was added to the staff in 2011-12 filling those open positions.
- 93.3% of our Professional Staff are Highly Qualified, possessing at least PA. Certification for their designated assignment.
- 100% of the Lead Teaching staff hold Montessori Credentials
- 100% of Professional Staff who began 2011-12 school year fulfilled the entire school year.

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

- HQT Report / Accuracy Certification Statement [2011-12]
- PDE-414 Verification Form [2011-12]

## **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, held on the Thursday of the first week of February, which is intended to set all the criteria and guidelines of the enrollment procedure. 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
- Issuance of admission letters and confirmation of enrollment

There are two requirements for admission: (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 2011-12 school year, the admission process was conducted as followed:

- 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 notice.
- 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 compilation.
- 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 placed in a numerical fashion and place on a computerized screen via an Excel Spreadsheet. The first selection was made, and then a list of students within the district was assembled.
- Last, children from the surrounding local district were selected using the same process.

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

## II. Student Enrollment for 2011-12 School Year:

Grade Level Chart from May, 2012:

Grade Level	Student Population
Kindergarten	26
1st Grade	33
2nd Grade	34
3rd Grade	31
4th Grade	30
5th Grade	25
6th Grade	14

The total number of students for the 2011-12 school year remained consistent at 193 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 reason(s) 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 119 students throughout the 2011-12 School Year. Documented data through self-studies, surveys, discussions, meetings, and conferences demonstrate strengths of the quality and integrity of the Montessori education at BCMCS as its most appealing aspect. Public confidence is affirmed through achievement of enrollment projections, heightened PSSA test scores, and the constant, continual expression of high satisfaction with institutional effectiveness of its staff which permeates into finely tuned 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:

<b>School Year:</b>	<b># of Students</b>
2001-2002	104
2002-2003	52
2003-2004	55
2004-2005	100
2005-2006	72
2006-2007	78
2007-2008	83
2008-09	88
2009-10	98
2010-11	126
2011-2012	119

## **Student Enrollment - Attachment**

- BCMCS Enrollment

## **Transportation**

Our host district, Pennsbury, provides bus transportation in accordance with their regular policy for private and secular schools. Students from other surrounding serving districts supply 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 2011-12 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, with the school to support, if need be, any and all applicable behavioral circumstances. Misconduct by the student(s) 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 appropriate disciplinary steps for bus incidences or misconduct. Servicing district codes and rules may supersede any/all BCMCS set guidelines.

## **Food Service Program**

Bucks County Montessori Charter School does not operate its own food service program. Students are required to pack lunches or purchase lunches through the PTA sponsored lunch program. The lunches that students bring into school 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.

During the 2011-12 school year, the PTA sponsored hot lunch option was provided in conjunction with *No Solo Pasta Food Services* of Morrisville, Pennsylvania. For students wishing to pay for this option, a hot lunch was made available. For the food lunch menu option, the PTA provided students with the nutritional knowledge they needed in order to make the accurate nutritional choices [i.e., daily option of chicken salad, etc.], so as to develop healthy eating habits. The menu plans an array of age-appropriate food options providing students with the tools they need to make good, healthy meal decisions.

BCMCS does not participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Programs *nor* Severe Needs Breakfast Programs, and is in compliance with all local [Bucks County] and 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 discipline 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* 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 concerned with 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 child'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 continues to be executed by the staff and personnel of BCMCS in the mentioned manner:

As requested, extracted from the BCMCS Student Code of Conduct is the following which denotes its compliance 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 2011-2012 school year, one (1) student totaling one (1) day of in-school 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: 2013**

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

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

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

---

**Board President**

**Date**

---

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**2012 - 2013 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:** Tony Stango   **Title:** Operations Mgr./CEO

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

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

---

*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

---

*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

---

*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

## **Signature Page - Attachment**

- 2011-12 Signature Page