Mountain Montessori Charter School

Submitted: March 13, 2015

By the Mountain Montessori Charter School
Steering Committee:
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Mountain Montessori Charter School

March 13, 2015

Dear Members of the Board of Directors of CSI,

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Steering Committee is pleased to submit the enclosed charter school application and corresponding appendices to the Board of Directors of the Charter School Institute.

The Charter Schools Act has made it possible for parents to take a more active role in their children's education and enable them to create a school that reflects their own philosophy of education. As stated in the Charter School Act section 22-30.5-102 (1) (c), "Different pupils learn differently and public school programs should be designed to fit the needs of individual pupils…." (2) (c), "[The charter school act is enacted] to encourage diverse approaches to learning and education and the use of different, proven, or innovative teaching methods" and (2) (f) "to provide parents and pupils with expanding choices in the types of education opportunities that are available within the public school system".

Through this application, Mountain Montessori Charter School Steering Committee respectfully requests the CSI to allow us to fulfill the above stated goals of the Charter Schools Act by establishing another non-traditional elementary school in the Steamboat Springs community.

Initially, Mountain Montessori Charter School (MMCS) proposes opening a p/K-6 charter school in Steamboat Springs using classic Montessori teaching philosophy and curriculum and expanding to include middle school (grades 7 and 8) in the third year of operation. If approved and authorized by the Charter School Institute, Mountain Montessori Charter School will be the first public Montessori School in Steamboat Springs. The Steering Committee would be honored to have this opportunity to serve the community by providing an alternative method of public education. We therefore respectfully submit for your consideration, this application for a five year charter to operate a CSI charter school.

Please feel free to contact any of the MMCS Steering Committee Members with questions or to provide you with any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mountain Montessori Charter School Steering Committee
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Jennifer Zuccone, Secretary (jenn@evoms.com)
Jennifer Brossett, Treasurer (jenlynnbro@gmail.com)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary **5**
- Overview of Mountain Montessori Charter School 5
- Montessori Method 6
- Potential Enrollment 8
- Special Programs 9
- Community Need & Targeted Student Population 10
- Leadership & Governance 11
- Location & Facility 11

Section A: Mission & Vision **12**
- Mission 12
- Vision 12
- Statements of Intent 13

Section B: Evidence of Support & Need **14**
- Historical Overview 14
- Current Potential Interest 15
- Evidence of Need 16
- Targeted Student Population 17
- Evidence of Support 18
- Evidence of Involvement 19
- Parent & Community Involvement 20
- Marketing & Outreach Plan 24

Section C: Leadership **25**
- Overview 25
- Governing Board Role 25
- Governing Board Training 26
- Head of School Role & Responsibilities 27
- Head of School Recruitment & Selection 28
- Head of School Evaluation 29
- Head of School Timeline 29

Section D: Education Program **30**
- Montessori Philosophy Overview 30
- Montessori Curriculum Instruction in the Primary Classroom 36
- Montessori Curriculum Instruction in the Montessori Elementary Program 38
- Montessori Curriculum Instruction in the Montessori Middle School 44
- Organizational Structure for Instruction 47
- Special Programs 52
- School Calendar & Daily Schedule 54
- Professional Development 56

Section E: Serving Students with Special Needs **60**
- Special Education in the Montessori Classroom 60
- Special Education Team 61
- Identification of Students with Special Needs 62
- Response to Intervention (RTI) 62
- Special Education in Preschool Program 65
- Serving English Language Learners 65
- Serving At-Risk Students 67
- Serving Gifted & Talented Students 67

Table of Contents (cont.)

Section F: Goals, Objectives, & Pupil Evaluation **69**
Overview 69
SMART Performance Goals 69
Evaluating Student Performance 71
Data Management Plan 78
Section G: Budget & Finance **83**
Revenue Assumptions 83
Expense Assumptions 88
Financial Reporting & Transparency 92
Purchased Services 92
Financial Policies 93
Section H: Governance & Operations **94**
Current Board Members 94
Board Development & Training 95
Colorado Non-Profit Corporation 501c(3) Status 96
Board Composition & Terms 97
Governing Board Meetings 99
Special Meetings 99
Emergency Meetings 99
Non-Discrimination Policy 99
Open Meeting Laws 99
Board Officer Roles & Responsibilities 100
Board Committees 101
Enrollment Policy 104
Student Discipline 112
Insurance 117
Transportation 118
Food Service 119
Requested Waivers 120
School Management Organization 133
Section I: Location & Facility **134**
Overview 134
Funding 134
Permits & Inspections 134
Facility Needs Assessment 135
Classrooms 136
Location Needs Assessment 137
Potential Site Locations 138
Acknowledgements **143**
Application Components Checklist **144**
Appendices

Executive Summary

Mountain Montessori Charter School (MMCS) proposes opening a p/K-8 charter school in Steamboat Springs using classic Montessori teaching philosophy and curriculum. If approved and authorized by the Charter School Institute, Mountain Montessori Charter School will be the first public Montessori School in Steamboat Springs. MMCS is pursuing authorization through the Charter School Institute following the verbal expressed intention of the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 to release its chartering authority over Mountain Montessori Charter School. In the first two years of operation, MMCS will offer p/K through 6th grade. In year 3, MMCS anticipates having a large enough student population to support expanding the school through 8th grade.

Mountain Montessori Charter School was born from the efforts of parents and educators committed to fostering an environment of collaboration among all members of its community: students, parents, teachers, staff, the school District and the great Steamboat Springs community.

Our Mission:

To inspire each child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful, and safe environment through the proven methods of Montessori education. As a school of choice, Mountain Montessori Charter School is a place for students, families and teachers to grow together as a community. MMCS aims to develop responsible, self-directed and resilient children who become life-long learners and creative problem solvers.

Our Vision:

Mountain Montessori Charter School creates a respectful, safe, nurturing and diverse educational community where students, staff, parents and community members collaborate to become empowered, enriched, challenged, resilient and prepared individuals collectively meeting the demands of an ever-changing society.

We will:

- Strive for academic excellence while developing the cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth of each child.
- Celebrate and enhance the unique greatness within each child while helping each child to reach his/her own potential.
- Support and maintain a focus on individualized learning.
- Encourage confident, self-motivated, independent life-long learners.
- Foster a collaborative community of students, staff and parents
- Develop, nurture and grow community partnerships

The Montessori Method:

The Montessori Method is a highly individualized educational approach for children used world-wide and based on the research and experiences of Italian physician and educator Dr. Maria Montessori (1870–1952). It is designed to lead children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and become eager, self-directed learners. Using a carefully prepared environment, teachers are guides utilizing self-correcting, hands-on learning materials and purposeful activities that allow children to learn at their own pace through discovery. This type of meaningful work in an orderly environment fosters concentration, encourages responsibility, independence and confidence, and results in children who love to learn.

In the classroom, Montessori curriculum includes specific, purposeful materials called "works" that offer self-correcting guidance to give the child opportunity to master each skill at his/her own pace. These materials are presented in a three part lesson to the child and then the child is allowed to discover, explore, and master each lesson before moving onto the next work. This gives each student the ability to progress as needed, and to spend extra time with each lesson as needed. The teacher observes the student, assisting when needed, and in this way is able to understand where each individual student is in his/her learning style and level for each subject.
Montessori education emphasizes:

- Individualized instruction for all children
- Freedom and responsibility within limits
- Multi-age classrooms
- Peer to peer learning
- Developmentally appropriate scaffolded instruction

Class Structure:

In adherence to the Montessori Method, classes will be multi-age in the following format:

Primary Classrooms: Students aged 3, 4 and Kindergarten

Lower Elementary Classrooms: Students in 1st-3rd grade

Upper Elementary Classrooms: Students in 4th-6th grade

Middle School: Students in 7th and 8th grade

Students remain with the same teacher during their three years in each classroom. This enables teachers to build strong relationships with the students and their families. Further, it establishes and nurtures a classroom culture as only 1/3 of the students in a class are transitioning out of or entering a class in any given school year.

School Calendar and Daily Schedule:

The three hour work periods characterized by the Montessori Method is factored into the daily class schedule, necessitating a longer school day than the local public school day. The school day at Mountain Montessori Charter School will run from 8:00 to 3:30, Monday through Friday. The school will follow a modified Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 calendar and is anticipated to open in fall 2016. The school year will begin September 6th and end June 1st. There will be developmentally appropriate tiered instruction of 163 school days with a total number of 1,141 hours of instruction.

The preschool program at Mountain Montessori Charter School will have both full and half-day options, five days per week. The half-day will only be offered in the mornings from 8:00 to 12:15. Full-day students will attend 8:00-3:30. Kindergarten will also have full and half-day options with the same outlined schedule as the preschool. Lunch and recess will be monitored by parent volunteers and/or administrative staff, and/or teaching staff on a rotating schedule. During lunch/recess and rotating specials, teaching staff will have out-of-class time to prepare materials. MMCS intentionally chooses to have a longer lunch time in adherence with Montessori philosophy to develop social graces and practical life skills. The daily class schedule is:

8:00-8:15-Welcome/Settle In

8:15-8:30-Group Meeting

8:30-11:30-Traditional Montessori Work Cycle

11:30-12:15- Lunch/Dismissal for ½ day preschool/Kindergarten

12:15-1:00-Recess

1:00-2:30 –Rotating Specials

2:00-3:15-Lessons

3:13-3:30-Wrap-Up/Dismissal

Standards Based Montessori Education:

Mountain Montessori Charter School believes the Montessori Method aligns naturally and synergistically to Colorado Academic Standards. MMCS teachers are responsible for helping students overcome obstacles to learning and for guiding them toward mastery of the Colorado Academic and Mountain Montessori Charter School Standards. The lead teacher in each classroom is a constant observer of all students and keeps detailed records on each individual student. The extensive record keeping and observation of students allow MMCS teachers to provide individualized cognitive and non-cognitive assessments dynamically and throughout the school year. Mountain Montessori Charter School maintains the highest of academic expectations for students as evidenced in the evolving Mountain Montessori Charter School Standards and Alignments referenced in Appendices C1 - C3. These standards are based upon Colorado Academic Standards and classic Montessori Standards.

Potential Enrollment

Mountain Montessori Charter School is anticipated to open September 2016 with 126 students, preschool through 6th grade. Below is the anticipated enrollment schedule for academic years 2016 through 2020, expanding to include Middle School in 2018:

	Projected Number of Students by Year				
Classes	**YEAR 1 2016**	**YEAR 2 2017**	**YEAR 3 2018**	**YEAR 4 2019**	**YEAR 5 2020**
PreK-3 yr old	16	16	16	17	18
PreK-4 yr old	16	16	16	17	18
Kindergarten (5 yr old)	16	16	16	17	18
Total Primary	48	48	48	51	54
First (6 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Second (7 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Third (8 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Total Lower Elementary	54	42	42	45	54
Fourth (9)	8	11	10	10	9
Fifth (10)	8	11	9	9	9
Sixth (11)	8	11	9	9	10
Total Upper Elementary	24	33	28	28	28
Seventh (12)			9	10	12
Eighth (13)			9	10	12
Total Middle School	0	0	18	20	24
Total # students	126	123	136	144	160
Total # funded by PPR	87.28	84.28	97.28	102.86	116.44

Projected enrollment is based on a combination of actual numbers from Intent to Enroll (ItE) forms and maximum classroom capacity. For year one, MMCS received a significant number of ItE forms for students 6-8 yrs old; therefore, the Lower Elementary classrooms start out at the maximum number allowed. After year one, the concentration of

Lower Elementary students begins to dissipate. In year two, the enrollment numbers return to a more natural progression of building up classroom size.

Preschool and Kindergarten Funding:

Since students aged 3 or 4 years old are not publicly funded, Mountain Montessori Charter School will charge tuition. Kindergarten is only half funded and families who choose full-day Kindergarten will be required to pay partial tuition to fund full-day Kindergarten. It is Mountain Montessori Charter School's intention to be the first school in Steamboat Springs to offer tuition-free full-day Kindergarten once the solvency of the school has been established and can be reasonably maintained. The budget shows this is possible as early as year three.

Special Programs:

Mountain Montessori Charter School will offer Outdoor Education, Performing Arts, Physical Education, Spanish, Music and Visual Arts classes.

- Outdoor Education: Yampatika proposes to work with Mountain Montessori School to develop an age appropriate, hands-on, inquiry based curriculum based on Yampatika's successful model for environmental literacy.
- Performing Arts: Perry Mansfield has expressed interest in partnering with Mountain Montessori to offer performing arts curriculum to enhance Mountain Montessori's academic offerings. The Mountain Montessori Steering Committee is awaiting this proposal.
- Other Special/Enrichment Offerings: Physical Education such as yoga, Spanish, Music and Visual Arts will be offered to students. These classes will be taught either by a contracted teacher with the appropriate credentials or an existing staff member with the appropriate credentials. If and when possible, parent and/or community volunteers will be utilized to staff these offerings.

Community Need:

Historically, the community of Steamboat Springs has long desired a Montessori based charter school. Efforts to bring this to fruition have been difficult. As an attempt to accommodate the desire and need of the community, the School District permitted a Montessori strand school in one of the public elementary schools. This was successful until one of the lead Montessori teachers moved out of state. Following her departure, the Montessori strand slowly dissolved as the District misunderstood the need to hire Montessori certified teachers for the program. Ultimately, the District cancelled the program, disappointing the proponents of Montessori education. Despite the effort to create the strand school, there continues to be a great demand and push for a Montessori charter school in Steamboat Springs.

Now is a pivotal time to successfully authorize a Montessori based charter school in Steamboat Springs. Currently, the two public elementary schools are beyond enrollment capacity and the School District is using modulars to accommodate the high student enrollment. A recent demographic study conducted by the School District indicates continued growth between 2-3% of elementary school aged children for the next five years[1] (Refer to Appendix A for the full demographic study). Families who attend the private Montessori preschool, Steamboat Springs Montessori, desire to have another option to continue Montessori education, rather than ending the Montessori experience at Kindergarten. Through authorizing Mountain Montessori Charter School, families will be able to have the continued Montessori education they desire for their children. Additionally, families unfamiliar with Montessori can have an alternative educational opportunity available to them.

Targeted Student Population:

Mountain Montessori Charter School aims to enroll a student population that mirrors the existing and evolving student population of the Steamboat Springs School District. We are, therefore, committed to meeting district-wide demographics within the first five years. The most recent demographic student data being used as a reference point is from the Colorado Department of Education for Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 for **2013-2014:**

Ethnicity & Student Status	**%of Student Population**
White	85.38%
Hispanic	10.62%
African American	<1%
Asian	1.29%
Pacific Islander	<1%
Alaskan/Native American	<1%
2 or more Ethnicities	1.58%
Economically Disadvantaged	18.12%
English Language Learners	7.66%
Students with Disabilities	10.95%
Gifted & Talented	8.25%

[1]Steamboat Springs School District – Enrollment Forecast and Demographic Observations. (2014).

The efficacy of the Montessori Method has been shown repeatedly in diverse populations and can be used to capitalize on meeting the needs of the student population. As such, and in alignment with our Mission and Vision, MMCS will implement a more detailed outreach plan and will be mindful ongoing that recruitment of a diverse student community will require a conscious and deliberate effort. Further Mountain Montessori Charter School will enroll students through a lottery if potential student enrollment exceeds available student seats.

Governance and Leadership:

Mountain Montessori Charter School will be governed by a Board of Directors made up of five to seven individuals, including one founding member of the Steering Committee. The Board of Directors will possess a diverse group of skills and experiences relevant to the governance of a new charter school, and a deep commitment to the community. The board will retain fiduciary responsibility for oversight of finances, academic outcomes, long-term vision setting, and adherence and implementation of the charter contract with the Colorado Charter School Institute. The Governing Board will be the highest authority in the school. Once authorized by the Charter School Institute, the MMCS Governing Board will begin recruitment of the Head of School.

Location and Facility:

Mountain Montessori Charter School is currently in the process of securing a location for the school. Possible locations to date include: leasing land at Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School & Camp in the Strawberry Park area, leasing/purchasing land near the area of Walton Creek Road & Highway 40, leasing/purchasing land neighboring the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. In all instances, modular construction would be used to build the school. In searching for a facility location, the goal is to find a location and build a facility that can support the expected student population in year five. Mountain Montessori Charter School has identified the following requirements for suitable land and facility:

1. Located in or near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.
2. Safe surroundings to house a Preschool, Elementary school, and Middle School.
3. Meets fire, ADA, and Routt County regulations.
4. Meets Colorado regulations for use as a child care facility for mixed-age (3 to 6 years old) classrooms.
5. Land must be approximately 3-4 acres in size to accommodate the outdoor classroom.

Section A: Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

To inspire each child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful and safe environment through the proven methods of Montessori education. As a school of choice, Mountain Montessori Charter School is a place for students, families and teachers to grow together as a community. MMCS aims to develop responsible, self-directed and resilient children who become life-long learners and creative problem solvers.

Our Vision:

Mountain Montessori Charter School creates a respectful, safe, nurturing and diverse educational community where students, staff, parents and community members collaborate to become empowered, enriched, challenged, resilient and prepared individuals collectively meeting the demands of an ever-changing society.

We will:

- Strive for academic excellence while developing the cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth of each child.
- Celebrate and enhance the unique greatness within each child while helping each child to reach his/her own potential.
- Support and maintain a focus on individualized learning.
- Encourage confident, self-motivated, independent life-long learners.
- Foster a collaborative community of students, staff and parents.
- Develop, nurture and grow community partnerships

Our mission and vision statements have guided the design of Mountain Montessori Charter School. We believe children naturally love to learn and are strong, intelligent, kind, and motivated. Students are considered capable with worthy ideas. The Founders of Mountain Montessori Charter School believe children deserve a personalized education and families in our community deserve options in education.

Statements of Intent

To fulfill our Mission and Vision by implementing Montessori curriculum, Mountain Montessori Charter School will:

- Use the resources and guidance of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and other qualified Montessori associations to implement the Montessori approach to learning and living
- Offer a challenging interdisciplinary curriculum combining the Colorado State Standards with Montessori curriculum/materials
- Present teaching materials specifically designed to provide concrete representations of the abstract within prepared learning environments
- Empower each student to direct his/her own learning within the structure of the curriculum with close guidance from a Montessori-trained teacher
- Utilize multi-aged classrooms, developed in three year cycles, permitting children to naturally engage in peer modeling and creating a classroom and school community that accepts and values each person
- Facilitate inquiry, exploration, critical thinking, and creative problem solving in all academic areas
- Identify, understand, and capitalize on the individual student's learning style and needs
- Educate the whole child from early childhood to adolescence by integrating self-reliance, independence, and respectfulness with academic work
- Hire and support Montessori trained and Highly Qualified Teachers
- Encourage and support family involvement by offering parent education of Montessori methods

Mountain Montessori Charter School's Mission and Vision were developed by conducting community meetings in the summer of 2014. Tools offered by the Colorado League of Charter Schools for developing mission/vision statements were used as well as references to other Montessori charter schools in the country. Additionally, the original Mission and Vision statements created by our predecessors were used as a reference in developing the Mission and Vision statements for Mountain Montessori Charter School.

Section B: Evidence of Support & Need

Historical Overview

Mountain Montessori Charter School was founded on the strong desire of Montessori supporters to create an alternative option for public education that is based upon the Montessori Method. The effort towards creating a Montessori charter school in Steamboat Springs has been a desire and vision for over a decade. In 2002, a group of twelve parents formed a Steering Committee to begin the application process of opening a Montessori charter school. At that time, 70 families representing 100 children expressed interest in a publicly funded Montessori program. The Steamboat Springs School District (SSSD) Board of Education voted unanimously to deny the Montessori charter application. Their primary reason for denying the charter application was the perceived adverse economic effect the charter Montessori school would have on the School District's minimal budget. The Steering Committee appealed the decision to the Colorado Board of Education.

The Colorado Board of Education ruled the SSSD Board of Education did not serve in the best interests of its pupils, school district or the community when it denied the Montessori charter school application. The Colorado Board of Education issued a reprimand to the SSSD Board of Education, requiring them to reconsider their denial. Once again, by unanimous vote, the SSSD Board of Education denied the Montessori charter school application. The Steering Committee appealed yet again and hired an attorney.

The Colorado Board of Education ordered the Steamboat Springs School District to accept the Montessori charter school application. The SSSD Board of Education refused, citing a state unfunded-mandate law, ruling the state board's order for the district to approve the charter application is optional. The Montessori Steering Committee filed a lawsuit against the Steamboat Springs School District and the Steamboat Springs Board of Education in an attempt to enforce the state order to approve its charter school application.

After four months of closed-door negotiations, each group had their attorneys draft an agreement that kept all aspects of the negotiations separate from any legal proceedings and the Steamboat Springs School District Board approved a multi-year Montessori strand in the Strawberry Park Elementary School. The Steering Committee dropped its lawsuit.

The first Montessori strand classroom opened in 2004. In the second year, there was enough student interest for the School District to begin a second class. The Montessori strand program was successful and to capacity by 2011. The program became so desirable that a lottery system had to be used to determine student enrollment.

In late 2011, the Lead Teacher of the Upper Elementary class re-located out of state and the School District hired a non-certified Montessori teacher. The class structure and integrity of the Montessori program became compromised. Parents become disappointed and frustrated and enrollment started to dwindle. Ultimately in August 2013, both classrooms were closed due to lack of enrollment and the Montessori program ceased to exist.

Despite closure of the strand school in Strawberry Park Elementary school, the strong desire to create a Montessori charter school still exists. In early 2014, a new group of parents and Montessori educators decided to persevere and build upon earlier predecessor's hard work to create a Montessori charter school in Steamboat Springs. Upon announcing the effort to create a Montessori charter school there has been avid support and encouragement from the community.

Current Potential Interest

As of March 2015, 69 families, representing 115 children have formally expressed interested in attending Mountain Montessori Charter School for the first year of anticipated operation (2016-2017). This data was collected between March 2014 and March 2015. Prospective families were asked to complete an "Intent to Enroll" form to assist the Steering Committee with assessing the need and desire for a Montessori Charter School in Steamboat Springs (see Appendix D for a sample form). It is understood by the prospective families and MMCS Steering Committee that the Intent to Enroll forms do not indicate "firm" numbers for enrollment nor guarantee enrollment. It is understood that the data collected is a guide to show evidence of support and to assist with planning projections for a fall 2016 school opening.

Gender	Preschool	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th/8th	Unknown (not enough data available)	TOTAL
Female	7	7	7	8	13	2	3	1	0	N/A	48
Male	10	5	11	4	10	6	2	1	2	N/A	51+16
Total	17	12	18	12	23	8	5	2	2	16	115

The early indication of interest and intentions to enroll are encouraging and clearly are defining a need and desire to an alternative option in education in Steamboat Springs. The above data assisted the Steering Committee with determining the number of classrooms and decisions around whether or not to include a middle school upon initial

opening. As is shown above, in the initial year of operation, it is not feasible to include middle school grades. It is anticipated, however, upon charter approval, there will be a growing number of families who will intend to enroll in Mountain Montessori Charter School, hence the projected enrollment numbers to have a total initial enrollment of 126 students in year one.

Evidence of Need

Beyond the preliminary grassroots outreach efforts and data collected, Steamboat Springs has a growing population with elementary school aged children. The Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 conducted a demographic study in August 2014 (see Appendix A for the full study results) to better understand the growth trends. The demographic study concluded the Steamboat Springs community will continue to see an increase of 2-3% in school aged population growth. Currently, both public elementary schools are exceeding their capacity (2014-2015 data was not available):

SCHOOL	Max Capacity	Operating Capacity 2013/2014	Percentage Beyond Capacity
Soda Creek Elementary School	460 students	555 students	17.2% OVER capacity
Strawberry Park Elementary School	480 students	518 students	7.4% OVER capacity

Data from CDE website www.schoolview.org

Pupil Membership by School & Grade Level

Aside from creating a charter school, it is clear the two current public schools are well beyond their capacity to meet educational responsibilities to the community. Recently the Steamboat Springs School District Board voted unanimously to hire an engineer for facility upgrades and to provide a quote to build a third public elementary school.[2]

Alternatives to Soda Creek Elementary School and Strawberry Park Elementary School are:

- North Routt Community Charter School in Clark, CO (K-8th)
- Emerald Mountain School (private school K-8th)
- Heritage Christian School (religious private school K-12th)
- Steamboat Springs Montessori (private preschool/K)

[2] (2015, January 13). *Steamboat Today*.

North Routt Community Charter School is authorized by Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 and is located 20 miles outside of the downtown area. Location of this school is a deterrent for some families. According to Principal, Brandon LaChance, North Routt Community Charter School can accommodate up to 99 students, Kindergarten through 8th grade. In the current academic year, 2014-2015, 87 students are enrolled in. For the 2015-2016 academic year, 13 students are on the enrollment waitlist.

The two other educational options in Steamboat Springs are private schools: Emerald Mountain School and Heritage Christian School. Emerald Mountain is non-secular and located in the center of downtown. Annual tuition to attend is $14,420 per student. The cost of tuition is prohibitive to most families, especially if they have more than one child attending the school simultaneously. Heritage Christian School is located west of the downtown area. Annual tuition for one child is $5,175 and $4,655 for each additional child. Although the cost of tuition is less than Emerald Mountain, some families may not be able to afford the tuition. Further some families may prefer not to have the religious instruction included with the general education and academics.

Steamboat Springs Montessori is a private Montessori preschool located in the downtown area. For the 2014/2015 school year, sixteen (16) students attend, of which four (4) are Kindergartners. The school is limited in growing due to many parents choosing to have their children attend the regular public school because there is no continuation of a Montessori program beyond Kindergarten available in the community.

Targeted Student Population

Mountain Montessori Charter School aims to enroll a student population that mirrors the existing and evolving student population of the Steamboat Springs School District. We are, therefore, committed to meeting district-wide demographics within the first five years. The most recent demographic student data being used as a reference point is from the CDE for Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 for 2013-2014:

Ethnicity & Student Status	%of Student Population
White	85.38%
Hispanic	10.62%
African American	<1%
Asian	1.29%
Pacific Islander	<1%

Alaskan/Native American	<1%
2 or more Ethnicities	1.58%
Economically Disadvantaged	18.12%
English Language Learners	7.66%
Students with Disabilities	10.95%
Gifted & Talented	8.25%

The efficacy of the Montessori Method has been shown repeatedly in diverse populations and can be used to capitalize on meeting the needs of the student population. As such, and in alignment with our Mission and Vision, Mountain Montessori plans to partner with Integrated Community, a local non-profit organization that serves the local immigrant and transient population in the community to reach out to the ethnic population. Integrated Community has offered to assist MMCS with outreach efforts to target families with school-aged children living in the "shadows". Integrated Community's assistance includes translation services as well as cultural training for MMCS faculty and staff.

If authorized, Mountain Montessori Charter School would not only offer another educational option to the community but it would also help alleviate the population bulge on the public schools, providing a quality education, tuition-free in an easily accessible location. Mountain Montessori Charter School will be the first and only *public* Montessori school in the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2, thus allowing families, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds to have access to a Montessori education for grades K-8.

Evidence of Support

Mountain Montessori Charter School's founding committee actively focuses development efforts by using effective outreach practices. Initial outreach efforts began by networking with the local private Montessori preschool and Kindergarten, Steamboat Springs Montessori. By working with the private school, we have been able to build a large email list to send out regular emails of our progress to potential supporters and to solicit potential enrollment forms, community support forms and to recruit potential governing board members. To date, we have over 200 names on our email list.

We have partnered with Steamboat Springs Montessori to do community information meetings at the library. We have promoted, invited, and held community input meetings to develop our mission, vision and goals for MMCS. In August 2014, every Saturday, we had an informational table outside a local grocery store to distribute brochures and collect potential enrollment forms and community support forms (see Appendix Ofor sample Potential Student Enrollment Brochure and sample Community Partner Brochure). We also promoted our efforts at a free

concert in the community in the summer of 2014. We held a fundraising and children's community yoga and dance event in October 2014. We created an informational website: http://www.mmcharterschool.com/. Through our website, we are able to collect additional potential enrollment forms as well as support forms and to use a blog as another means of communication and outreach. We created and promote a Facebook page to expand our outreach. We have solicited and been successful at having our local newspaper, *Steamboat Today*, write an article about our work to bring a charter school to Steamboat Springs:

http://www.steamboattoday.com/news/2014/sep/02/montessori-charter-school-looks-2016-opening/

Through all of these efforts, we have collected 30+ Letters of Support (see Appendix E for a sample form and written Letters of Support). In our regular and ongoing email updates, the Steering Committee will frequently receive responses back thanking the group for doing the work and offering encouragement to keep the momentum and effort going.

Evidence of Involvement

Beyond reaching out to potential families and students, we are currently in negotiations with Perry Mansfield, a world-renowned performing arts camp, to develop a curriculum to incorporate the performing arts as a part of our enhancement offerings. Additionally we have a proposal from Yamaptika, a non-profit environmental education organization with the mission to inspire environmental stewardship through education, to help us enhance the outdoor education emphasis in our school curriculum (See Appendix G1). Lastly, Integrated Community has agreed to assist MMCS with our outreach efforts to children who live in the "shadows" of our community as immigrants, minorities, and at-risk (See Appendix G2).

As we have gained momentum and traction in our efforts, we attracted a local attorney, Jason Lacy, who has offered his legal services to us pro bono. Further, we have attracted and received the support of a local developer who is assisting us in networking with other community partners to find a suitable location for the school. We have networked and regularly stay in contact with the nearest charter school to our community, North Routt Community Charter School (NRCCS). Brandon LaChance, the Principal of NRCCS, has offered us guidance on the day to day operations of charter schools, promptly answered our questions, and showed his support by attending our community outreach meetings.

Parent & Community Involvement

As was detailed earlier, the community of Steamboat Springs has long desired to have a Montessori education option beyond the preschool/Kindergarten years. The Montessori advocates in the community recognize not only the academic benefits of a Montessori based education but also the inherent ways Montessori education develops skills, curiosity, self-confidence, and a genuine love of learning. Further, Mountain Montessori Charter School supporters understand that having a Montessori based charter school in the Steamboat Springs community provides another option in education that betters the overall community by preparing students to be resilient global and community citizens who appreciate diversity, are stewards of the natural environment, and who will contribute productively to society. Based upon these values and continued support, Mountain Montessori Charter School's sustainability and success is contingent upon both parental and community involvement.

Since initiating the Montessori charter effort in early 2014, community word of mouth, grassroots enthusiasm, and the energy of a volunteer community of parents and educational visionaries has sustained and grown the momentum to create Mountain Montessori Charter School. A group of involved parents and community members and partners continue to participate with the Steering Committee in the final stages of the charter application and charter contract process. This continued involvement is essential in making Mountain Montessori Charter School a reality.

Leadership Opportunities

Once Mountain Montessori Charter School is established and operational, parents/legal guardians, and community supporters will be involved in several leadership aspects of the school including:

- Governing Board Members
- PTO/Parent Council
- Membership and participation on either of or both of the above board committees

All parents will automatically be members of the Parent Council which will encourage the involvement of parents in the day to day activities of the school, organize and implement fundraising and volunteerism, and elect parent representatives to the Governing Board as openings occur each June. Parents will also have a voice and be encouraged to attend the monthly Governing Board meetings.

Parent Involvement

Mountain Montessori Charter School recognizes parents/legal guardians are children's first and most influential teachers and believes children do better when their parents/legal guardians are invested in their education and

active in their school community. MMCS plans to build family-school partnerships and strengthen parental involvement and support for learning through:

1. *Parent Education*
    a. All new parents/legal guardians to Mountain Montessori Charter School will be required to attend the Montessori Transition Program to orient them and their child/children to Montessori methods and the Montessori environment. During this workshop, parents will also be oriented to the expectations of their involvement to keep MMCS sustainable and successful through volunteerism and helping their students at home.
    b. Mountain Montessori Charter School will create a parent education curriculum covering aspects of carrying Montessori philosophy into the home and in parenting, education, and child development. Parent education will be held monthly. Topics may include:
        - Implementing Montessori in the home
        - Developmental Stages for 3-6, 6-9, and 9-12 year olds
        - How to read with your child and talk about what you are reading
        - Building basic literacy and math skills
        - How to help with homework in alignment with Montessori methods
        - How to give your child more responsibility and independence

2. *Parent Volunteerism*

    Upon enrollment of their children to Mountain Montessori Charter School, parents will be required to complete a Volunteer Form and Contract. On the form, parents can designate their availability throughout the year to volunteer as well as list talents, interests or skills that will be helpful to Mountain Montessori Charter School's sustainability and success. Volunteer opportunities can range from but not be limited to: Parent Council, classroom helpers, organizing carpool transportation, lunch time/recess helpers, office assistance, etc. Mountain Montessori Charter School expects families to volunteer a minimum of ten (10) hours per school year. The Parent Council will be responsible for creating, managing and overseeing MMCS volunteer program.

3. *Annual School Community Events*

    Mountain Montessori Charter School believes it is important to hold annual events to engage the whole school community and to give parents/legal guardians, students, teachers/staff something fun and bonding to look forward to within the year. Establishing and maintaining school traditions through annual events creates a sense of belonging to a community and having roots in the community and in the school. Some events we plan to offer include:

    - Back to school social-scheduled before the school year starts for families to get re-acquainted after summer break and to meet and/or get re-acquainted with teachers
    - Fall Harvest (once school garden program is implemented)
    - Thanksgiving Feast
    - Family Gingerbread Decorating Night

- Winter Carnival
- Spring Planting (once school garden program is implemented)
- Spring Performing Arts Show
- Moving up and Graduation Ceremonies

On-going Communication

Mountain Montessori Charter School recognizes consistent, regular communication with families is integral in maintaining parent/legal guardian support and involvement. Parents will receive a monthly newsletter via email updating them on the most current information and happenings in the school. The monthly newsletter will be posted both on the school's website as well as on a community bulletin board at the entrance of the school. Hard copies of the newsletter will also be available upon request. In all the primary spoken languages of our school community, the monthly newsletter will include:

- Letter from the Head of School with updates
- Letter from Governing Board Chair with updates
- Letter from PTO/Parent Council President with updates
- Overall class updates
- Monthly topic as it pertains to overall school theme being taught and how to reinforce at home
- Volunteer opportunities and Volunteer recognition
- Other topics/sections as deemed important or part of enhancing the community

Classroom teachers will also be expected to send out weekly classroom updates to their students' families via email.

Mountain Montessori Charter School will maintain an open door policy and encourages parents/legal guardians to schedule appointments with the Head of School or teachers if further communication is needed. Mountain Montessori Charter School's website (www. mmcharterschool.com) will be regularly updated and maintained with all of the above communications.

Community Involvement

Mountain Montessori Charter School acknowledges the importance of being involved in the greater community as well as inviting the greater community to be a part of the school. MMCS has reached out to local businesses, nonprofit organizations, neighborhoods, community leaders and the local newspaper to share the vision of creating a Montessori Charter School. Through these efforts we have been successful in the following:

- Collaborating with Steamboat Springs Montessori, a private Montessori Preschool and only Montessori option in Steamboat Springs, to consult on various topics and to network with potential Montessori families and supporters
- Creating a partnership with Yamaptika to contract with Mountain Montessori Charter School to offer outdoor education as an enhancement to our curriculum
- Creating a partnership with Perry Mansfield Performing Arts Camp to contract with Mountain Montessori Charter School to offer performing arts education as an enhancement to our curriculum as well as to possibly co-locate on their property in Strawberry Park neighborhood
- Initiating a potential partnership with Yampa Valley Medical Center to explore contracting our Special Education Services
- Developing a community partnership with Integrated Community, a local non-profit organization that serves local immigrants and non-English speaking community members to assist us with outreach efforts, translation services, and cultural/diversity training.
- Creating a partnership with a local realtor who is assisting the Steering Committee with finding a location for Mountain Montessori Charter School
- Creating a partnership with Sundance Studio to hold a community outreach event offering children's yoga to help promote the Mountain Montessori Charter School (local yoga instructors volunteered their time for the event)
- Working with a local grocery store to have an information table to promote Mountain Montessori Charter School
- Networking and receiving the wise guidance of North Routt Community Charter School
- Being gifted pro bono legal services by a local attorney to assist the Steering Committee with developing the school's Governance

Mountain Montessori Charter School continues to nurture these relationships by including the partners on all charter school effort updates via email and by meeting with them on a regular basis to conduct business to progress on collaborative projects. The momentum from these efforts expands the opportunities within the community. Mountain Montessori Charter School recognizes the importance of ongoing community partnership building and makes this a priority. A Community Partnership Brochure (see Appendix O) has been created to promote Mountain Montessori Charter School and the ways community members can get involved.

Once Mountain Montessori Charter School is authorized, a community outreach effort will be initiated to recruit Governing Board members as well as community members/professionals who have specific talents/experience to volunteer at Mountain Montessori Charter School. The Steamboat Springs community has a diverse pool of expertise and skills to potentially share with Mountain Montessori Charter School. In turn, Mountain Montessori Charter School will collaborate with the partners to create community service projects that students can participate in that will incorporate their academic subjects.

Networking

Throughout preparing the charter application, the Steering Committee has actively networked with the local Steamboat Springs community, North Routt Community Charter School, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools. These initial relationships have led the Steering Committee to expand our networking efforts to build solid working relationships with Fort Collins Montessori School, Compass Montessori School, and DCS Montessori School and Salida Montessori. Networking with all of the above has assisted the Steering Committee with clarifying our vision, having resources to ask questions, learn and model best practices and to inspire the future. Mountain Montessori Charter School values these relationships and will continue to nurture them. Further, Mountain Montessori Charter School acknowledges that continued networking is necessary for creating, maintaining and sustaining the best practices to grow and maintain a high quality charter school.

Marketing and Outreach

If authorized by the CSI, the Steering Committee would send out a press release to the local newspaper to announce the approval of Mountain Montessori Charter School. It is anticipated this announcement would prompt a front page news story given the current overcrowding in the local elementary schools. With the announcement, it is likely the Steering Committee would receive numerous emails and phone calls from potential families. The school's authorization would also be announced via email to our over 200 supporters. Further, the Steering Committee would personally notify our partner, Integrated Community, to share the news of the new school with the non-English speaking population and the At-Risk population. With these efforts the Enrollment Policy outlined in this application will be put into motion and if necessary, an enrollment lottery would be initiated.

Section C: Leadership

Overview

The Governing Board will be the highest authority in the school. It will be comprised of 5-7 individuals with a diverse set of skills who are committed both to the success of our community and our school. The Governing Board will bear responsibility for oversight of the school, both financial and otherwise. The Governing Board will also have the responsibility of hiring the Head of the School, evaluating the Head of School and reviewing any non-voluntary terminations of staff members. The board members will meet on a regular schedule, and during their meetings they will receive reports from various committees (comprised of school employees, parents, and community members) according to a schedule developed by the Governing Board and Head of School. The Head of School is responsible for relaying to the staff any important information or decisions from the board meetings. Monthly board meetings will be open to the public and staff will be encouraged to attend in order to create a culture of trust and transparency.

Governing Board Role

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will abide by the adopted policies and state and federal laws, rules and regulations, unless specifically waived. The MMCS Governing Board will operate as a policy setting Board in accordance with the by-laws of Mountain Montessori Charter School. The responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the school and the assurance of achieving the Board's long-term goals will be delegated to the Head of School. One of the Board's primary roles is to assure that the Head of School is operating in accordance to the Board's directives and executive limitations. The MMCS Governing Board has or will:

1. Determine the school's Mission, Vision and Purpose and ensure that the school is on the correct path to follow the Mission, Vision and Purpose.
2. Determine all school policies in accordance with the school's Mission, goals and educational program.
3. Create and maintain Staff and Parent Handbooks (to be developed upon charter authorization).
4. Select and evaluate the Head of School.
5. Provide proper financial oversight and assist in developing and approving the annual budget.
6. Ensure adequate resources are provided for the organization to fulfill its Mission and its short and long term goals.
7. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability. All Board members, as well as employees, will annually sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement (Appendix F5). Board members will also be required to sign a Board Member Agreement (Appendix F6).
8. Be responsible for final accountability for the school's academic success, organizational viability and faithfulness to the terms of the contract with the Charter School Institute.

9. Recruit and orient new Board members, assess Board performance, and assure ongoing Board member training and development.
10. Review performance in meeting prior year's goals and establish new annual goals.

Governing Board Training

Upon approval of this charter application, the Mountain Montessori Charter School founding Governing Board will begin the search for a Head of School. The founding Board plans to select and hire a Head of School by January 2016. Upon hiring a Head of School, the Board will undertake an extensive and comprehensive briefing for the Head of School on activities to date, including but not limited to, a review of legal documents created and filed by the Governing Board, Governing Board governance and structure, a review of the charter application, a detailed explanation of the Governing Board duties and Head of School responsibilities, and the contract negotiated between MMCS and CSI. It is likely that the Board and Head of School will undertake a strategic planning session that will cover short-term and long-term goals and objectives for the school.

Upon charter authorization, the MMCS Governing Board will apply for the Colorado League of Charter School's STAGE 6 Grant. This grant is a planning grant awarded to schools that are approved to open and can be used to receive customized governance training or, if the board has already received governance training, the grant can be used for professional development based on a school's need. Additionally, this grant can be used for admission for two individuals (a board representative and an administrative representative) to the League's annual conference.

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will receive annual training on the topics of finance, care and loyalty responsibilities, and best practices. Board members will sign a Mountain Montessori Charter School Ethical Conduct Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement annually and will be expected to complete all Colorado Department of Education Board training modules within 3 months of being elected to the Board. The Board will operate with confidence and effectiveness within the governance structures previously outlined. By allowing all interested in the school to have a voice, we will create a school community where everyone feels supported and appreciated. Through a balanced and high functioning governance structure, we will enable a healthy school culture and, therefore a place where children will thrive.

Prior to Mountain Montessori's opening date in fall of 2016, the Governing Board will develop a comprehensive board training program in cooperation with the Head of School and outside consultants as necessary. This training program will include a board orientation for new board members as well as ongoing training for existing members. New board members will be required to complete the Colorado Department of Education's online board training

modules within the first three months of their service on the board. Additionally, prior to opening, the Governing Board, in cooperation with the Head of School, will develop a rubric for evaluating the Head of School.

Head of School

Mountain Montessori's Head of School will responsible for and accountable to the Governing Board for all aspects of the school's operations, including enrollment, educational program, community relations, fiscal management, personnel management, and professional development as well as property management. These responsibilities should be administered in a manner consistent with the Montessori philosophy and in the best interest of MMCS. The Head of School will delegate responsibilities, provide appropriate leadership and work with the Board, staff, parents and the community to effectively achieve MMCS' goals. The Head of School shall demonstrate intimate knowledge of the Montessori philosophy and a full working knowledge of educational and administrative responsibilities required for the position. The ideal Head of School will possess the following minimum qualifications:

Head of School Minimum Qualifications

- Master's Degree in Education or Management related content
- Administrator/Principal license or the ability and commitment to obtain a Colorado Principal license within two years
- Administrative or leadership experience in an educational environment
- Effective communication, organizational, and delegation skills.
- Thorough understanding of the Montessori philosophy and theory
- Director Qualified designation according to the Colorado Department of Human Services preferred.
- Colorado First Aid and CPR training certification
- Montessori certification preferred
- Demonstrated knowledge of State Content Standards
- Successful experience with staff supervision and budget management
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.

Head of School Highly Preferred Qualifications

- Montessori Elementary certification through an accredited institution
- Experience in creating an organization and maintaining sustainability
- Experience in charter schools

More detailed information on the Head of School position can be found in the Head of School Job Description in Appendix K.

Head of School Recruitment

Following authorization of this charter application, the Governing Board of the Mountain Montessori Charter School will begin to recruit for a well-qualified Head of School. The Board intends to attract candidates who are able to lead both the staff and the students in creating a dynamic, high performing Montessori school. To achieve this, the Board will advertise the position locally via resources such as local newspapers, the Steamboat Springs District job board, the Colorado Montessori Association website, the Colorado League of Charter Schools website, and Colorado education job fairs. The Board will also advertise the position nationally through national job posting services, Montessori educational journals, and national Montessori organizations. Finally, the Board will maximize the opportunity to network with other Colorado Montessori schools, both public and private, to communicate the open job position of a Head of School.

Head of School Selection

The Governing Board will be responsible for reviewing all applications received, and will undertake initial interviews with qualified candidates. The Head of School Interview process will include the following standard steps:

- Receipt and review of completed application, resume, cover letter and references
- Phone screen
- Formal interview with Board members and one or more founding parent(s)
- Written prompt administered on a relevant topic (the observation, educational philosophy, or planning a lesson/unit)
- Reference check
- Clearance of a clean criminal background check

In addition to the above steps, the Head of School will also complete a classroom observation and debrief. As Mountain Montessori will not yet have opened its doors to students at the time of the initial hire of the Head of School, the classroom observation and debrief will happen either by watching a previously recorded video of a Montessori classroom, or by visiting another local Montessori school. The purpose of this exercise is to observe the candidate's observational and evaluator skills as well as their communication skills in giving feedback. A highly qualified Head of School will be hired by January 2016.

Head of School Evaluation

The Governing Board is responsible for evaluating the Head of School. The evaluation process will include specific and measurable goals consistent with the Standards of the Association Montessori Internationale and with the Interstate

Standards For Administrators which address key elements of teaching, learning, administrative duties, accountability, community involvement and cultural competencies. The evaluation process will also meet all requirements of SB 191. The elements of this report shall be formulated by the full Board prior to its annual review of the Head of School. The evaluation will include but will not be limited to survey results from students, parents, staff, and assessment results of the school as a whole.

In instances where the Head of School's performance is found to be below expectations but the Board is recommending that the Head of School be retained, the Board will create a remediation plan and will make recommendations for improvement. The Head of School Evaluation Rubric can be found in Appendix L3, Head of School Evaluation. A basic outline of the Head of School Evaluation Process is as follows:

Timeline

Early January:

The Head of School submits to the Board a self- evaluation using the Head of School Evaluation Form.

Mid January:

The Board of Directors President gathers information-surveys, assessment data, letter, etc.

Early March:

The committee, in closed session, reviews information and prepares its evaluation.

The Board makes a recommendation based on one of the following:

- Rehire the Head of School with a salary recommendation
- Rehire the Head of School with conditions
- Place the Head of School on administrative leave pending further action
- Non-renewal of contract

The Board, in closed session, discusses the recommendation with the Head of School, who may choose to respond to the recommendation. The Board notes the response from the Head of School, if any, and approves a final recommendation.

Concerns

Any concerns that fall outside of the regular evaluation process as described herein should be brought to the attention of the Governing Board Chair. During the regular course of the year, the Chair person is a conduit for feedback to the Head of School regarding such concerns. An additional evaluation may be required at any time by a majority vote of the Governing Board.

Section D: Educational Program

Montessori Philosophy Overview

At Mountain Montessori Charter School, we believe in the Montessori Method of education to achieve our mission and vision to produce life-long learners and creative problem solvers. Further, MMCS believes incorporating a foundation in Outdoor Education supports Montessori learning and promotes the education of the whole child.

The Montessori Method of education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes and development, including: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. The Montessori Method draws upon the idea of a "learning triangle" formed by the teacher, student, and environment that creates education as a flow experience - the continuing self-construction of the child throughout the program. In order to be considered authentic, Montessori programs must meet certain non-negotiable criteria, all of which form part of the Mountain Montessori instructional structure.[3] These non-negotiable components include:

- Multi-age classrooms
- Guided choice of learning activities
- Uninterrupted blocks of work time
- Prepared environments for learning

Through our Outdoor Education curriculum, children will be able to continue to build their knowledge based on the sensorial experiences of nature and through constant contact with the seasons and the natural world. As a result, mental work and physical exercise are held in balance because of these experiences.

"It is also necessary for his psychical development to place the child in contact with creation, in order that he may lay up for himself treasure from the directly educating forces of living nature." Maria Montessori

It is through these interactions with the outdoor environment that MMCS's unique approach is able to support the whole child. Children become more aware of nature and are better able to understand the needs of the world and how they are important, and can make a difference.

The Montessori Method of Education is time-tested. Montessori schools have existed and demonstrated success for over 100 years in countries all over the world. Currently, in the United States alone, there are over 4,000 Montessori schools more than 400 of which form part of the public school system.[4] Research documenting the success of Montessori programs is extensive and is referenced throughout this application in the applicable sections to which it correlates. Due to the strength of the research behind Montessori and its long history of documented success, MMCS

[3] Introduction to Montessori. (n.d.). Retrieved October 26, 2014.

[4] Introduction to Montessori. (n.d.). Retrieved October 26, 2014.

takes great care to structure our program around the research-based best practices of Montessori instruction. However, as a public charter Montessori school and in alignment with our mission to produce responsible global citizens, we also believe that we must not only prepare our students for success within the walls of our school but in the greater community as well.

By incorporating the traditional elements of the Montessori Method with the roadmaps and monitoring tools provided by state and local standards and woven together with individual attention given to every child, we believe that our students will exit Mountain Montessori filled with a love of learning and confidence to step into their roles as the next generation of responsible global citizens.

Teachers at Mountain Montessori Charter School will implement the Montessori curricula for core instruction in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The Montessori curricula are proven to provide a solid base of education that is not only time tested, but supported by extensive research. The benefits of a Montessori education have been formally studied and documented at all levels pre K-12. A few sample studies include:

- Montessori children at the end of their Kindergarten year were significantly better prepared for elementary school outscoring their peers in reading and math skills. They also tested better on "executive function," the ability to adapt to changing and more complex problems, an indicator of future school and life success. At the end of their elementary program, Montessori students showed greater gains in language. They write more creative essays using more complex sentences. (Lillard and Else-Quest, 2006)[5]
- Montessori students were rated by their middle grades teachers in Milwaukee as "above average" on follows directions, completes work on time, listens attentively, uses correct grammar and spelling, class enthusiasm, multicultural awareness, and responsibility and dependability. (Duax, 1989)[6]
- Montessori students scored 10 - 20 points higher on the California Achievement Test compared with students in traditional classrooms. (Public Montessorian, 1990)[7]
- Highest high school graduation rate, lowest grade level retention rate, and highest school success ratings were achieved by students who attended Montessori early childhood programs. (Karnes, Shwedel, & Williams, 1983)

However, equally as important as the success of Montessori across the age spectrum is the demonstrated success of Montessori across socio-economic and ethnic lines. Montessori programs appear to benefit both ethnic minorities and low-income families as well:

- High school students who attended a Montessori Head Start program achieved highest level of mathematics and reading compared with students who attended other types of Head Start programs. (Miller & Medley, 1984)[8]

[5] http://www.montessori.org
[6] Duax, Tim. (1989). Preliminary report on the educational effectiveness of a Montessori school in the public sector. *The NAMTA Journal, 14*(2), 56-62. http://www.montessori.org
[7] Public School Montessorian. (1990). Research. *Public School Montessorian, 2*(2). http://www.montessori.org

- Increases in attention strategies, general intelligence, and academic achievement occurred over time by Montessori students from all socioeconomic levels. (Chattin-McNichols, 1992)[9]
- Minority students enrolled in a Montessori program scored higher on self-concept, mathematical and geometric concepts, vocabulary recognition, attention strategies, and general intelligence. (Boehnlein, 1988)[10]

With the extensive research supporting the Montessori Method, Mountain Montessori Charter School has carefully crafted its program to meet each of the core tenants of the Montessori Method while also meeting or exceeding all of the state and local standards for education. By incorporating outdoor education into the traditional Montessori Classroom, Mountain Montessori Charter School creates a living classroom where learning is real, hands on, and tied to the small experiences and everyday adventures of a child's life.

Philosophy of Montessori Core Tenants: Multi-Age Classrooms

In the Montessori Method, classes have a vertical age structure, spanning three years, beginning at age three. Initially, Mountain Montessori Charter School will offer two Primary classrooms (preschool/Kindergarten) for students ages three (3) to five (5) years; two Lower Elementary classrooms of grades 1 through 3; and an Upper Elementary classroom of grades 4 – 6. It is projected Mountain Montessori Charter School will expand to include a Middle School classroom of grades 7 – 8 in year 3. At full build-out in year 5, it is projected there will be 2 Primary, 2 Lower Elementary, 1 Upper Elementary, and 1 Middle School classrooms.

The benefits of mixed age classrooms are many. Younger children have the opportunity to learn by observation and absorption through observing the work of older children. Younger students are challenged and stretched by the more advanced academic learning of their peers. They learn how to interact socially, modeling behavior off of the more mature students and observing the progression of learning. Older children have opportunities to teach the younger ones, thereby acquiring a greater depth of understanding as well as greater confidence and competence. Teaching their younger peers, older students develop leadership skills and a voice. In these multi-age classrooms, all students naturally develop social skills that are much more difficult to hone in the traditional classroom. Students must learn to effectively communicate, negotiate, self-monitor, and collaborate to be successful.

In addition to the academic and social growth provided by multi-age classrooms, these same classrooms also serve as small communities. By spending three years in the same classroom, strong relationships are formed between

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[8] Miller, L., & Medley, S. (1984). *Preschool intervention: Fifteen years of research*. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Ontario.
http://www.montessori.org

[9] Chattin-McNichols, John. (1992). What does research say about Montessori? In Margaret Howard Loefller (Ed.), *Montessori in contemporary American culture* (pp. 69-100). Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books. http//www.montessori.org

[10] Boehnlein, Mary Maher. (1990). Research and evaluation summary of Montessori programs. In Implementing Montessori education in the public sector. Cleveland, Ohio: NAMTA. http:/www.montessori.org

teacher, student, and families. Throughout their multiple years in each class, families come to know one another by volunteering, participating in school events, and the friendships formed between their students. Teachers know each child at a much more profound level than in the traditional classroom, having an extended view of the child's social, emotional, and cognitive development over the years. That in-depth knowledge of each student combined with the time spent together allows teachers to relate to families on a deeper level.

Philosophy of Montessori Core Tenants: Guided Choice of Learning Activities

The Montessori Method is child-centered and allows an unfolding of each child in an atmosphere of cooperation. The role of a Montessori teacher is constructively guiding children in their learning which, in the traditional Montessori structure, happens through one-on-one or small group teaching followed by independent application of skills during Montessori work time (described below.) Montessori instruction differs from traditional instruction in that it rarely, if ever, addresses the whole group. Instead, teachers provide one-on-one or small group lessons. These lessons are specifically targeted to address the specific student's needs on the continuum of learning and provides for maximum differentiation as students only participate in the lessons that pertain to their learning needs. After each individual or small group lesson, students then move to individual exploration of the concept taught via resources provided by the prepared environment of the classroom (described below). Thus, students are allowed to immediately interact with and apply the knowledge they have just been taught. During the blocks of work time provided, a student may return to the same skill as often as necessary until he/she shows mastery. The Montessori teacher continually assesses the skill of each student through observation and tracks student progress. At Mountain Montessori, each student will have an individual work plan. Both the teacher and student prepare and oversee the work plan together to track progress on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.

Philosophy of Montessori Core Tenants: Uninterrupted Blocks of Work Time

Along with the concept of guided choice of learning activities comes another key Montessori philosophy which is that of uninterrupted blocks of work time. It is during these extended blocks of work time that one-on-one and small group instruction takes place. However, in addition to instruction, students use blocks of work time to explore and interact with the concepts they have just learned, or with those that they have been working on for some time. The Montessori teacher, when not engaged in instruction with small groups of students, circulates the classroom providing guidance and assistance to students as needed, differentiating for each learner and recording observations on where each student is with his/her mastery of the content at hand. At MMCS, teachers implement a variety of observational tools (see Appendices B1, B2) in addition to each student's individual work plans to measure mastery. In traditional non-Montessori classrooms, learning often follows a routine of whole group lesson followed by whole group practice and only allows for individual application in homework - removed

from the classroom. In the Montessori structure, student learning becomes a "flow" experience. The extended blocks of work time allow for continual self-construction of learning on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis for the duration of the program.

Philosophy of Montessori Core Tenants: Prepared Environments for Learning

In order facilitate the type of guided learning and "flow" described above, a very intentional environment must be created. Montessori programs create space for learning through what are referred to as "prepared environments". In these prepared environments, Montessori students are provided with intentionally selected tools and concrete materials (see Appendix O for suggested list of materials) which isolate important concepts and skills on which students are working to gain mastery. The genius behind Montessori tools is each tool isolates a key skill and possesses a built-in "control of error", that is, the student is able to judge upon completing an activity whether he or she has done it correctly without input from the teacher.

For example, a preschooler practicing the key skill of dressing him/herself may be provided with a frame covered in cloth with five buttons on one side and five holes on the other side. If the child can fit each button into a matching hole, he/she knows that the activity has been completed correctly. If, however, there is an extra button or extra hole, the child can revisit the activity as many times as needed to get it right. [11] In Montessori terminology, this specified focus on one key skill is known as "isolation of difficulty".

Incorporating "isolation of difficulty" into learning allows for a number of benefits to the student. As mentioned in the example above, the materials students use allow them to self-check and self-correct making learning an exploration, rather than rote skills to be memorized. The ability of multiple students in the class to be working on multiple activities at the same time and simultaneously at their own pace, allows for differentiation down to the individual level - something difficult to achieve in a non-Montessori classroom. It also allows for the teacher to circulate the room, observing the students, making notes on their learning, and providing extra assistance or guidance as needed.

Additionally, in whole-group instruction or whole-group practice, it may be difficult to identify which child does not understand one specific concept. Often error is not recognized until a child completes his or her homework, turns it into the teacher, and has it graded. Only then, 24 hours or more after the child has done his/her work, does the teacher identify a misunderstanding. In the Montessori prepared environments with each child working on his/her own concept, it become immediately obvious if a student is struggling or confused and the teacher may intervene in that moment to assist in learning.

[11] http://amshq.org/Montessori-Education/Introduction-to-Montessori/Montessori-Learning-Materials

By implementing the above instructional structures, Mountain Montessori Charter School creates an environment in which every child is challenged at an appropriate level and learning happens naturally. At MMCS, we also realize the importance of documenting this learning and ensuring that every child meets or exceeds the standards and goals required for success both in and outside of the classroom.

Philosophy of Montessori Core Tenants: Outdoor Environment

"When the child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them up in cupboards." - Dr. Maria Montessori

A key feature that makes Mountain Montessori Charter School such a unique learning environment is the creation of a unique outdoor environment. The school will be located on 3-4 acres that will accommodate our vision for an Outdoor Classroom. It's easy to think of this as a progressive new idea, but it's actually rooted in a 100-year-old philosophy. Dr. Montessori was an early proponent of experiential learning and considered the outdoor environment a natural extension of the classroom. Her vision for schools was always a combination of indoor and outdoor classrooms as a way to study the interconnectedness of all things. Dr. Montessori had deep reverence for the natural world and believed we develop an understanding of self when we understand the interconnectedness of all things— that true respect for self grows together with deep respect for others and for nature. It also supports the whole child—body, mind, and soul—and promotes respect for all living things.

Capitalizing on the Montessori belief that children enjoy outdoor learning environments created to inspire imagination and the excitement found in nature, the MMCS Outdoor classroom will consist of garden areas, a greenhouse, compost, walking paths, sand box, mud pie kitchen, outdoor musical instruments, fruit trees, and a barn that houses goats and chickens. Our students will benefit from the on-site Learning Farm, where they will be taught farm education, animal husbandry, wood working skills, and lessons on gardening, food, and health.

Educational Program: Curriculum

Mountain Montessori Charter School will encompass and align both Montessori curriculum and Colorado Academic Standards. The Colorado Montessori Association (CMA) has provided curriculum alignment materials for grades K-6 that they developed by bringing together Montessori educators and advocates throughout Colorado during 2012 and 2013. A sample alignment for each elementary level can be found in Appendices C1 - C3. MMCS will use these CMA standards as the basis for K-6 curriculum during the first year of operation.

During the start-up year prior to the school opening, significant professional development time will be dedicated to refining and perfecting these standards to ensure a full and detailed alignment within one year of Mountain Montessori opening its doors. For more information on this professional development work, please see the Professional Development section of the application for further details. MMCS will also update and re-evaluate its curriculum yearly based on input from test results and school audits.

If authorized by the CSI, Mountain Montessori Charter School will open in the fall of 2016 with pre/K through 6th grades. MMCS requests to reserve the right to add/grow the school in future years, if the need is prevalent to do so. Based upon current enrollment projections, it is anticipated MMCS will have enough students progressing from Upper Elementary into Middle School grades by the fall of 2019 in Year 3 of operation.

The Montessori Curriculum

Montessori curriculum as a whole is developmental and interdisciplinary. It is structured to unify the study of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. Studies of literature, mathematics, fine arts, writing, history, social studies, civics, economics, and sciences all complement one another. Further, Montessori curriculum is designed to match the developmental needs of children at progressive stages of maturity (Appendix C4, The Montessori Curriculum Matrix). The curriculum is embedded within a learning environment that has been specially prepared to meet the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of children regardless of where they fall within the various stages of development. At Mountain Montessori Charter School, those stages will include the Primary classroom (preschool - Kindergarten), Lower Elementary classrooms (grades 1 - 3), Upper Elementary classroom (grades 4 - 6) and Middles School (grades 7 - 8).

The Primary Classroom (Preschool/Kindergarten)

Children in the Primary program possess what Dr. Montessori called the *absorbent mind*, the ability to absorb all aspects of one's culture and environment without effort or fatigue. The child is introduced first to "small" ideas that gradually widen into larger concepts. Self-correcting materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves,

and children choose their work from one of several distinct areas within the classroom. The classroom becomes a "living room" for children. Children choose their work and they work in specific work areas. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, from distracted to focused, through work in the environment. The process occurs though repeated work with materials that captivate the child's attention. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulatives are viewed as "materials for development."

The areas of activity described below constitute the prepared environment intended to cultivate a child's ability to express him/herself and think with clarity. These descriptions were drawn from the core preschool program of the North American Montessori Teachers Association[12].

- **Practical life** enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.
- The **sensorial** area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, etc.
- **Mathematics** makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- **Language arts** include oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, alphabet cut-outs, and various presentations allowing children to link sounds and letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through writing.
- **Cultural** activities expose the child to basics in geography, history, and life sciences. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

The preschool/K environment unifies the psycho-social, physical, and academic functioning of the child. It provides students with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security and a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, a habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career.

[12] http://www.montessori-namta.org/The-Montessori-Preschool-Program

Half day vs. Full Day

The Primary program offers two options of instruction: half day and full day, both five days per week. The classroom set-up and daily class schedule are designed to allow for half-day students and full day students without interruption. Since Kindergarten is the culmination year of synthesizing all of the lessons from the first two year of preschool, families will be encouraged to enroll Kindergarten students full-time to capitalize on this critical learning development. Full-day Kindergarten is especially important for newly enrolled students, in particular, for those students without prior Montessori experience. The extra time in school allows students to adjust to Montessori methods. Regardless of choice, half-day Kindergarten students will be accommodated.

The Montessori Elementary Program

The elementary program offers a continuum built on the preschool/K experience. As in the preschool/K, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. They are intended to evoke the imagination, to aid abstraction, to generate a world view about the human task and purpose. The child works within a philosophical system asking questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences, and so on. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science in the study of natural history and world ecology.

The Montessori Elementary Program is made up of connective narratives providing an inspiring overview of organizing and integrating "The Five Great Lessons." The Five Great Lessons span the history of the universe from the Big Bang Theory of the origin of the solar system, earth, and life forms to the emergence of human cultures and the rise of civilization. Aided by impressionistic charts and timelines, the child's study of the Great Lessons leads to awe and respect for the totality of knowledge.

Studies are integrated not only in terms of subject matter but in terms of moral learning as well, resulting in appreciation and respect for life, moral empathy, and a fundamental belief in progress, the contribution of the individual, the universality of the human condition, and the meaning of true justice. Integration of the arts, sciences, geography, history, and language evoke the native imagination and abstraction of the elementary child. A summary of The Five Great Lessons is as follows[13]:

The First Great Lesson: The Coming of the Universe and the Earth

The First Great Lesson tells the story of the beginning of the universe. Using props, the teacher describes how the universe and the earth came to be and how the continents and oceans first came together. Intended to be

[13] The Five Great Lessons of the Montessori Curriculum. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.montessoriforeveryone.com/The-Five-Great-Lessons_ep_66-1.html

engaging and captivating, this lesson provokes the student's imagination and encourages him/her to take a keen interest in learning.

Commonly, in the Montessori classroom this lesson incorporates:

- *Chemistry:* states of matter, changes, mixtures, reactions, elements, atoms, periodic table, compounds, molecules, chemical formulas, equations, lab work, and experimentation
- *Physics:* magnetism, electricity, gravity, energy, light, sound, heat, friction, motion, and experimentation.
- *Geology:* types of rocks, minerals, land forms, volcanoes, earthquakes, plate tectonics, ice ages, and eras of the earth
- *Astronomy:* solar system, stars, galaxies, comets, and constellations
- *Meteorology:* wind, currents, weather, fronts, erosion, water cycle, clouds and glaciers
- *Geography:* maps, globes, latitude/longitude, climates, land/water form names, and continent and country research.

The Second Great Lesson: The Coming of Life

The Second Great Lesson focuses on the coming of life. This lesson revolves around the Timeline of Life and illustrates this concept through a long chart with graphics and text to show the living beings of earth from microorganisms to dinosaurs.

Commonly, in the Montessori classroom this lesson incorporates:

- *Biology:* cells, organized groups five kingdoms, specimens, dissection, observation, and use of microscope
- *Botany:* study of plants, classification, functions, parts of plants (seed, fruit, leaf, stem, root, flower), and types of plants
- *Habitats:* location, characteristics, food chains/webs, symbiosis, adaptation, ecosystems, and conservation
- *Ancient Life:* eras of the earth, evolution, extinction, fossil records, and exaction
- *Animals:* classification, needs, similarities/differences, human systems, nutrition, hygiene
- *Monera, Protista, and Fungi Kingdoms*: what they are, classification & observation

The Third Great Lesson: The Coming of Human Beings

The Third Great Lesson is the Coming of Human Beings. This lesson revolves around the three gifts that make human beings special: a mind to imagine, a hand to do work, and a heart that can love.

Commonly, in the Montessori classroom this lesson incorporates:

- *History:* timelines, prehistory, ancient civilizations, world history, and history of specific countries and continents
- *Culture:* art, artists, music, composers, dance, drama, architecture, design, philosophy, religion and grace and courtesy
- *Social Studies:* current events, government, economics, commerce, volunteering & charity
- *Discoveries & Inventions:* scientists, inventors, scientific method, inventions, simple machines

The Fourth Great lesson: The Story of Writing

The Fourth Great Lesson is the Story of Writing, sometimes called Communication in Signs. This lesson focuses on the story of the development of the written alphabet from the early "alphabets" of hieroglyphics to writing today.

Commonly, in the Montessori classroom this lesson incorporates:

- *Reading:* literature, poetry, non-fiction, myths and folk tales, authors, reading comprehension, reading analysis, and literary terms
- *Writing:* elements of style, function, voice, composition, letter writing, research, and study 50 skills
- *Language:* origins of spoken language, foreign languages, history of languages, speech & drama.
- *Structure:* alphabets, bookmaking, grammar, punctuation, sentence analysis, word study, and figures of speech.

The Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers

The last of the lessons is the Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers, sometimes known as the History of Mathematics and covers the development of mathematics in various civilizations of the world. Commonly, in the Montessori classroom this lesson incorporates:

- *Mathematics:* operations, fractions, decimals, multiples, squares, cubes, percentages, ratios, probability, introduction to algebra

- *Numbers:* origins of numbers and systems, bases, types of numbers, scientific notation, and mathematicians.
- *Geometry:* congruency, similarity, nomenclature of lines, angles, shapes, solids, measurement, and theorems.
- *Application:* story problems, measurement, estimation, graphs, patterning, rounding, money

The Great Lessons as a Unifying Element in the Montessori Curriculum

The Five Great Lessons of the Montessori curriculum are used as a springboard for learning of all types of learning styles. The engaging nature of these dramatic lessons encourage Montessori students to want to learn more and the open ended questions these lessons provoke give a manner of allowing children to explore at their own pace while making the learning applicable and concrete. The Five Great Lessons are referenced frequently as new topics are introduced and unify all learning throughout the elementary curriculum.

The Montessori Curriculum and Content Areas

The elementary curriculum strongly emphasizes math and language, and then uses them thematically to study other subjects. Literature is an integrating link for all academic disciplines. Emphasis is on open-ended research and in-depth study using primary and secondary sources, as opposed to textbooks and other summaries.

Mathematics is initially taught with manipulative materials that demonstrate the interrelatedness of geometry, arithmetic, and algebra. Students must understand how to work with the manipulative materials, as well as, how their findings translate into accurate conventional math computations. Students identify relationships, theorems, and formulae themselves. In addition, they learn about the people who first made these discoveries. Manipulatives are an essential part of Montessori's materials as they allow students a very concrete way of internalizing concepts. Students eventually move away from the use of manipulatives (generally by upper elementary) when they are developmentally and intellectually ready to shift from more concrete to more abstract ways of thinking.

Language Arts emphasizes basic reading skills, using a combination of whole language, and phonetics. Early in the elementary program, students will be introduced to the mechanics of the English language, the etymology of words, syntax, and parts of speech with the aid of the Montessori materials. (See Appendix C5 for List of Recommended Montessori Materials). In addition to the written word, the language arts curriculum emphasizes other forms of communication, including debate, oral delivery, and group discussion. The Upper Elementary classroom is a literacy-rich environment with a strong language program. Daily activities include the following

elements: reading, written communication, oral communication and handwriting. In the Upper Elementary group, learning to read shifts to reading to learn, and reading becomes a primary source of information. Students read from a wide genre. Reading comprehension is enhanced with discussion circles and a variety of hands on activities. Grammar expands to include sentence analysis and advanced verb study, which supports developing writing skills. Written communication includes spelling, vocabulary development, writing, and research. The development of strong writing skills is an area of special focus, and students are supported in becoming confident, expressive, and fluent writers. Oral communication is developed through small group presentations, whole school addresses, and theatrical presentations with an emphasis on confident, clear delivery. Students continue to refine handwriting skills in print and cursive in addition to expanding their use of the keyboard.

Social Studies and Sciences integrate anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, economics, geography, geology, government, history, philosophy, physics, political science, and sociology rather than teaching them as separate subject matters. The Five Great Lessons set the stage so the child can see and understand the extent of human labor necessary to accomplish all that is here in the present. For example, biology instruction provides the nomenclature needed to structure and relate facts and processes in order to develop an ecological view of life and a feeling of responsibility for the environment. Geography is presented to illustrate the ways in which topography and landforms have affected the histories of peoples and their civilizations. The study of human civilizations focuses on the material and spiritual "fundamental needs": food, shelter, transportation, defense, clothing, art, religion, friendship, and character. The use of timelines, pictures, charts, and other visual aids supports the temporal sequences and the interrelationships of these disciplines.

In addition to traditional Montessori curricula, MMCS will be implementing a number of specials to enrich the child's learning environment:

- Outdoor Education via Outdoor Classroom and Yampatika (see appendix G "Mountain Montessori Proposal Yampatika")
- Performing Arts
- Spanish
- Physical Education

The Outdoor Classroom is an integral part of the MMCS curriculum at all levels, Primary through Middle School, and many subject areas such as science, language arts, music, art, and practical life.

At the Toddler Level:	Children go on walks around the campus, observing nature, finding frogs, plant life, making mud pies, and many exciting things. On nice days, students are invited to enjoy working outside and take in fresh air on nature walks around the campus. In the winter, children will have access to winter activities as well.
At the Primary Level:	Children enjoy outdoor learning environments created to inspire imagination and the excitement found in nature. Primary teachers regularly take small groups of children out to pot plants, weed and dig, water from the rain barrels, and fill birdfeeders. On nice days, students are invited to enjoy working outside on picnic tables and take in fresh air on nature walks around the campus.
At the Elementary Level:	Elementary students enjoy outdoor learning from each of the six kingdoms around campus. They will use gardens and greenhouse which they plant and tend to, to classify flowers and study the parts of a flower. They will also use their gardens to sketch flowers and study their parts, as a meeting place for discussion groups, and as a peaceful place to work. The children utilize the rest of campus for lessons in animal husbandry, soils, geology, natural resource management, and other extensive outdoor education possibilities.
At the Middle School Level:	The Adolescent community of the Middle School uses outdoor environments in a variety of ways to enhance their curriculum. Throughout the year, small groups use outdoor environments with science materials – for example, to measure dissolved oxygen in wetlands and streams. In their writing, they can use the environment to inspire poetry about nature. Our teachers are able to combine these hands-on experiences with lessons on science and nutrition. It creates a healthful, well-rounded learning opportunity for the children. The student engages in elements of farming as an economic enterprise through the care of plants and animals, the maintenance of simple machines, the understanding of land use, and the operations of accounting, sales, personnel records, and working relations in ongoing projects.

In addition to the Outdoor Classroom, MMCS plans to partner with Yamapatika, a local non-profit environmental education organization with the mission to inspire environmental stewardship through education. Yampatika has developed a place-based environmental literacy program (ELP) that reaches every K-5 public elementary school classroom in Routt County, Colorado. At present, Routt County is the only county in the state in which children have this opportunity. The program has grown from a pilot program in 2009, reaching 6 classrooms, to a well-established STEM-based curriculum delivery mechanism in 76 classrooms across three school districts. Year after year, evidence of effect has been well-documented through third party evaluation.

With 52% of its land in public hands, Routt County provides the ideal setting for place-based education. Whether our youth grow up to be public lands managers or simply recreational resource users, having a strong sense of environmental stewardship will help them make informed decisions about these public lands. In addition to the natural opportunity we have, there is an increasing need to continue to involve youth in active pursuits in the outdoors.

There is an increasing awareness at the local, state, and national levels about the need to integrate environmental education and outdoor experiences into our schools' curricula. At the federal level, the No Child Left Inside Act was introduced to advance environmental education in our nation's schools. Although the Act never passed, it did spark statewide efforts to develop environmental literacy plans. In December of 2012, the Colorado Department of Education passed the Colorado Environmental Education Plan. The plan, which enjoyed bipartisan support, seeks to connect students and teachers to environmental learning opportunities.

Yampatika proposes to work with Mountain Montessori Charter School to develop an age-appropriate, hands-on, inquiry based curriculum based on Yampatika's successful model for environmental literacy (See Appendix G1 for the full proposal). Curriculum would be developed in the summer of 2016 in preparation for a fall 2016 opening date. In the pilot year, programming would be delivered by a Yampatika Naturalist, in coordination with Mountain Montessori staff.

The current proposal for curriculum development and program delivery is relevant under the following assumptions:

1. Mountain Montessori's initial "grade levels" will consist of primary (pre-K), lower elementary (1-3), and upper elementary (4-6). Should a middle school grade level (7-8) be added, an additional proposal for services will be provided.
2. Programs will be age-appropriate, place-based and correlated to Colorado's Academic
3. Standards, Common Core and/or equivalent academic requirements.
4. Curriculum will be designed to meet the learning needs of the three grade levels noted above.
5. Student days will be roughly equivalent to the Steamboat Springs School District 2015-16 calendar in which there are 172 days.
6. Programs would be delivered to each grade level each day for 1-1.5 hours by a Yampatika Naturalist (~3-4.5 hours/day, ~12-18 hours/week).
7. Programs would be delivered Monday -Thursday and designed to complement the Friday Outdoor Excursion.
8. A Yampatika Naturalist would accompany the Friday Outdoor Excursion with the intention of providing curricular support to Mountain Montessori staff (~8 hours).
9. Any and all activities undertaken will be covered by Mountain Montessori's liability insurance.
10. Should travel be required, Mountain Montessori shall provide a vehicle and cover all transportation costs for students and the Yampatika Naturalist.
11. Should Mountain Montessori wish to enter into a contractual agreement with Yampatika for the services described in this proposal, a Memorandum of Understanding shall be crafted to define the scope of work, timeline and deliverables.

The Mountain Montessori Middle School Program

Peace, Grace and Courtesy, and Service Learning will be introduced in the beginning of the school year. Students will identify the pillars of a positive school community, and as the year continues they will actively work to uphold these pillars. Students will be educated on service projects that benefit the community such as organizing

fundraisers to benefit local and nonlocal non-profits, growing food for Lift Up Food Bank, and other student directed projects.

Practical Life and Micro-Economy lessons will be held regularly in the middle school and address issues of particular concern to middle school students. These lessons will include: standardized testing, community, conflict resolution, parent and family relations, smoking and drug awareness, dating, sexual education, and a variety of basic life skills (i.e. self-care, homecare, financial responsibility, social etiquette). The Micro-Economy allows students to plan, create, and run a business. The funds raised will benefit Middle School activities, fundraising to benefit our partnerships such as Integrated Community, Yampatika, Perry Mansfield, and future ME ventures. As students move through the Micro-Economy lessons, math, language arts, science, and social studies will be incorporated into the projects through creating appropriate and applicable business plans.

Language Arts will be integrated across the entire academic curriculum with a particular link to Social Sciences and International Studies. Students will continue to develop their individual skills and the crafting of language through vocabulary and word study; the reading process with a focus on comprehension and self-monitoring strategies; and reading applications with informational, technical, persuasive, and literal text. Students will explore and master their understanding of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, editing, conferencing, revising, and publishing. Students will learn a variety of writing applications, conventions, and research techniques. They develop oral, visual, and written communication through unique individual and group projects and will deliver informational and persuasive presentations.

Mathematics will be taught in small group lessons where each course of study will be matched with individual development needs. The math program will focus on projects integrated with other subjects. Students will focus on four critical areas, as standardized by Common Core Standards. These areas include:

- connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems
- completing understanding of division and fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers
- writing, interpreting and using expressions and equations
- develop understanding of statistical understanding

Science at MMCS is intended to be a discovery based program which integrates mathematics, reading, writing, and social sciences when possible. The central goal of the science program is to help each student develop an appreciation and understanding of the formal process of scientific inquiry. Experiments are performed and constructed by the students, and their detailed analyses are kept in a portfolio. Emphasis will be placed upon

observation, measurement, organization of data, and scientific inference. Our curriculum will include topics such as Chemistry, Geology, Geography, Botany, Biology, Microbiology, Zoology, Soil Science, etc.

Social and International Studies will develop and refine research and inquiry skills learned in the Elementary cultural lessons while emphasizing individual research and Modern History as well as international exploration. This program will have an integrated study of geography, history, and social and cultural studies. These lessons will be taught through impressionistic lessons, primary and secondary source readings, independent research, experiments, and class discussions.

Specials Programs will continue on a rotating, weekly schedule for Middle School Students. These programs will include:

- Outdoor Education
- Performing Arts
- Physical Ed
- Spanish

More information on these specials can be found in the Specials Program of this charter application.

Graduation Requirements and ICAP

MMCS has chosen to use a readymade curriculum to aid in our Individual Career and Academic Plan. Because the Steamboat Springs High School uses Naviance to guide and track students' through their career discovery, MMCS will begin students in Naviance in the 6th grade. This will allow continuity and easier integration into high school for students and teachers, making the transition to high school easier and more streamlined for students and staff. More information about Naviance can be found at http://www.naviance.com/

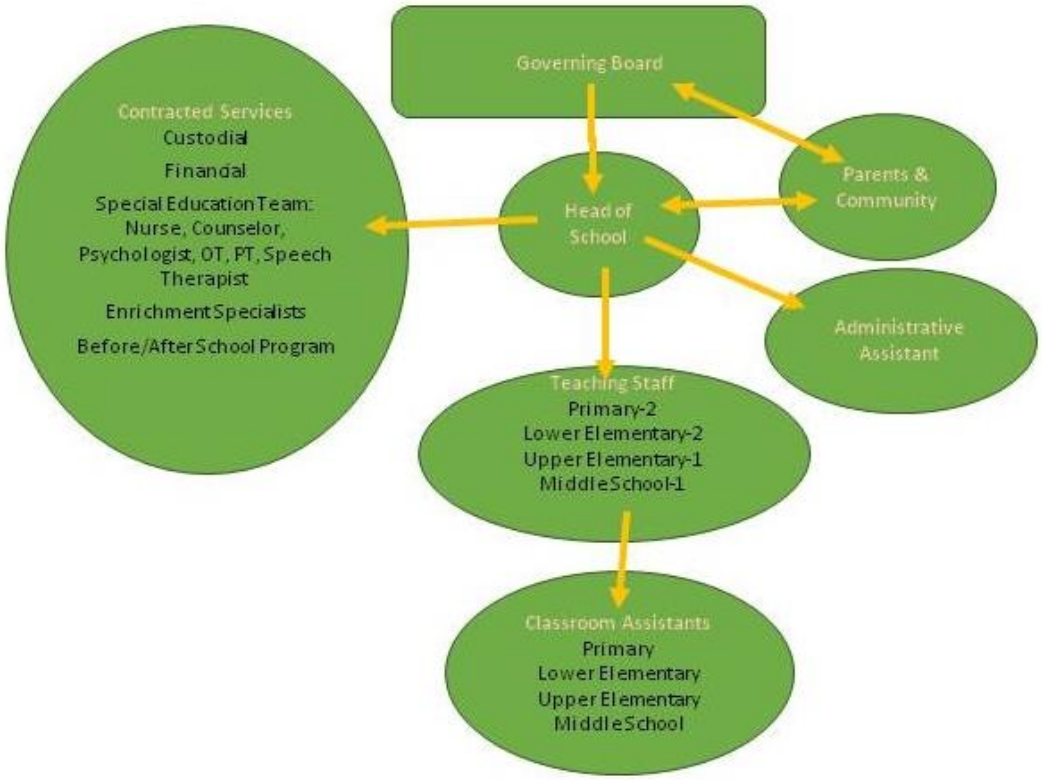
At the beginning of 6th grade, Students and parents will be informed of the MMCS graduation requirements as well as the district HS graduation requirements. Middle school students (grades 6-8) will complete the following graduation requirements:

1. Passing grades in each CORE class (Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies).
2. Complete and present Portfolio.
3. Fulfill the 8 hours community service requirement.
4. Payment of all student fees, including Library and lost book fees.

Educational Program: Organizational Structure for Instruction

Mountain Montessori Organizational Chart and Curriculum Implementation

In order to create and maintain a high quality charter school, MMCS plans to hire core staff and subcontract teaching staff for more specialized areas of expertise. For the first five years of operation, Mountain Montessori anticipates its organizational chart being as follows:



Hired Staff:

Head of School

Mountain Montessori's Head of School will responsible for and accountable to the Governing Board for all aspects of the school's operations, including enrollment, educational program, community relations, fiscal management, personnel management, and professional development as well as property management. These responsibilities will be administered in a manner consistent with the Montessori philosophy and in the best interest of the MMCS mission and vision. The Head of School will delegate responsibilities, provide appropriate leadership, and work with the Board, staff, parents and the community to effectively achieve the School's goals. The Head of School shall demonstrate intimate knowledge of the Montessori philosophy and a full working knowledge of educational and administrative responsibilities required for the position.

Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant will provide general assistance to the Head of School. He/she will run the front office and complete all procedural tasks in the areas of administration, finance, enrollment, and general clerical tasks. The Administrative Assistant reports directly to the Head of School, but works in close conjunction with both the Head of School and other staff.

Lead Teachers

Mountain Montessori's classroom lead teachers are responsible for the effective daily education of Mountain Montessori students. Classroom teachers will run organized, professional classrooms, monitor the learning of their students, and communicate regularly with students, parents, colleagues, and the greater Mountain Montessori community. One of the hired Lead Teachers will also possess the Director Qualified credential to oversee the Before and After School program. Classroom teachers are evaluated by the Head of School.

Teacher Assistants

Teacher Assistants aide the Lead Teacher in providing a warm, nurturing, and safe classroom environment. Teacher Assistants meet the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social needs of both the individual and the group in classroom environment. The assistant teacher reports to the Lead Teacher for the classroom he/she is assigned.

Spanish Teacher

At least one staff member hired on with MMCS will be fluent in Spanish. This teacher will be capable of assisting ELL students and the other MMCS staff. The Spanish teacher will also teach Spanish enrichment to all students and will assist all classes as necessary. The Spanish teacher will serve as a liaison to MMCS community partner, Integrated Community.

Contracted Services

Mountain Montessori Charter School recognizes the need to work with experts and specialists in order to fulfill its mission and vision. To accomplish this and to be fiscally responsible, MMCS will contract out specialized professionals.

Special Education Team

The Special Education Team will work along with Lead Teachers to develop IEPs as needed and to meet with faculty and offer support in students' educational needs. The Special Education Team will include the following licensed

professional subcontractors: School Psychologist, Counselor/Behaviorist, Nurse, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, and Special Education Consultant. The role and function of the Special Education Team is outlined in detail in the Serving Students with Special Needs section of the application. The Special Education Team reports to Head of School.

Naturalist Teacher

Formal outdoor education will be contracted via Yampatika. Yampatika will provide a Naturalist to teach age appropriate lessons on animal husbandry, botany, sustainability, and encourage a general love and respect for the earth in partnership with classroom Lead Teachers. This is further outlined in the Special Program section of the application. The Yampatika Naturalist reports to the Head of School.

Other Enrichment/Specials Teachers

Mountain Montessori Charter School is currently awaiting a proposal from Perry Mansfield to partner in offering Performing Arts Education as part of the school enrichment curriculum. This would be a contracted service for a fee. The Performing Arts enrichment is further detailed in the Special Program section of the application.

The Steamboat Springs community has an athletic culture and has produced many winter Olympic athletes as well as yoga teachers. Within the community, there is an abundant opportunity to recruit and hire an experienced physical education enrichment specialist. Mountain Montessori Charter School will subcontract a 1099 employee to teach our physical education classes. It is estimated this employee will work between eight and ten hours per week.

Before and After School Teacher

The student to teacher ratio for a Before/After School program is 10 students to 1 teacher. The teacher will be paid $12/hour and must have the qualifications outlined in Section 7.702.5 PERSONNEL, CDE RULES REGULATING CHILD CARE CENTERS (LESS THAN 24-HOUR CARE):

- All personnel must demonstrate an interest in and knowledge of children and concern for their proper care and well-being.
- A criminal record check request must be submitted to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation within 5 days that an individual is employed by the center.
- The personnel file of each staff member must contain clearance or arrest report from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation resulting from the staff member's criminal record check.

- Staff members must be current for all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by their health care provider.
- All staff members must submit to the center a medical statement, signed and dated by a licensed physician or other health care professional, verifying that they are in good mental, physical, and emotional health appropriate for the position for which they have been hired. This statement must be dated no more than 6 months prior to employment or within 30 days after the date of employment. This statement must indicate when subsequent medical statements are required. Subsequent medical statements must be submitted as required in writing by a physician or other health care professional.

Employment Policies

A DRAFT Employee Handbook is included in Appendix F9. The DRAFT Employee Handbook describes the relationship between the school and the employees.

Standards Based Montessori Instruction: The Montessori Method is built upon the belief that children possess an instinctive drive to learn. In the traditional Montessori classroom, the role of the teacher is to prepare the classroom environment so that it is rich in learning opportunities designed to teach key developmentally appropriate concepts and skills. In modern public education, it is the role of the state and local communities to lead in identifying those developmentally appropriate skills and concepts through state and local standards. These standards stand independent of the educational method used to achieve them. At Mountain Montessori Charter School, we carefully train our teachers and structure our classrooms to balance state and local standards with students' individual progress and developmental needs, thus creating a system in which students are not only held to the same academic standards as the rest of their peers across the state, but through which they are allowed to show mastery of these standards at their own pace.

Mountain Montessori's curriculum is both aligned to the current state standards as is demonstrated in Appendices C1 - C3 and frequently exceeds them. The observations tools are created to track progress through the aligned Mountain Montessori curricula, thus ensuring mastery of not only the state standards but the deeper Montessori curricula. The individualized and small group instruction of the Montessori classroom provides for greater differentiation of skill mastery than the traditional classroom. Not every child learns the same skill at the same rate and in the Montessori classroom, students are provided the time and space to grapple with concepts they find more difficult to master and allowed to move quickly through those concepts that come easily to them. Thus, rather than being a "one size (or one pace) fits all" classroom, differentiation is brought down to the individual level, something difficult to do in the traditional classroom. Students work through their investigations into learning at their own pace, tracked carefully by the teacher. Should a student begin to fall behind the teacher will then intervene providing additional support to help make progress to or above the grade level expectations but

while still allowing the student to explore and experience concepts via the prepared classroom, thus maintaining learning as an experience rather than simply a list of standards that must be checked off.

In many instances, the classic Montessori curriculum far exceeds the state, district, and Common Core Standards in terms of expectations for academic achievement. Mountain Montessori Charter School curriculum is built around the expectation that properly prepared, encouraged, and engaged students can meet and exceed both the minimal standards set by the district and the more rigorous expectations of the Montessori curricula while also investigating the world around them on a deeper level in accordance with their individual interests and abilities.

Differentiation for Every Child: In the traditional classroom, students receive instruction via a three-tiered system that is designed to meet the needs of every student. As explained on the Colorado Department of Education website:

> Tier I instruction includes high quality, research-based curricula and instructional strategies that support the district's curriculum guidelines. Tier I provides core instruction for all students…Tier II offers supplemental instruction in addition to the standards-based curriculum received in Tier I. The curriculum and instruction at Tier II is designed to meet the needs of students not progressing as expected in Tier I. Tier III instruction includes more explicit instruction that is focused on a specific skill need, whether that be an accelerated need or a remedial need. (Colorado Department of Education)[14]

In the Montessori classroom, *all* students receive the equivalent of Tier III intervention or, in other words, maximum differentiation. The small group and individualized instruction of the Montessori classroom ensures that every child is working on concepts specifically geared toward his/her level of mastery of that concept. The teacher, in working with each student or small group is able to monitor and adjust the instruction to address the needs of the individual or small group at hand and then, once the student is on track and working toward his or her next goal, the teacher moves on and addresses the next student or group of students at the same personal level. Additionally, the multi-age classroom gives students the chance to learn from one another and feel part of a fluid community. A student requiring accelerated instruction reading, for example, might join the older students in the classroom for reading activities while the same student, finding math more challenging, might stay with his peers or even work with some of the younger students in class for math-related activities. With the constant shifting of small group activities on an as-needed basis, students avoid being pigeon-holed into ability groups or always working with the same students considered to be on the same academic level as them. Rather, they move fluidly to the group or activity which is most individually appropriate for their level of mastery at that specific moment in time aided, as always, by the classroom teacher and the Montessori progress monitoring tools.

[14] Colorado's Six Components of RtI. (n.d.). Retrieved October 26, 2014.

Educational Program: Special Programs

MMCS will offer a variety of unique, quality special programs using contracted services from local community agencies. From the start, we will offer Outdoor Education, Physical Education, Performing Arts, and Spanish programs for all students. We will also add International Studies as a supporting elective for Middle School Social Studies in Year 3. MMCS will address the Colorado State Standards for each subject, and will incorporate relative, thematic curriculum based on what the students are learning at that time, when appropriate. As the school grows and matures, other special programs will be integrated as is fitting for the budget and availability. Specials scheduling will be conducted on a weekly, rotating list and will assist in giving teachers planning and preparation periods and/or lunch hours. Specials teachers will be available every day for one hour per class per week. Teacher assistants may be used during these specials classes to keep an optimum ratio as multiple classes may be combined together. A detailed schedule including the specials rotations can be found in Appendix J3.

Outdoor Education (OE): Outdoor Education will be used extensively at all levels both formally by partnering with Yampatika, and informally by teachers of MMCS and for all major subjects. Students will utilize the greenhouse, garden beds, and materials such as a Tower Garden (http://www.towergarden.com/) to grow produce that will be harvested for school consumption and can be sold and/or donated to the local community as part of Community Service Learning projects and a Micro-economy for the Middle School. OE will also include a contracted service through Yampatika. Yampatika has developed a place-based environmental literacy program (ELP) that reaches every K-5 public elementary school classroom in Routt County, Colorado. At present, Routt County is the only county in the state in which children have this opportunity. The proposal for partnership with Yampatika is located in Appendix G1.

Physical Education: The ultimate goal of Physical Education is to assist all children along the path to a lifetime of physical fitness. The focus of this class will include health, positive body image, body awareness, and increasing focus and concentration. MMCS will achieve this by incorporating Yoga, locomotor and axial movement skills, cooperative games, teamwork, movement, and athletic skills. MMCS plans to eventually include snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and other outdoor winter activities unique to our ski town culture to our physical education curriculum once funding allows for equipment.

Performing Arts: The arts teach us how to make judgments in the absence of rules; they also teach us that goals are best held with flexibility and that some activities are self-justifying.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Engaging_Arts.pdf

The MMCS performing arts piece is designed to expand the abilities of students to understand others and communicate through language and action. Theater activities will require students to take risks, plan, make decisions, and develop a focused awareness of who and what is around them. Dance, music, improvisation, storytelling, play making, playwriting, directing, management, design, and technical theater will all be used to enrich the classroom experience. MMCS is currently awaiting a proposal from Perry Mansfield and The Chief Theater to contract for services.

Spanish: Mountain Montessori Charter School will offer Spanish to students beginning in Primary years. The Spanish program will be designed to enable students to speak and write their basic thoughts and questions in Spanish by their 4th year. In addition to in school lessons, Middle School students will be given the opportunity to travel abroad via a student travel aid such as World Strides International Discovery http://id.educationaltravel.com/ws/itinerary/YPU/Discover-Costa-Rica/?t_year=2016. MMCS will partner with Integrated Community, a local non-profit agency serving immigrants, to further staff our Spanish classes, and is currently awaiting a proposal.

Before & After School Care

Mountain Montessori Charter School acknowledges the needs of the school community to have before and after school care available in a safe and trusted environment. The MMCS before school program is designed to offer working parents/legal guardians an opportunity to have safe childcare prior to school starting. Before school care begins at 7:30 am and goes until the start of school. Before school care is available to families Monday through Friday. The before school care program is flexible to cater to family needs as is outlined in the fee schedule in the Budget and Finance section of the application.

The MMCS after school program is designed to offer childcare for working families after school. After school care begins at 3:30 pm and ends at 6:00 pm. After school care is available to families Monday through Friday. The cost of the program varies depending upon need. The fee schedule is outlined in the Budget and Finance section of the application. In addition to the after school program, afterschool clubs will be offered quarterly to offer additional enrichment to students. These clubs include Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and others to be determined. The clubs will be led by either staff members or community volunteers. Fees will be associated with each club to offset expenses to the school, including staffing and supplies/materials. The Before and After School Care will be licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Childcare Licenses and will adhere to all of the rules and regulations required for childcare centers. The entire Before and After School Care program will be overseen by a Director Qualified staff member, most likely one of the Primary Lead Teachers.

Educational Program: Calendar & Daily Schedule

As per C.R.S. § 22-33-104 et. seq. and 22-32-109(1)(n)(I-II)(A&B), Mountain Montessori Charter School calendar and school schedule exceed the state requirement, which is 1,056 hours for secondary students and 968 hours for elementary students. Students enrolled in the Lower and Upper Elementary programs will receive formal academic seat time of 1,100.25 hours over 163 school days. The school calendar was created with the input and feedback of potential families who expressed their intent to enroll their children into Mountain Montessori Charter School. The Steering Committee created a school calendar survey for families to complete (See Appendix J1). It is with the feedback and adhering to state law that our calendar and school schedule were created.

A Day in the Life of Mountain Montessori

8:00 am

Upon arrival, students will be welcomed to school and have time to settle in for the day.

8:15am

Students will be directed to their classrooms for line time, where teachers will give a daily lesson, address the calendar, weather, topics of discussion, etc.

8:30am

Students will begin their three hour work cycle which is to be uninterrupted. Teachers will offer individual lessons to those who need them, and observe students in their environment.

11:30am

Students will break for lunch. Lunch and recess will be monitored by parent volunteers and/or administrative staff, and/or teaching staff on a rotating schedule. During lunch/recess and rotating specials, teaching staff will have out of class time to prep materials. *MMCS intentionally chooses to have a longer lunch time in adherence with Montessori philosophy to develop social graces and practical life skills. Montessori meals are incorporated into the curriculum and this is a time to learn and practice table settings, food prep, clean up, conversation skills, etc.* Preschool students will have lunch in the preschool classroom, on designated lunch tables. Lower and upper elementary students will have lunch together.

12:15pm

½ day preschool/Kindergarten student pick up.

Outside/recess time for full day students.

1:00pm

Rotating special classes, i.e. outdoor education, Spanish, performing arts, P.E., etc.

2:15pm

Classes will return to classrooms for a lesson.

3:15pm

Daily classroom care & clean up.

3:30pm

End of school day

The entire school day is composed of 6.75 hours of formal seat time, excluding the 45 minute lunch recess, mid-day.

Mountain Montessori Charter School

School Calendar 2016/2017

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY

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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

MARCH

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			1	2	3	4
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

MAY

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28	29	30	31			

JUNE

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25	26	27	28	29	30	

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

First Day for Staff – August 1	Martin Luther King Jr. Day/No School- Jan 16
First day for students- September 6	Mid-winter Break/No School- February 7-10
Staff development days/No School- Nov 1, Dec 19, February 6, April 1	Memorial Day/No School- May 29
Conferences/No School- Nov 18, March 17	Spring Break/No School - April 18-21
Thanksgiving Break/No School- Nov 21-25	Students' last day- June 1
Winter Break/No School- December 20-30	Teachers' last day- June 2

Educational Program: Professional Development

Teacher Quality Mountain Montessori believes that high teacher quality begins with a strong hiring process. Due to our relatively unique location in a largely rural area of the Rocky Mountains, Mountain Montessori will have to consistently and actively recruit highly qualified teacher candidates. To help guide us in this process, we created a Lead Teacher job description that can be found in Appendix L1. As with the Head of School position, Mountain Montessori will advertise the position locally via resources such as local newspapers, the Steamboat Springs District job board, the Colorado Montessori Association website, the Colorado League of Charter Schools website, and Colorado education job fairs. Additionally, Mountain Montessori will actively cultivate relationships with local teacher education entities including but not limited to:

- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Colorado, Denver
- University of Denver
- University of Northern Colorado
- Colorado State University
- Metropolitan State University
- The Montessori Institute
- Montessori Centre International of Denver
- Endicott College and partner schools
- Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR in Boulder, CO)
- Or any other qualified Montessori training to be considered case by case by the MMCS Governing Board and Head of School

Great instruction begins with great teachers, and Mountain Montessori takes teacher recruitment and selection very seriously. Outlined below are teaching staff qualifications and requirements.

Lead Teacher Qualifications and Requirements

The minimum qualifications for Mountain Montessori Lead Teachers include:

- A Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university
- AMS/AMI or other qualifying Montessori certification at the appropriate grade level
- Meets all the ESEA requirements for "highly qualified"
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong interpersonal skills with both children and adults
- Ability to work collaboratively
- Strong self-starter; able to work with limited direction
- Entrepreneurial outlook and charter school commitment

In addition to the above qualifications, the ideal Mountain Montessori Lead Teacher will also possess the following preferred qualifications:

- 3+ years of experience in a Montessori classroom
- Experience in the charter school system
- Leadership experience in an educational setting

Upon hire, the Head of School will be responsible for hiring MMCS teaching staff and support staff in partnership with the Governing Board. In this process, the two will work together to create job descriptions and performance evaluations for the Assistant Teacher positions, the Specials/Enrichment staff and the Special Education Team.

Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Specials/Enrichment Staff Interview Process

For the first year of operation, teacher hiring will be completed by the Head of School and the Executive Committee of the Governing Board. In subsequent years, teacher hiring will be completed by an interview committee comprised of the Head of School, current Mountain Montessori teachers, and at least one parent. Prospective teachers at Mountain Montessori will undergo a highly rigorous hiring process which will include the following steps:

- Receipt and review of completed application, resume, cover letter and references
- Phone screen
- Orientation information to learn more about the school mission/vision, philosophy, schedule, student population, and teacher expectations
- Classroom observation and debrief – (this activity has two goals: test the candidate's observational skills, and expose the candidate to our educational model)
- Demonstration lesson (this activity has two goals: test the candidate's instructional skills, and ability to receive constructive feedback)
- Written prompt on a relevant topic (the observation, educational philosophy, or planning a lesson/unit)
- Formal interview with Head of School and Executive Committee
- Reference check
- Clear criminal background clearance

During the formal interview aspect of the interview, candidates will be provided with a standard packet of information that provides all key details about employment at Mountain Montessori including, but not limited to the Mountain Montessori Educational Philosophy, instructional norms and expectations, benefits and pay scales and the definition of at-will employment.

Upon charter authorization, Mountain Montessori Charter School anticipates opening the fall of 2016 with a potential student enrollment of 126 students and the following staffing plan for teachers:

Classroom	Teacher(s)	Assistant(s)
Primary	**2**	**2**
Lower Elementary	**2**	**2**
Upper Elementary	**1**	**1/2**
Specials/Enrichment Instructors: Yampatika, P.E., Performing Arts, Spanish	**4**	**N/A**
Before and After School Care (assumption of 10 children)	**1**	**N/A**
Special Education Team: Psychologist, Counselor, OT, PT, Speech, Nurse	**6**	**N/A**

Professional Development & Training

Given Mountain Montessori Charter School is located in a rural area, the best opportunity to maximize quality ongoing professional development is to bring the training and professional development to our community. In doing so, MMCS will save on travel and training registration expenses for multiple people. The following are professional development opportunities planned:

1. Schedule and offer Montessori education, training and certification to hired teachers through the North American Montessori Center http://www.montessoritraining.net/?gclid=CjwKEAiAmuCnBRCLj4D7nMWqp1USJABcT4df8EReEhXgv5VYBH0Co2dSirb54MlLIcIKv6KTDVk2uxoCD7_w_wcB. The estimated cost of this training varies by the certification program for Primary Teachers, Lower Elementary Teacher and Upper Elementary Teachers. For Primary Teachers, the cost is $2200. The cost for Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary Teachers is $3000. This training will be offered to non-Montessori certified teachers and qualified assistants who desire to be Montessori certified. Mountain Montessori Charter School will pay for the entire training in exchange for a committed three year exclusive teaching contract with MMCS. Should a teacher be unable to fulfill the teaching contract, he/she will be required to pay for the training that was provided to him/her, prorated based upon the amount of time the exclusive teaching contract was fulfilled. Further, MMCS will research and communicate other Montessori training opportunities that have scholarships available for teachers to pursue http://amshq.org/About-AMS/What-We-Are-Doing/Awards-and-Grants/Teacher-Education-Scholarships . Of the potential Lead Teacher applicant pool, it is estimated that three (3) of the five (5) teachers will already have the required Montessori education for the appropriate level of classroom instruction.
2. Schedule Montessori training Consultant, Betsy Hoke twice a year to facilitate classroom observations and provide teacher training and mentoring (www.mentoringmontessori.com). See Appendix I for the consulting proposal.
3. The Head of School and the Governing Board will be responsible for continually researching professional development opportunities that align with MMCS mission and vision. Every professional development opportunity will look to maximize reducing costs by either by bringing the training/development opportunity to Steamboat and making use of technology through online training/webinars.

As indicated above, professional development initiatives and focus at Mountain Montessori will be based off of data collected and analyzed by the Head of School. With the Governing Board's approval, the Head of School will drive professional development decisions and identify required resources and training. The data used to identify professional development needs will include:

- student achievement data through standardized test scores
- in-house formative and summative assessments
- needs identified by student achievement data
- teacher evaluations
- the annual school report

Initial professional development trainings to be completed during Mountain Montessori's first year of operation include but are not limited to:

Pre-Opening of Mountain Montessori

- Mountain Montessori: Mission and Vision (Who are we? How were we founded? What our mission and vision means for the daily lives of students and teachers.)
- Nuts and Bolts of Working at Mountain Montessori (logistics, organizational structure, job descriptions, etc,)

- Instructional Norms: How we Teach at Mountain Montessori
- Student Information System and Technology Training

Ongoing

- Curricular development and alignment
- Assessment and data tracking development and alignment
- Montessori specific workshops and conferences

As quality instruction is key to a quality education, Mountain Montessori's annual calendar allots a significant amount of time for teachers to improve their instructional practice. Annually, the calendar provides two weeks/10 business days of pre-service training to teachers. During the first year of operation, one month will be provided to fully prepare staff for the opening year. This time will be used to train all Mountain Montessori teachers in the systems, routines, expectations and responsibilities of Mountain Montessori Charter School. In subsequent years, the pre-service time will be divided between returning teachers and teachers new to Mountain Montessori. New teachers will report two weeks previous to returning staff in order to receive a thorough orientation to the school. Returning staff will then join the group two weeks prior to the first day of school, and the focus will then shift to that school year's instructional - academic focus and expectations. In the course of the school year, Mountain Montessori has set aside regular times for teachers and administration to meet for ongoing professional development. These times include:

- **Daily Teacher Planning:**
  Daily, between the hours of 11:30 am and 2:15 pm time will be used by Mountain Montessori teachers to develop, refine, and ensure implementation of a viable curriculum. A rotation schedule will be created for teachers and staff to share the rotating responsibility of monitoring lunch and recess as well as possibly teaching a special/enrichment class. When a teacher is not scheduled for the rotating responsibilities, he/she will have dedicated teacher prep time. The focus of these work times will include but not be limited to: vertical and horizontal alignment, data analysis, curricular work sessions and preparing Montessori materials.
- **Professional Development Days**:
  In addition to daily planning time, the annual calendar provides for 4 professional development days. These days are intended to provide teachers with the additional training they need in order to continually improve their instructional practice. Topics to be covered on professional development days will include but not be limited to: Montessori-specific initiatives, school-wide instructional initiatives, data and data tracking trainings, and outside professional development. The Head of School, with approval of the Governing Board, will strive to bring professional development opportunities to Steamboat to minimize expenses.

Staff Evaluation

Mountain Montessori Charter School will follow the CDE Quality Standards for Principals and Teachers as outlined in the Rubrics for Principal Evaluation (Appendix K1) and for Teacher Evaluations (Appendix L2).

Section E: Serving Students with Special Needs

Special Education in the Montessori Classroom

In the Montessori classroom, *all* students receive the equivalent of Tier III intervention or, in other words, maximum differentiation. The small group and individualized instruction of the Montessori classroom ensures that every child is working on concepts specifically geared toward his/her level of mastery of that concept. The teacher, in working with each student or small group is able to monitor and adjust the instruction to address the needs of the individual or small group at hand and then, once the student is on track and working toward his or her next goal, the teacher moves on and addresses the next student or group of students at the same personal level. Additionally, the multi-age classroom gives students the chance to learn from one another and feel part of a fluid community. A student requiring accelerated instruction reading, for example, might join the older students in the classroom for reading activities while the same student, finding math more challenging, might stay with his peers or even work with some of the younger students in class for math-related activities. With the constant shifting of small group activities on an as-needed basis, students avoid being pigeon-holed into ability groups or always working with the same students considered to be on the same academic level as them. Rather, they move fluidly to the group or activity which is most individually appropriate for their level of mastery at that specific moment in time aided, as always, by the classroom teacher and the Montessori progress monitoring tools.

Dr. Montessori has stated that her work is founded on a "science that transforms the personality". She began her work with children at a mental asylum in Rome and observed that these children were hungry for meaningful activity. She developed a method of education that successfully enabled children who were considered uneducable to learn new skills and increase their level of competence. The individualized approach and the prepared environment developed by Dr. Montessori is the same approach used today in Montessori environments. This method can benefit children with or without disabilities academically, emotionally, and socially (reference Implementing Montessori Education in the Public Sector, 1990 p.273). Because the Montessori method can benefit children with or without disabilities and because the culture of community is inherent within a Montessori school and classrooms, inclusion of students with special needs is viewed as natural and necessary. There are many benefits of full inclusion including:

- Students with special needs have greater access to the curriculum
- Meaningful relationships are created among children with special needs and their typically developing peers
- Increased achievement
- Higher expectations for students with special needs than in non-inclusive settings
- All students receive the opportunity to be prepared for life in an inclusive society

- Increased communication between school staff
- Increased school community of understanding and acceptance of diversity (*Tomorrow's Child,* "An Invitation to Inclusion," April, 2014, pp. 28-36.)

The Montessori Method of education is well suited to serving a variety of students who fall within the spectrum of "special needs," from those individuals requiring Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to Gifted and Talented students. Montessori embodies techniques that work well for most students. In particular, the Montessori approach of allowing students to learn independently and at their own pace ensures that students can work at a variety of levels, and yet still be in social and educational settings with their peers. This keeps both the advanced and the challenged learners from feeling ostracized from their friends or treated as an extra responsibility by the teaching staff. Montessori teachers follow students through a three-year cycle, getting to know individual learning styles. This allows the teacher to introduce new levels of challenges in a child's studies, and in the case of children with IEPs or 504 plans, keeps children on track without having to go through a "starting over" phase each year as a new teacher is introduced to their particular learning challenges.

Based upon the most current demographic data provided to the Colorado Department of Education by Steamboat Springs School District RE-2, approximately 11% of the elementary school aged student population receives special education services. Mirroring this data, MMCS anticipates 12% of its student population will need such services in year one. As the school continues to operate, it is anticipated this need will grow up to 17% by year five.

Mountain Montessori Charter School understands the responsibility to serve all students and is committed to serving students with exceptional needs. In fact, because MMCS is designed to offer innovative educational strategies, we are uniquely situated to provide individualized support to meet the needs of students with disabilities and other unique challenges. Following the guidance of North Routt Community Charter School (NRCCS) to deduct a certain dollar amount from allocated PPR, MMCS will allocate $800 per student to be designated as Special Education Services as an expense. To ensure MMCS has adequate resources for special needs children, at the end of the each school year all unused funds for Special Education Services will be placed in a restricted Special Education Services reserve for future need/use.

Special Education Team

MMCS will provide special education services via Special Education Team. The Special Education Team consists of contracted, licensed professionals who will serve students with special needs who fall in the Tier 2 category. The

budget line item of Special Education Services is funded by allocating $800 of PPR funding and is used to pay for the Special Education Team and corresponding services. The Special Education Team includes:

- Licensed School Psychologist
- Licensed Counselor/Behavior Specialist
- Licensed Nurse
- Licensed Physical Therapist
- Licensed Occupational Therapist
- Licensed Speech Therapist
- Special Education Consultant (SPED)

MMCS chooses to follow the detailed Health Plan aligning to legal requirements to support the unique needs of MMCS' student population that was developed by the Colorado Department of Education. The entire plan can be found in Appendix M. Further, MMCS plans to contract with the Northwest Colorado Visiting Nurses Association (NWCOVNA) for a licensed registered nurse to provide for MMCS health needs. The proposed contract between MMCS and NWCOVNA is included in Appendix M.

Identification of Students with Special Needs

Upon the initiation of the Head of School, Lead Teacher, Teacher Assistant or parent/legal guardian a child identified as needing to be assessed for special needs will be evaluated and assessed by the contracted School Psychologist. Based upon the assessment(s), the contracted School Psychologist will determine if the student requires and IEP. The student will also be evaluated by the contracted nurse to determine if there are any physical limitations contributing to the student's situation. If it is determined the student needs and IEP, the contracted School Psychologist and contracted school nurse (if applicable) will work with the Special Education Consultant to write the appropriate IEP for the student. The Special Education Consultant will then coordinate the designated interventionists to provide services to the student. The Special Education Consultant will oversee the case management of students on IEP's and will work Lead Teachers to facilitate the best possible scenario for the student. MMCS plans to have an agreement with outsourced licensed professional by January 2016.

As students with IEP's become "normalized" in the classroom, they will receive age appropriate lessons using the Montessori Method and at minimum, meeting Core Curriculum standards. MMCS will use curriculum materials purchased from North American Montessori Center (NAMC) or any other applicable resources to assist in carrying out these lessons. Due to the nature of Montessori Education, teachers will be able to observe and identify students who fall behind "benchmarks" and are at possible risk of failure. All students are offered an individualized education plan

because each student is allowed to progress at their own rate. Teachers will support students individually and as a group in order to provide, meet, and exceed individualized goals.

Response to Intervention

In order to align Montessori with RtI, MMCS will schedule quarterly meetings of the classroom teacher, Head of School, and the SPED consultant to assess school-wide progress and to identify individual students who may need more assistance to reach certain academic goals. In cases where individual students are identified as needing intervention, the SPED consultant will oversee the process and outline strategies that the classroom teachers might use to ensure adequate progress. The plan for carrying out individualized education plans is:

1. Upon Teacher evaluations, each student will follow lesson plans and works as he/she is able.
2. If a teacher or parent/guardian feels the need for further evaluation, an evaluation with the contracted School Psychologist will be scheduled, conducted, and documented. Reasons for further evaluation may include students who fall below their required benchmark, students who show signs of being gifted and talented, students who have little/no knowledge of the spoken or written English language, as well as any other noticeable difference in learning that the child's teacher feels needs attention.
3. The contracted School Psychologist, the SPED consultant, and the student's Lead Teacher will meet and collectively put together an Individualized Learning Plan for that particular student if it is deemed necessary. This initial plan will consist of classroom strategies designed specifically for the success of the child in need.
4. Parents/legal guardians will be notified via conference of the student's IEP and ways to help the child at home.
5. The IEP will be carried out for 6 months with the necessary specialist(s)
6. Student progress will be documented and reviewed monthly, and after 6 months, the Special Education Team will determine the next steps.

The primary goal of the MMCS Special Education program will be to allow students with IEPs to fully participate in mixed-age classes to the greatest extent possible. As discussed above, Montessori schools can often provide an inclusive program for most students with IEPs. Other attributes of a Montessori education that allow elements of most IEPs to be met within the classroom include a recognition that parents are an integral part of a child's education, as well as an approach to team teaching which welcomes the presence of specialists and other professionals in the classroom without interrupting the flow of the class itself. Children with IEPs will need structured, explicit systematic instruction consistent with their level of emotional and academic development.

When students with existing IEPs enroll in the school, MMCS will adhere to the following general process:

1. After students enroll in the school, staff will communicate with families of enrolled students to identify students already receiving Special Education services and secure existing IEPs.
2. The SPED consultant will oversee ongoing assessment of IEP students and will provide classroom teachers with appropriate education to provide the least restrictive environment for these students in accordance with their existing IEPs and within the context of a Montessori classroom.
3. In any situation where a student's IEP implementation requires a review of best placement, MMCS will arrange for a staffing meeting to include, but be not limited to, the Special Education consultant, the student's teacher, the student's parents and our outsourced team. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess areas of the IEP that may not be adequately addressed through the services available at MMCS.
4. All IEPs will be reviewed and revised as needed or upon request, but at least annually, by the Special Education Team, a MMCS teacher, parents/legal guardians of the student.

MMCS will implement the following general process to identify students with disabilities as defined in IDEA:

1. When students without pre-existing IEPs are not progressing academically, MMCS teachers and the Head of School will implement the steps described above, consisting of classroom strategies designed to facilitate learning for these students.
2. If a student does not respond to tiered intervention, MMCS will recommend an evaluation, and with parental consent will refer the student to our outsourced Special Education Team for an evaluation with an appropriately licensed professional.
3. If testing indicates evidence of a disability and the student is identified as eligible for special education services, an IEP will be developed by an IEP team, including, but not limited to, the Special Education Team for MMCS, a MMCS teacher, parents/legal guardian of the student, and the outsourced Special Education Team.
4. In any situation where a student's IEP implementation requires a review of Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE), MMCS will arrange for a staffing meeting to include, but be not limited to, the Special Education consultant, the student's teacher, the student's parents and a member of our Special Education Team or his/her designee service. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess areas of the IEP that may not be adequately addressed through the service. All IEPs will be reviewed and revised as needed or upon request, but at least annually, by the IEP team described above.

Students with 504 Plans and with Physical Disabilities

MMCS will comply with all state and federal guidelines for the effective delivery of services to all physically disabled students. MMCS's education program will also comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The ability to service the needs of physically challenged individuals will be taken into consideration in MMCS's search for a facility. MMCS will work to ensure that a student's physical/occupational therapy, as required by his or her IEP, is provided. Students are placed under a 504 Plan if they have a physical or emotional disability, are recovering from chemical dependency or have an impairment that restricts one or more major life activities. Examples of these "major life activities" include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing and learning. MMCS's SPED consultant will oversee implementing the 504 plans of children and support the classroom teacher. Certain elements of the Montessori approach to learning can serve students with 504 plans very well. These include:

- lessons in practical life, such as using a broom to sweep crumbs off the floor
- using a wet cloth to wipe down a table
- learning how to use buttons on a button frame, as well as the heavy emphasis on sensorial materials that foster fine and gross motor skill development.

Since there is a continual emphasis on self-motivation and independence through these activities in the classroom, students with 504 plans may not need to be removed from their peers to acquire and perfect daily living skills.

Preschool Program Special Needs

Mountain Montessori Charter School will accept appropriate placements of preschool students with disabilities. In instances where a Primary teacher suspects a child may have a learning disability, MMCS will refer the parents/legal guardian to an appropriate professional in the community for evaluation. It will be the parents/legal guardians' responsibility to obtain an evaluation and subsequent services, unless the student is in the grade equivalent of Kindergarten in the Primary classroom. If the student is in Kindergarten, he/she will be assessed and given the same opportunities as the other special education students as outlined above.

English Language Learners:

Mountain Montessori Charter School will serve all students limited English proficiency in accordance with all the applicable Federal Laws and Regulations and in compliance with C.R.S. § 22-24-105. In mirroring the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 demographic data most recently available from 2013-2014 from the CDE website, it is anticipated that approximately 8% of our student population will potentially be ELL. With that in mind, Mountain Montessori will adhere to the following process with English Language Learners:

1. Upon enrolling into MMCS, all students will receive a home language survey of languages spoken in the home to be kept in his/her file. Will be administered upon admission into the school to determine English proficiency.
2. Identified students whose dominant language is not English will receive assessments of English proficiency using instruments and techniques and materials such as the phonetic system including the

phonetic box depicted in Appendix N or other curriculum such as the Pearson English Learning System. Assessments will be administered upon admission into the school to determine English proficiency.

3. All ELL students will be given the Colorado English Language Assessment (ACCESS) in January of each school year. The ACCESS will allow MMCS to track individual student progress in language proficiency over time and to determine appropriate and optimal instruction for each ELL student. MMCS will also be able to compare ACCESS testing data results to assess student progress.
4. All ELL students will be provided with educational programs that are responsive to the specific needs of each ELL student and in compliance with federal guidelines and consistent with Montessori methods and with effective English language acquisition.
5. Students will be given a full immersion into English speaking classrooms and will be taught with traditional Montessori methods, but may include repeated instructional sequences or variances.
6. Progress of ELL students as a group and for each individual student will be monitored and teaching/curriculum programming will be adjusted as needed to ensure ELL students' to effectively understand and acquire English.
7. MMCS will report the number of ELL student attending the school to CSI, Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 and the Colorado Department of Education. MMCS will also report the specification of the number of non-English languages identified as the students' primary languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their primary language.

As is with other special needs students at MMCS, ELL students at MMCS will be included in their mixed age, Montessori classroom to the greatest extent possible. MMCS anticipates ELL students will respond best to inclusion and full-immersion in a predominantly English speaking classroom supplemented with small group and/or individual instruction as needed.

In alignment with Montessori methods, MMCS will ensure ELL students can continue to learn in other subject areas without being fluent in English. MMCS will partner with Integrated Community's Education Coordinator to create appropriate and effective teaching methods in this regard. If necessary, MMCS will hire an ESL consultant to assist in developing the proper teaching methods and strategies. To the greatest extent possible, Montessori methods will be maintained and may involve differentiated instruction, grouping ELL students with peer mentors and creating well-structured cooperative activities. Additionally, other techniques may include repeated instructional sequences with variances connecting to the overall curriculum and teaching within a context of learning. Lastly, and in following the Montessori philosophy of peer learning, ELL students will be given the opportunity to be leaders to the English-only students with the Spanish learning curriculum.

All students with special needs whether limited or non-English proficiently, or English speaking students, will be included in the Montessori classroom to the greatest extent possible. Explicit instruction in fun and appealing songs, chants, read-aloud, and poems will be provided to beginning language learners to help develop the recognition of sounds that accompany the English language. At all times, the emphasis will be on explicit, repetitive and patient instruction to help the ELL decode the language as well as the concepts that may be presented. Reading instruction will be combined with an emphasis on understanding, vocabulary, figurative language (when appropriate), and fluency. Visual aids and manipulatives are part of the Montessori Curriculum and therefore will be very helpful in working with

ELL students. Learning takes place best in an atmosphere of trust, and therefore the ELL teacher/volunteer(s) will be encouraged to know the students, their families, and the nuances of the culture of origin. Collaboration among the teachers will help keep speaking, writing, reading, and listening as part of the learning and community experience.

Of significance with ELL, when Congress funded the National Reading Panel in 1997, there were, and still are, few studies to validate specific recommendations. However, having concepts presented in both the native language, as well as English, appears to help ELLs, and with that in mind, MMCS will make every effort to hire at least one teacher who is bi-lingual or endorsed in Linguistically Diverse Education. In the case that a bi-lingual teacher is not available for an ELL student, MMCS will endeavor to hire aides or use volunteers who are bilingual to provide translation and extra services to the child. As has been mentioned, MMCS will partner with Integrated Community to seek out partnership opportunities that are mutually beneficial to meet the needs of ELL students at MMCS as well as to offer job and volunteer opportunities to qualified clients of Integrated Community.

At Risk Students

As defined in C.R.S. § 22-30.5-103, "At-risk" students are "those students who because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic or cultural factors are less likely to succeed in school." Mountain Montessori Charter School will make every effort to meet the needs of enrolled at-risk students. Montessori classrooms are very inclusive, welcoming children of all abilities and socioeconomic levels. Because children have the same teacher for three years, and are with many of the same children over that period of time, the classroom can become like a second home for many students, not just those considered at-risk. Other factors which will help welcome at-risk students are the emphasis on grace and courtesy skills, mutual respect and cooperation, as well as practical life lessons. Differences in age, speech, looks or dress are not deciding factors on "who is my friend?" Rather, children in Montessori programs develop a high-level of respect for all people, and tend to not categorize themselves or others as strictly as one might find in other programs.

Academically, at-risk students will be encouraged to become independent, self-motivated learners, just like every other child in the class. The highly nurturing and highly stimulating environment found in Montessori classrooms provide more individualized attention to at-risk students than might ordinarily be available and received in a typical classroom. With Montessori's emphasis on respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment a comforting and nurturing community is created and maintained, allowing at-risk students to flourish.

Although MMCS does not provide lunches to students, MMCS intends to provide daily lunch for students through the school snack program, partnering with community restaurants for donations, and offering organic, fresh food from the school garden when available seasonally. The details of how this operates are outlined in the Food Services section of the application.

Gifted and Talented Students

"Gifted and talented" students are children who show or have potential to show a high level of performance in one or more areas of expression, such as intellectual or leadership capabilities, artistic or creative talents or specific academic aptitudes. MMCS believes that the Montessori Method can allow such children to move at an advanced pace, accepting greater academic challenges, while at the same time remaining in a social setting with peers of the same age. Children who present potential for greater academic or artistic achievement will be encouraged to challenge themselves, and will be presented with lessons of greater complexity. In certain situations, the classroom teacher may find an adult mentor in an area of interest, such as mathematics, astrophysics or literature, whom the student may interact with and gain in-depth knowledge from.

At the same time, the multi-age, differentiated learning environment will develop their abilities as leaders through peer teaching and interaction.

When a teacher believes that a student may have exceptional talents or abilities, MMCS will contact the Special Education Consultant (SPED) for an assessment. If the child is found to be gifted and talented, MMCS will hold a meeting with the student's parents, the student, if appropriate, the student's teachers, the Head of School, and the SPED to determine whether the majority of the student's academic and social needs can be met within a Montessori context. The SPED can also make the parents and students aware of other enrichment programs for advanced learning which exist within the community in which the student may participate.

Funding

Funding of the Special Education Team will come from three sources. Each December a count of eligible IEP students enrolled in the school will be taken. The school will receive funding during the following school year to assist with the services required for those students. Estimates for the 2016-2017 school year put these funding levels at $1800/IEP student from IDEA and $1500/IEP student from ECEA. The third source of funding is the school's per pupil allotment of public funds. MMCS plans to set aside $800/student enrolled in the school into a Special Education Fund. This will be used in conjunction with the IDEA and ECEA funds to contract out Special Education services and to purchase any curricula, materials, or assessments needed by the special education team. At this time Mountain Montessori Charter School anticipates purchasing contracted Special Education services in the areas of School Psychologist, Speech Therapist, OT, PT, Special Education Consultant, Nurse and Gifted and Talented Consultant from licensed/certified, qualified professionals in the community.

Section F: Goals, Objectives, & Pupil Evaluation

Mountain Montessori Charter School will provide an individualized, progressive educational experience for the children of the Steamboat Springs and surrounding area. MMCS will adhere to the process and criteria established by the Charter School Institute (CSI) for school accreditation. MMCS will measure pupil performance by STAR assessments, CMAS, PARCC, W-APT, and in-house assessments using Montessori specific observational tools and record keeping. Since 2015 is the pilot year of the new assessment PARCC, MMCS will use that data when it is available to establish a baseline comparison for student achievement goals in 2016. The goals provided below are also located in the Baseline Targets Template found in Appendix N.

The school anticipates performing at or above CSI and state levels in all core content areas. MMCS aims to hold, at minimum, these same standards, as well as our own personal educational goals and standards. MMCS is comparing the performance of CSI and the State of Colorado instead of the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 because the local demographic will include a larger special needs population than the Steamboat Springs School District's (SSSD). Based upon the most current demographic data provided to the CDE by Steamboat Springs School District RE-2, approximately 11% of the elementary school aged student SSSD population receives special education services. However, MMCS anticipates 15% of its student population will need such services in years 1-3, 16% in year 4, and 17% in year 5.

SMART Performance Goals

Mountain Montessori Charter School has identified five Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) goals that reflect the school's high expectations.

1. MMCS will provide an exemplary Montessori education from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade:

    a. Objective: Meet or exceed the Charter School Institute and State of Colorado content standards:
        - Measurement: MMCS 's students will meet or exceed the 50th percentile of CSI and state standards in each area.

    b. Objective: Meet or exceed the Charter School Institute and State of Colorado Student Growth Scores:
        - Measurement: Receive a "meets" or above rating for academic growth in each area by having student proficiency levels at or above the 55th percentile as measured by the Colorado Growth Model.

    c. Objective: Close Student Growth Gaps:
        - Measurement: Growth gaps for the five subgroups (Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible, Minority Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Students Needing to Catch Up) will achieve a median growth percentile of 55 or higher in reading, mathematics, and writing.

d. Objective: Provide appropriate training and professional development for the staff:
   - Measurement: 100% of teachers will participate in 4 professional development days per school year.

2. Encourage the enrollment, retention, and continuation of students from all economic and ethnic backgrounds:

   a. Objective: Establish and maintain effective outreach and support programs:
      - Measurement: Enrollment and retention data will be analyzed and reviewed annually to provide baseline data and input on improvement of outreach and retention plans.

   b. Objective: Meet or exceed the CSI district's attendance rates:
      - Measurement: Each year the school will improve its average daily attendance rate until it reaches 95%. The average daily attendance rate of the first year of the school will serve as the baseline measure.

3. Promote a safe, positive, and respectful environment:

   a. Objective: Value students and families as customers and be responsive to their concerns in a manner that is consistent with the school's mission, vision, and goals:
      - Measurement: In an annual survey of students, 95% of students will respond that they feel safe or very safe at MMCS.
      - Measurement: Using survey data collected annually from parents by the School Accountability Committee, at least 90% of parents will say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the education their child is receiving at MMCS.

   b. Objective: Enhance each student's social and emotional development through character education and co-curricular activities.

   c. Objective: Encourage parents to actively participate in the school.
      - Measurement: 85% of families will volunteer support to school programs and events during the school year by volunteering a minimum of 10 hours of service.
      - Measurement: 100% of new families will attend the Montessori Transition program
      - Measurement: 85% of families will attend Parent Education nights that discuss implementing Montessori philosophy into the home and parenting.

   d. Objective: Model and foster respect and support among the students, faculty, staff, and administration.

   e. Objective: Promote respectful relationships among all members of the school community by offering Back to School social, Fall Harvest, Thanksgiving Feast, Family Gingerbread decorating night, Winter Carnival, Spring Planting, Spring Performing Arts show, and a Graduation Ceremony:
      - Measurement: 85% of families attend at least one community event.

4. Demonstrate fiscal responsibility:
   a. Objective: Maintain records and conduct business in accordance with customary procedures for financial accountability:
      - Measurement: External audits will be clean with no significant financial concerns and will show that the school meets or exceeds professional accounting standards.

- Measurement: Comply with all requirements of the Public School Financial Transparency Act HB10-1036 by posting budgetary and financial documents on the school website.

5. Maintain a high functioning charter board:
    a. Objective: Recruit, train, and develop charter board directors that will ensure the school's mission, vision, and goals are obtained and appropriate policies in place:
        - Measurement: All board members will complete the CDE Board Training Modules within their first three months on the board and provide the certificate of completion.

Evaluating Student Performance

***Establishing a Performance Baseline*:**

Mountain Montessori is committed to inspiring children to grow and learn. In order to ensure that we are reaching this goal, we are committed to using regular student assessments and data-driven decision making to inform instruction from the individual student level to school wide initiatives. Please refer to Appendix N for the CSI Assessment Matrix.

In order to accurately measure and monitor student growth, Mountain Montessori must have a baseline of performance for all incoming students. We plan to establish this performance baseline in two waves: an initial and extensive assessment process for the first year of operation when a performance baseline will need to be established for every Mountain Montessori student, and a more streamlined, shorter process in following years for students new to Mountain Montessori.

In the first year of operation, teachers at Mountain Montessori will establish a baseline for each new student in Kindergarten and above by giving an initial reading and mathematics assessment using the STAR assessments. The information gathered from these assessments will be used by teachers to guide initial instruction in their first year with an entirely new group of students.

In addition to the STAR baseline assessments, Mountain Montessori teachers will spend the first year compiling detailed records of student performance and growth that include the in-house formative and summative assessments and progress monitoring tools (explained in further detail subsequently in this section). While these types of detailed records are the norm in the Montessori classroom and will be expected from all teacher for every students each year, they will be especially key in the first year of operation in order to establish a solid baseline of performance across all content areas. Recognizing the depth and breadth of this undertaking, Mountain Montessori has allotted time in the first year calendar to both complete the initial standardized assessments and

organize and analyze the information they provide. Baseline testing will be done the first week of school between September 6th and September 9th. All other testing will occur in December and March. During regular professional development days, teachers will be given time to work on both organizing and analyzing the data collected for these student records and participating in both vertical and horizontal level conversations as to how this baseline data will drive instruction during that initial year of operation.
Over the course of the first year, the CMAS will also be given to all students in fourth and fifth grades and the PARCC to all students third grade and above. These scores will be added to the STAR data and the teacher records of each child in order to give a detailed picture of each student's performance.

One of the unique aspects and great strengths of the Montessori Method of Education is that students spend three years in the same classroom, thus allowing teachers to develop a deep understanding of a student's performance and growth. Thus, after the initial year of operation, teachers will perform the same initial baseline assessments for all students new to Mountain Montessori but will be able to continue a seamless flow of ongoing assessment for returning students that becomes a cycle of embedded progress monitoring reinforced by regular standardized test "check-ins." When it comes time to move a student from one Montessori classroom to the next, teachers will be able to pass on each student's record of learning, thereby ensuring vertical alignment and a smooth transitions between classrooms.

This cycle of ongoing assessment along with interventions for students not meeting assessment benchmarks is further described in the section: Data Management and Data Support for Teachers.

Evaluation Methods

The complex data requirements of the federal and state governments as well as the Charter School Institute demand a variety of pupil assessment types. Additionally, Mountain Montessori commits to the Montessori philosophy that the teacher observations of students should serve as one of the primary sources of evidence of student learning. Thus, a wide variety of tools will be used in evaluating pupil performance. In order to explain how Mountain Montessori will use these tools to evaluate and monitor student performance, we must first identify what those tools will be.

Standardized Assessments:

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Assessments:
STAR Enterprise Assessments provide measures of student achievement in four areas:

- STAR Early Literacy Enterprise assesses early literacy and early numeracy skills (grades pre-K–3)

- STAR Reading Enterprise assesses reading skills (grades K–12)
- STAR Math Enterprise assesses math skills (grades K–12)

Mountain Montessori has chosen to use the STAR assessment system for a number of reasons:

- STAR assessments meet all requirements of the Colorado READ Act for early literacy development and testing.
- STAR assessments meet all testing and reporting requirements of the Colorado Charter School Institute,
- STAR Assessments are designed to provide educators with flexibility in administering the assessments at the frequency most fitting their needs. State and CSI requirements include administering tests three times per year, however teachers may use STAR assessments as often as monthly to better understand how student progress is unfolding during the school year with enough time to change the growth trajectory, or as often as weekly for progress monitoring students in tiers 2 and 3 of an RTI framework or as needed to monitor READ Plans.
- STAR Assessments meet all criteria set by the National Center on Intensive Intervention.
- (NCII) (2012a, 2012b, 2012c) and the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) for "Sensitivity to Student Improvement."
- STAR Assessments can be completed in a relatively short period of time (20 - 30 minutes) in comparison to other standardized tests and they provide valid data instantly so that teachers can target instruction, monitor progress, provide students with the most appropriate instructional materials, and intervene with at-risk students while minimizing the out-of-class impact on instruction, thus keeping with the Montessori philosophy of prioritizing individual student time exploring and learning at an individual pace in the classroom.

Additional details on the above information as well as additional information on STAR Enterprise Assessments can be found at: http://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R003957507GG2170.pdf

Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS):

The CMAS is Colorado's large scale assessment designed to measure student performance in the Colorado Academic Standards in Science and Social Studies. As per Colorado state requirements, Mountain Montessori will administer the Social Studies CMAS annually to all students in grades 4 and 7, and the Science CMAS annually to all students in grades 5 and 8.

Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):

Mountain Montessori will administer the PARCC test annually to all students in grades 3 - 8 in accordance with the Colorado state and Steamboat Springs District policies. PARCC data will be used by teachers to design learning outcomes for students and embed them in appropriate units of study. PARRC data will be used for evaluating school-wide performance by the Mountain Montessori Governing Board and evaluation compliance with the school accountability plan.

W-APT: The W-APT which stands for the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test is a screening test to assist in the identification of students that qualify for English Language Learning (ELL) programming. Mountain Montessori will administer the W-APT assessments according to the Federal guidelines requiring schools to screen and place new students with a primary or home language other than English within 30 days. Throughout the remainder of the school year, this screening and placement will happen within 2-weeks of the student's enrollment.

In-House Formative and Summative Assessments

Summative Benchmark and Advancement Assessments:

Mountain Montessori will also use periodic interim assessments that directly align with the Montessori instructional approaches in all core subject areas in order to adapt teaching approaches in an on-going basis. Samples of benchmark assessments would include, but not be limited to: writing samples, unit or chapter tests, literary responses, oral reports, demonstrations, dramatizations, open-ended math problems, research projects, computer programs, etc. These standardized and teacher-developed benchmark assessments will align with the Colorado Academic Standards, Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 standards and MMCS expectations. These in-house assessments will also improve student performance by building the capacity of our teachers to develop and use assessment tools to drive instruction. This process will encompass tool building, data collection, data analysis and revisions to instructional plans that better meet the needs of students.

Montessori Record Keeping:

Montessori Record Keeping is a key component of effective Montessori education. All Mountain Montessori teachers are expected to keep comprehensive *daily* notes on students' progress through the curriculum in *all* content levels and mastery of key skills and standards. These records are used to inform planning for each child's individualized lessons and learning plans. We believe that effective record keeping that informs instruction is necessary to ensure that all students are making adequate progress towards meeting all standards.

Classroom records will include the following components:

- Standardized/normed test scores sorted either by child or as class at a glance (STAR assessment results)
  - Math Assessments/Checklists
  - Writing Rubric scores
- Portfolio of Work Samples
  - Writing samples
  - End of unit projects/demonstrations of learning

- Photographs of completed works
- Copies of completed work plans
- Rubrics from Demonstrations of Learning

- On-going progress monitoring
  - Checklist or anecdotal record of works presented/skills and standards mastered
  - Record of progress through works
  - Record of skills mastered, skills developing, skills not yet taught
  - Anecdotal records of observations of students' work, work habits, social interactions, oral language development, etc.

Formative Assessment Tools:

Student performance will also be documented on an on-going basis using the following tools:

- Daily Observation and Recording: A cornerstone of Montessori education is the keen teacher observations of each student as the children pursue their work. Montessori teachers receive intense training in the art and science of observation. Mountain Montessori School teachers will be committed to significant observation of the students and, at a minimum, will include all the items identified in the "*portfolio of work samples"* and "*on-going progress monitoring"* list above. There will be two major outcomes of this activity: 1) a record of what the teacher sees for documentation and reporting purposes and 2) information for the teacher to plan for the next phase of individual student's academic development. MMCS will use Montessori Compass for observational recording and will have the ability to confidentially save information for each student. See Appendix H1 - record keeping for an example.

- Curriculum Progress Tracking Sheets: In order to provide a consistent mechanism to track the presentation of Montessori lessons given to students, Mountain Montessori School (Teachers and Head of School) will use curriculum progress tracking via Montessori Compass. There will be a series of formats for use with each classroom level (Pre K/Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, etc.) Every student will have a curriculum progress tracking file maintained in the classroom by the teacher. Information collected in daily observation and recording is transferred to the appropriate file in Montessori Compass. Montessori Compass uses various methods to record data including date, tally, and color coding. An example of these are located in Appendix H2.

- Progress Reports: Each level will have its own progress report, which will be issued quarterly: twice during parent conferences on the quarter, once mid- year, and once at the end of the academic year. The progress reports have areas for both academic assessment and personal development or non-cognitive growth (termed "Qualities of a Montessori Learner"). The personal development section includes insight into both work/study skills as well as life skills. See sample in Appendix H3.

- Report Card**:** Mountain Montessori School will also use a "hybrid" report card that recognizes both Montessori outcomes and State/District Academic standards. A sample of this type of report card can be found in Appendix H4. Mountain Montessori will develop its own report card using the model provided by April 2016.

Mountain Montessori will use Montessori Compass to record and track pupil performance and test results in order to maintain accountability and assess student needs.

Data Management and Data Support for Teachers

Mountain Montessori recognizes the need to have a comprehensive data dashboard system that can be used to compile, sort, aggregate and assist with the analysis of a variety of kinds of academic, and financial data. At this point Mountain Montessori School will be purchasing a comprehensive system, such as Montessori Compass, an online record keeping, data management system. A decision will be made during the Planning year as to which specific system will be selected.

Academic Data Tracking: Montessori Compass is designed to accomplish the following tasks:

- Allow teachers to compile data from multiple sources in a user friendly format.
- Allow data to be sorted by student, subject/skill/standards, class, age cohort, proficiency level.
- Allow administrators to compare data from multiple classrooms
- Create dashboards for classrooms to highlight areas and students in need
- Create reports for teachers, parents, board members, authorizer, and other stake holders.
- Provide appropriate data needed to guide professional development decisions.

Financial Data Tracking: We will work with an accountant during the Planning Year to identify a system to track financial information including but not limited to:

- Tracking monthly cash flow
- Tracking the difference between estimated and actual costs
- Keeping track of upcoming and past deadlines and highlighting any approaching deadlines or deadlines missed
- Tracking revenues and discrepancies between anticipated and actual revenues.

Longitudinal Student Data Reporting

The Head of School and teachers will collect longitudinal student data as it becomes available and will analyze it no less frequently than 3 times per year. Longitudinal student academic data will be shared frequently with the governing board (3 times/year) and with the teaching staff (3+ times per year). Mountain Montessori will send home an annual School Report once a year to inform parents and community members of how students are doing as a group and what the improvement goals are for the upcoming year. This report card will include overview data

of how each grade level at the school is doing, and how the Mountain Montessori Charter School scores are changing over time. It will include students' percentage proficiency on reading, writing, math and oral language assessments. The School Report will be posted to the website and also shared with community members, the Governing Board, CSI, Steamboat Springs School District RE-2, and other stakeholders.

Additionally, data from all assessments, both standardized and in-house, formative and summative, will be regularly shared with and analyzed by teachers in order to drive professional development and future instruction. A table outlining all of the testing dates providing data can be found below in **Table 1.1.** Additionally, more information on how data will be shared and used to drive instruction can be found in the section, **Plan for**

Evaluating Pupil Performance: Performance Standards.

Table 1.1: Calendar of Testing Dates

Assessment	Month Administered	Type of Assessment	Purpose
STAR	Three times annually, September, January, May	Standardized assessment of student growth aligned to state, district and local standards	*September:* Baseline assessment for individual student achievement *January:* measurement of longitudinal growth, *May:* measurement of longitudinal growth and planning for the following year.
W-APT	August (for new students), January	English language proficiency screener test and longitudinal growth tool.	Assessing English language ability of students new to Mountain Montessori. Assessing English language learner needs in order to provide adequate support.
PARCC	March, May	State mandated assessment for school accountability	School accountability tool, assessing by grade level an alignment of curriculum to Common Core Sate Standards. Measures school's longitudinal growth year over year as well as school's according to the Colorado Growth Model.

CMAS	April	State mandated assessment of student performance in science and social studies.	School accountability tool, assessing by grade level students' performance in science and social studies curriculum as aligned to CAS.
Mountain Montessori Assessments	On-going	Teacher developed: may include writing samples, unit projects, demonstrations of learning, student led conferences, research projects, etc.	On-going, embedded, "hands-on" assessment to effectively adapt instruction for each child. Embedded progress monitoring.

Data Management Structure and Responsibilities

As the success of Mountain Montessori students depends upon every adult within the school, the responsibility for tracking and managing data is spread throughout the school's organizational structure. The accountability for this data management moves in a hierarchical structure through three layers:

1. *Teachers*
    - Administer standardized tests, analyze results and make correlating adjustments to instruction
    - Maintain daily, weekly, and monthly formative assessments and progress monitoring tools
    - Use professional development time to compare horizontal and vertical achievement results
    - Create and implement RtI plans in accordance to data analysis results
    - Regularly report student achievement data to Head of School
2. *Head of School*
    - Creates calendar maps
    - Monitors and ensures assessment occurs
    - Supports teachers in developing assessments
    - Ensures data is recorded
    - Creates reflection forms
    - Leads data analysis sessions
    - Holds every member of the team accountable
    - Reports Assessment data to the Governing Board and the public
3. *The Governing Board*
    - Monitor results of assessments
    - Ensures compliance with the school's Accountability Plan and Unified Improvement Plan
    - Make policy and staff adjustments as needed

Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance: Performance Standards

Communicating Individual and School Progress

Mountain Montessori believes that in addition to collecting and analyzing student data to inform our instruction, it is important to communicate this information with various stakeholders at regular intervals. We commit to the following communication schedule and methods:

Stakeholder	Method of Communication	Frequency	Intended Uses
Charter School Institute	Annual school data report and Unified School Improvement Plan	Once per year, more frequently if requested	Assure that Mountain Montessori is adequately meeting student achievement requirements to maintain authorization as a charter school
MMCS Governing Board	• Data report at time of annual report to parents • Key data highlights	• Once per year, more frequently if requested • Monthly board meetings	Maintain oversight of the academic status "big picture." Enable governing board to make informed decisions and speak with authority about school's academic progress
School Administrators	Electronic copies of data generated by teacher assessments and/or standardized assessments	3 times per year	Inform professional development, maintain whole school accountability and provide warning if correction course is necessary.
Teachers	• School-wide: • Classroom: Professional development days, Copies of data dashboards, formative/summative assessment data	• 3 times per year • Monthly during teacher data team meetings	• Provide feedback on school's academic success. Guide school-wide discussion on areas of focus and next steps. • Inform individual classroom instruction, vertical and horizontal alignment among teams

Students	Student-level data: • Progress reports • Report cards • Formal student • teacher conferences • Informal student • teacher conferences Whole school data: As part of an authentic math exercise in the classroom	Student-level data: • Quarterly • Quarterly • Quarterly • Daily Whole school data: Once per year	Hold students accountable for their own learning and engage them as partners in education. Help students learn to make informed choices about how to improve academic success. Engage students at an age-appropriate level as key members of the school and its progress.
Parents	Student-level data: • Progress reports • Report cards • Formal parent teacher conferences Whole school data: Annual school report	Student level data: • Quarterly • Quarterly • Semesterly	Provide feedback about student academic progress and how each parent may support it. Engage parents as partner in the school's academic process. Allow parent to make informed decisions about the quality of their student's education

Interventions and Corrective Action

Mountain Montessori believes in the right level of academic challenge for every student. The purpose of Mountain Montessori's extensive and detailed data collection is to ensure that every child receives an individualized education that allows him/her to meet or exceed all academic achievement goals. If data indicates that individual student, classroom or school wide goals are not being met, the following interventions and corrective actions will be put in place:

<u>Student level</u>

When students are not meeting achievement goals the following steps will be taken:

- Classroom teacher will systematically assess area of academic need for the student using careful observation and data analysis, and implement a classroom intervention. This intervention should last for 3-4 weeks, include a clear and measurable goal for the student, occur regularly, target the academic need and be clearly documented.
- At the end of the classroom intervention the teacher will re-assess the student to determine whether or not sufficient progress has been made. If the student has not made progress a meeting will be called with the parent, teacher and the school intervention coordinator. At this meeting the student's areas of need will be discussed and the group will decide which of the school intervention resources would best serve the student.
- A new goal will be set and the student will begin receiving intervention services. The group will meet back in another 4-8 weeks to determine whether or not the interventions have been effective in closing the students achievement gap or whether more intensive services or a different intervention are required.

Classroom Level

When the data shows us that a large group of children from one class are not meeting academic achievement goals the following steps will be taken:

- Classroom teacher and Director of Education (Head of School) will systematically assess areas of need and skills or concepts lacking by analyzing student assessment data.
- Classroom teacher will design or implement a pre-existing class-wide intervention to target the standards where students are not making progress.
- Head of School will assess whether or not the classroom teacher needs additional resources, Professional Development, additional staff, specific intervention program, to best meet the needs of students. If it is determined that additional resources are required they will be provided by the Director of Education or school.

School Level

When/if the data shows us that students are not meeting academic achievement standards across an entire grade level or the entire school the following steps will be taken:

- Head of School and classroom teachers will analyze student data to determine in what skills or areas students are struggling
- Head of School will determine what steps will most highly impact achievement in this area, this could include: staff-wide professional development, new teaching strategy, additional curricula or program

(example: adopting a new writing program if writing scores are not proficient), changes to the daily schedule to place more emphasis on subject area where students are struggling the most, implementation of school wide intervention.

- Head of School will re-assess student achievement to see if changes have improved student outcomes or if additional interventions are necessary.

Section G: Budget & Finance

Mountain Montessori Charter School is aware that charter school finance is one of the greatest challenges development teams can face. With this in mind, the budgets have been developed with conservative revenue expectations and with the goal of reducing costs wherever possible. Please see Appendix R to view the budget as an Excel Spreadsheet. The budget in Appendix R is based on a combination of actual numbers from letters of intent for Year 1 and projected enrollment for Years 2-5. MMCS is well aware that no public money may be used to support the preschool, however revenue generated from the preschool may be used to support the K-8 program.

Revenues

School Revenue Sources:

- Colorado State Per Pupil Funding (Grades K-8)
- Preschool and Full Day Kindergarten Tuition
- Before & After School Program
- Title 1, 2, 3 Funding
- Gifted & Talented
- ELPA Funding
- IDEA Funding
- ECEA Funding
- Colorado Public Charter Schools Startup and Implementation Grant
- Fees
- Grants & Fundraising

Colorado State Per Pupil Funding (Funding for students in grades K-8):

Grades 1-8 will be funded by the State of Colorado at the Per Pupil Amount for Steamboat Springs Public Schools which is projected to be at least $7,001/student in the 2016-2017 school year. Kindergarten students are funded at 58 percent of PPR. Annual increases in PPR after Y1 have been set at 2%, which the Mountain Montessori Charter School feels is sufficiently conservative; however, MMCS recognizes that due to variations in funding from year to year, the projected PPR may be subject to additional changes.

Preschool and Kindergarten Tuition:

Tuition for preschool and full-day Kindergarten is a major part of the school's revenue. MMCS is following the design of both private and public charter Montessori schools in Colorado and nationally by having a multi-age preschool/kindergarten program or Primary Classroom. Specifically, we provide 16 Kindergarten slots in our 2 Primary Classrooms. Of these slots, 16 Kindergarten students will be publicly funded for the morning half-day portion. Additionally, we estimate that approximately 14 of these 16 students (88%) will choose the full-day Kindergarten option and stay through the afternoon. The families of the full-day Kindergarten students will be charged tuition to cover the optional attendance in the afternoon. Mountain Montessori Charter School expects to charge approximately $360 per month for 10 months for the full day program. It is Mountain Montessori Charter School's intention to be the first school in Steamboat Springs to offer tuition-free full-day Kindergarten once the solvency of the school has been established and can be reasonably maintained. The budget shows this is possible as early as year three. To be clear, revenue associated with public, chartered students will not be used to finance the Preschool. However, any excess funds from the preschool may be transferred to the charter school's general fund for use as needed.

Preschool & Kindergarten Tuition	Cost/Month
Full Day Preschool Program (5 days/wk; 8:00-3:30 daily)	$800
Half Day Preschool Program (5 days/wk, 8:00-12:15 daily)	$550
Full Day Kindergarten (5 days/wk; 8:00-3:30 daily)	$360
Half Day Kindergarten (5 days/wk; 8:00-12:15 daily)	No tuition

Before and After School Program:

Before School Program 7:30-8:30 am	Cost/Month	After School Program 3:30-6 pm	Cost/Month
Drop-in	$15.00	Drop-in	$18.00
2 days/week ($10/hr)	$80.00	2 days/week ($10/hr)	$200.00
3 days/week ($7/hr)	$84.00	3 days/week ($7/hr)	$210.00
4 days/week ($6.25/hr)	$100.00	4 days/week ($6.25/hr)	$250.00
5 days/week ($6/hr)	$120.00	5 days/week ($6/hr)	$300.00

It is estimated that at least 10 children will sign up for the Before and After School programs averaging $2,500 per child annually.

Capital Construction Funding:

Assumes $165.00 per pupil, based on CSI Budget Template.

Title I, II and III Funding:

1. Title I: MMCS does not anticipate qualifying for Title 1 funds.
2. Title II: Assuming $21 per PPR, based on figures from the North Routt Community Charter School
3. Title III: Assuming $24/LEP student and $165/NEP student, based on recommendations in CSI Budget Template

ELPA Funding:

The English Language Proficiency Act provides funding for Bilingual Education and ESL programs serving students whose primary language of communication is not English. We anticipate that approximately 8% of our students will qualify as either Non English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) under the ELPA guidelines. Of the 8% of ELL students, it is estimated 2% will be NEP and 6% will be LEP. ELPA funding is assumed to be $307/NEP and LEP students and $605/M1 and M2 students based on recommendations in CSI Budget Template.

Gifted and Talented:

Assumes 0.5% of student population will be eligible for Gifted & Talented funding of $110/G&T student, based on recommendations in CSI Budget Template.

IDEA and ECEA Funding:

Every December a count will be taken of eligible IEP students enrolled at Mountain Montessori Charter School. For the following school year, the school will be allotted funds from IDEA and ECEA to defray the costs of our special education program. These rates are subject to change but the current projected rates are $1,300/SPED student from IDEA and $1,400/SPED student from ECEA. MMCS assumes 2% of the state funded student population will qualify for this funding.

Colorado Charter School Program (CCSP) Start-Up and Implementation Grant:

As a charter school, Mountain Montessori would be honored to receive start-up federal funding managed through the Colorado Department of Education CCSP grant. The CCSP Start-Up Grant can pay $1,500/student enrolled in

the program, where Kindergarten students count as 0.58 and Preschool students do not count. The grant is determined based on the average number of eligible students enrolled in the program in years 1-3.

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Steering Committee and Governing Board recognize the competitive climate for applying and receiving CCSP grant funding. MMCS strives to ensure financial stability without the dependence of CCSP grant funds and has not included these funds in the budget.

Fees:

A $250 activity fee will be charged per student at the beginning of each school year to assist with the cost of enrichment activities. Activity Fees fund supplemental activities or materials that are outside those required to deliver the basic curriculum. A $100 supply fee will be charged per student at the beginning of the school year to assist with the cost of supplies.

Fundraising & Charitable Contributions:

To supplement the other revenue streams, Mountain Montessori Charter School plans to raise $50,000 per year from private donations and fundraising. The Board and Parent Council will be responsible for this fundraising effort. The Board feels this is a conservative goal based on the fundraising efforts of North Routt Community Charter School. Pending approval of the MMCS charter application with the CSI, an aggressive fundraising campaign will be initiated by the Steering Committee. The fundraising campaign will include:

1. Creating an online fundraising campaign through www.gofundme.com . On this website, MMCS can be promoted to raise start-up funds. Included in our campaign would be a video explaining our cause to enhance the message and amplify its effectiveness. We currently have volunteers skilled and willing to assist us with this project. The online fundraising campaign would be announced to our email supporter list (which currently has over 200 subscribers). We would ask everyone to contribute to the cause as well as forward the fundraising link to all in their networks and to share it on their social media outlets. The online fundraising allows for exponential donations by the sharing through social media for those who support Montessori and/or schools of choice. A fundraising goal of $50,000 will be set.
2. A strategic marketing campaign will announce the approval of the school. This will be done through our current outreach efforts as well as having the local newspaper announce the approval of the charter. With the approval of MMCS being official, it is anticipated community members will rally to support the new school, now that there is something officially tangible. The Steering Committee and Interim Governing Board will actively solicit known generous donors in the community to assist with the school's start-up costs.
3. The Steering Committee will apply for funding available through AMI/AMS as well as Montessori public school sector.
4. The Steering Committee will apply for local grant funding including: Yampa Valley Electric Caring Consumers Program, Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation, Steamboat Springs Education Fund Board, and the Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce.
5. The Steering Committee will research and apply for other grant opportunities including: Whole Kids Foundation, Carrot Seed Fund, The Colorado Rockies Charity Fund, and Live Well, to name a few.

In addition to the above fundraising efforts, we have had community members offer to donate Montessori classroom materials. Further, the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 has Montessori classroom materials in storage from the discontinued strand school. Lastly, Steamboat Springs Montessori preschool has offered to donate unused and gently used Montessori classroom materials to MMCS.

United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) Community Facilities Loan program

The MMCS Governing Board will apply for and use funding from the United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) Community Facilities Loan program. Upon approval of the MMCS charter application, the Governing Board will submit a Pre-Application to the USDA-RD office in Delta, Colorado. The requested loan amount will be based on the amount needed to build and furnish the school. The Pre-Application process determines applicant and project eligibility and reduces the risk of unnecessarily expending fund developing the reports required in the full application. If approved, the applicant is then invited to submit the full application. Kristen Rockford, Governing Board chair, has previously worked with Dave Carter of the USDA-RD in submitting a Pre-Application and Application for a different project. Kristen Rockford also previously worked for a sister agency to Rural Develop called USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Her work background and previous experience makes her uniquely suited to navigate the process of applying for a Community Facility Loan.

Colorado League of Charter Schools:

Mountain Montessori Charter School has already received planning grants in the amount of $3,500 from the Colorado League of Charter Schools for assistance in pre-application development activities. The Colorado League of Charter Schools offers ongoing support and resources post charter authorization. Mountain Montessori Charter School will make use of grant lead opportunities and assistance to obtain additional funding to support the financial needs of the school.

Upon charter authorization, the MMCS Governing Board will apply for the Colorado League of Charter School's STAGE 6 Grant. This grant is a planning grant awarded to schools that are approved to open and can be used to receive customized governance training or, if the board has already received governance training, the grant can be used for professional development based on a school's need. Additionally, this grant can be used for admission for two individuals (a board representative and an administrative representative) to the League's annual conference.

Expenses

Montessori classrooms require specialized materials, the expense of which makes starting new classes more expensive than found in other schools. However, in choosing materials, it is reasonable to purchase core materials for the first year, and add more extended materials in subsequent years. Therefore, if Mountain Montessori Charter School finds that enrollment does not meet expectations, the school will choose to buy only core materials in its first year of operations. The core materials will be cross-referenced with the Curriculum to make sure no gaps are created by this approach. Additionally, the Steamboat Springs School District RE-2 has Montessori classroom materials in storage from the discontinued strand school and Steamboat Springs Montessori preschool has offered to donate unused and gently used Montessori classroom materials to MMCS.

Another Montessori preference is to have a Lead Teacher and an assistant teacher in grades 1-3. This results in a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:13.5. However, Mountain Montessori Charter School is aware that legally, a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:30 is acceptable. If revenue cannot support an assistant per class, Mountain Montessori Charter School will consider reduced staffing for the first few years. Some options are sharing an assistant between two elementary classes, or training parent volunteers to serve as classroom assistants. In addition, because we combine Kindergarteners with Preschoolers we have budgeted for and will maintain a ratio of 1:10 by having 3 aides at that level.

Full-time lead teacher salaries will average $45,000, with reasonable variance based on skills and experience. A $4,140 benefit package will be provided for each full-time employee. This will be expanded to include part time employees as the budget allows. Health and Dental insurance are components of this benefit package. Employees will pay approximately 50% of the premium for this insurance. It is the intent of the Mountain Montessori Governing Board to increase teacher pay as much as possible during subsequent years of operation, in conjunction with increased student enrollment and state funding.

The Head of School and other staff salaries are conservative based on the limited nature of the first year budget. It is our intent to increase salary schedules as our enrollment increases and as our actual budget picture becomes clearer. Skills which are expected to command a higher salary include Director Qualification, ELL training, and Special Education certification. Mountain Montessori Charter School has conservatively budgeted increases of 2% for now, given the uncertainty in state educational funding.

Mountain Montessori Charter School intends to fully contribute to the Public Employee's Retirement Association (PERA). This budget assumes a contribution rate of 18.35% per salary dollar of all eligible employees in Y1, 2016-17, with a 0.9% increase in each subsequent year.

Professional Development is a high priority of Mountain Montessori Charter School. We believe highly trained teachers provide the best education for our children and so this remains a consistent line item in our budget, increasing each year as the number of full time faculty grows to its full requirement. The annual calendar provides for 4 Professional Development days. These days are intended to provide teachers with the additional training they need in order to continually improve their instructional practice. Topics covered on Professional Development days will include but not be limited to: Montessori-specific initiatives, school-wide instructional initiatives, data and data tracking trainings. Teachers may receive outside professional development by attending conferences and/or travelling throughout the state to observe other Montessori schools as financially feasible.

Given Mountain Montessori Charter School is located in a rural area, the best opportunity to maximize quality ongoing professional development is to bring the training and professional development to our community. Expenses are reduced by having to pay for consultant/training fees and travel expense for one to two people rather than for the entire staff. The following are professional development opportunities planned:

1. Schedule and offer Montessori education, training and certification to hired teachers through the North American Montessori Center http://www.montessoritraining.net/?gclid=CjwKEAiAmuCnBRCLj4D7nMWqp1USJABcT4df8EReEhXgv5VYBH0Co2dSirb54MlLIcIKv6KTDVk2uxoCD7_w_wcB. The estimated cost of this training varies by the certification program for Primary Teachers, Lower Elementary Teacher and Upper Elementary Teachers. For Primary Teachers, the cost is $2200. The cost for Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary Teachers is $3000. This training will be offered to non-Montessori certified teachers and qualified assistants who desire to be Montessori certified. Mountain Montessori Charter School will pay for the entire training in exchange for a committed three year exclusive teaching contract with MMCS. Should a teacher be unable to fulfill the teaching contract, he/she will be required to pay for the training that was provided to him/her, prorated based upon the amount of time the exclusive teaching contract was fulfilled. Further, MMCS will research and communicate other Montessori training opportunities that have scholarships available for teachers to pursue http://amshq.org/About-AMS/What-We-Are-Doing/Awards-and-Grants/Teacher-Education-Scholarships . Of the potential Lead Teacher applicant pool, it is estimated that three (3) of the five (5) teachers will already have the required Montessori education for the appropriate level of classroom instruction.
2. Schedule Montessori training Consultant, Betsy Hoke twice a year to facilitate classroom observations and provide teacher training and mentoring (www.mentoringmontessori.com). Betsy charges $700 daily for her consulting fees. Additionally, her travel costs to Steamboat are estimated to be $135/night (see Appendix I for the consulting proposal).
3. Annually, staff will be offered a $100 stipend to apply to additional professional development of his/her choice upon the pre-approval of the Head of School. Should the cost of the additional training be more than the allotted stipend, the staff member will be responsible for paying the difference.
4. The Head of School and the Governing Board will be responsible for continually researching professional development opportunities that align with MMCS mission and vision. Every professional development opportunity will look to maximize reducing costs by either by bringing the training/development opportunity to Steamboat and making use of technology through online training/webinars.

The annual budget includes $2,200/teacher for Professional Development. This figure is based on the budgeted amount for Professional Development at other Montessori schools including Steamboat Springs Montessori Preschool & Kindergarten and Montessori del Mundo. Of the budgeted amount of $2,200 per teacher for professional development, $100 will be allocated to each teacher as a stipend for him/her to choose an appropriate and applicable training. The remaining funds will be used to fund other staff wide training and development.

The school will open with 5 full time teachers, 4.5 full time assistants. By year 5, this will grow to 6 full time teachers and 4.5 full time assistants. In the first several years of operation, the school will have assistant teachers, whom if qualified, will perform substitute teaching responsibilities as necessary. However, the budget does allow $10,000 for a substitute teacher to cover teacher days off.

The school will retain 3% of total state funded revenue as mandated by TABOR. In addition, a 2% Contingency fund will be established.

Montessori classrooms do not make extensive use of computers. Therefore, the budget shows at most 2 computers per classroom, with a small allocation for basic word processing and internet access software. Because of the structure of a Montessori class, two computers per room will allow each student sufficient computer access as well as computer use for assessments. The budget does allow one computer for each lead teacher.

The budget assumes that half-day Preschool students will occupy the same classroom as full-day Preschool and Kindergarten students. Full day students will not have the interruption of another set of half-day students joining after lunch. This means the school will not reuse the classroom in the afternoon for a second half day class.

Montessori materials are essential for the start-up and initial implementation of a quality Montessori program. The initial Montessori teaching equipment required for a new classroom is expensive. However, these materials are far more durable than standard textbooks. Therefore, we placed these materials in the required instructional supplies amount in our budget, and we also consider the Montessori equipment to be capital goods. In addition, we anticipate that the vast majority of these materials and equipment will be purchased with USDA-RD loan, fundraising, and/or grant funds during the Planning Year.

As detailed in the Insurance description on page 119, Mountain Montessori Charter School shall, at all times, maintain necessary and appropriate insurance coverage. This includes workers Compensation, Comprehensive

General Liability Insurance, Building and Contents, Errors & Omissions (School Leaders), and blanket Occupational Accident Insurance. This insurance will be based upon a student enrollment figure for the following coverage: Commercial Property Coverage, Commercial General Liability Coverage, Commercial Crime Coverage, Commercial Auto Coverage and Educators Protection Plus, which includes part of our Errors & Omission policy. Directors and Operators/Employee Practices Liability encompasses the remainder of Errors and Omissions. We will also have an umbrella policy. In addition, the insurance quote includes liability insurance for Special Education. (See Appendix P).

Mountain Montessori Charter School will hire an accountant, to be determined. This budget item, based on the size of our school, has been set at $4,000 annually. This finance professional will coordinate with the Head of School to continually keep the school's financial picture in focus. This contracted financial service provider will be experienced and will display full understanding of finance and budgeting with regard to Colorado charter schools and will provide regular financial reports to the Head of School and the Governing Board. In addition, this financial professional will provide Quickbooks or appropriate accounting software set up, training and maintenance, payroll once a month, as well as all budget creation and scenarios, bank reconciliations, budget review and management of accounts payable and accounts receivable. The school's finance professional will ensure that the fiscal functions of Mountain Montessori Charter School adhere to all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and will assist in presenting our proposed budget in the CDE-18 format.

CSI will retain 3% of total PPR revenues for administrative costs. CDE will retain an estimated 1% of PPR for additional costs incurred for schools authorized through CSI.

Special Education Funding

Funding of the Special Education Team will come from three sources. Each December a count of eligible IEP students enrolled in the school will be taken. The school will receive funding during the following school year to assist with the services required for those students. Estimates for the 2016-2017 school year put these funding levels at $1800/IEP student from IDEA and $1500/IEP student from ECEA. The third source of funding is the school's per pupil allotment of public funds. MMCS plans to set aside $800/student enrolled in the school into a Special Education Fund. This will be used in conjunction with the IDEA and ECEA funds to contract out Special Education services and to purchase any curricula, materials, or assessments needed by the special education team. At this time Mountain Montessori Charter School anticipates purchasing contracted Special Education services in the areas of School Psychologist, Speech Therapist, OT, PT, Special Education Consultant, Nurse and Gifted and Talented Consultant from licensed/certified, qualified professionals in the community.

Financial Reporting & Transparency

Mountain Montessori Charter School anticipates hiring an experienced accountant who performs audits for non-profit schools to conduct an annual external audit following the end of the fiscal year. The results of this audit will be made part of the public record. The results will also be used to plan the future financial activities of the Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board and Head of School. Mountain Montessori Charter School has received a proposal estimate of $5,000 annually from Catterson & Company PC .

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will be responsible for oversight of the school's finances. To fulfill this responsibility, the Board will have a standing Finance Committee and will hire a professional accountant to assist in maintaining the financial records. The Board Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring the school financial records are accurate and complete, and will provide monthly financial updates to the Board.

Financial Reporting

Mountain Montessori Charter School will comply with House Bill 14-1292, Public School Financial Transparency Act, and shall post financial information on-line, in a downloadable format, for free public access. All documents will be posted or updated within 60 days after completion or receipt of the applicable report, statement or document.

Required Financial Information

- Annual Budget
- Financial Audit
- Quarterly Financial Statements
- Salary Schedules or Policies
- Accounts Payable Check Registers
- Credit, Debit and Purchase Card Statements
- Investment Performance Reports or Statements
- Prior two budget years' financial information shall be maintained on-line, in a downloadable format, for free public access, until the end of the current budget year.

Purchased Services

Mountain Montessori Charter School plans to provide most instructional and administrative services directly with the exception of certain Special Education instructional requirements, a school counselor, an Outdoor Education Teacher from Yampatika, and a Before/After School teacher. At this time Mountain Montessori Charter School anticipates

purchasing Special Education services in the areas of School Psychologist, Speech Therapist, OT, PT, Special Education Consultant and Nurse from licensed, qualified professionals in the community. Based upon the most current demographic data provided to the CDE by Steamboat Springs School District RE-2, approximately 11% of the elementary school aged student population receives special education services. Mirroring this data, MMCS anticipates 15% of its student population will need such services in years 1-3, 16% in year 4, and 17% in year 5. Following the guidance of North Routt Community Charter School (NRCCS) to deduct a certain dollar amount from allocated PPR, MMCS will allocate $800 per student to be designated as Special Education Services as an expense. Any unused funds for Special Education Services will be put in a Special Education Services Fund for future need/use.

The services of a school counselor will also be purchased at $22/hour with an average of 2.5 hours/day during the school year. It is anticipated the counselor will work in six hour blocks twice a week. The Before/After School Program teacher will meet the requirements of a child-care provider and will be paid $12/hour.

Financial Policies

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will have the responsibility for setting and refining financial policies. At a minimum, those policies will include:

1. Checks over $2,000 must have two signatures.
2. Purchase orders must have two signatures.
3. The administrative assistant or Head of School will be responsible for petty cash disbursement, not to exceed $200.
4. All checks and purchase orders must have supporting documents such as a statement of services provided or an invoice, check copy or other documentation showing the purpose and amount of the check or purchase order and approval signature.

The Governing Board will approve more detailed Financial Policies and Procedures by January 2016.

Section H: Governance & Operations

Mountain Montessori Charter School fully recognizes the high level of commitment and dedication to excellence that must exist within the Governing Board in order to operate a successful charter school. Throughout the creation of this charter application the interim Governing Board (initially called the Steering Committee) has guided the planning process and coordination of curriculum development, legal and financial matters, operation issues, marketing initiative and outreach program.

The members of the Mountain Montessori Charter School interim Governing Board are:

Board Member	Specialty/Skill	Board Responsibility
Kristen Rockford	Small Business Owner, former Board member of Montessori Preschool	Governance Plan, Budget/Finance, Facility Search
Jennifer Zuccone	Small Business Owner, education background in Social Work & Psychology	Public Relations, Community Outreach, Fundraising/Grant Writing
Jennifer Brossett	Former Lead Teacher of Laurel Street Preschool and Owner of a child care facility	Montessori Philosophy, Montessori Curriculum and Education Plans, Staffing
Judy Zuccone	Quality Control & Compliance	Governance Plan

See Appendix F2 for Biographies and Resumes of the Current Governing Board.

Throughout the process of our program development, the Board has engaged in conversations with private and charter Montessori schools locally and throughout Colorado, with the Colorado League of Charter Schools, with the Colorado Department of Education, with the Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, with Montessori Public School Consulting, with Montessori Education Center of the Rockies, with the Montessori Foundation, and with the Colorado Montessori Association. The result of our extensive research and training has culminated in this charter application for Mountain Montessori Charter School.

The interim Governing Board recognizes the importance of continuity among its leadership. Board member overlap is built into the system as Mountain Montessori Charter School moves from the interim Board to an initial

Governing Board after the approval of its charter, and finally into its first election and nomination of Board members.

The Board has filed its Articles of Incorporation (See Appendix F3) with the State of Colorado and approved its Bylaws (See Appendix F4), Ethical Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Disclosure Statement Policy (See Appendix F5 and F6), and Grievance Process and Dispute Resolution policies (Appendix F7).

Board Development & Training

It is the guarantee of Mountain Montessori Charter School that the interim Board members will successfully complete all 30 CDE board Training Online Modules (approximately 15 hours of board training) by January 2016. All new Board members will also be required to complete these trainings within 3 months of being elected to serve on the Governing Board. In addition, Mountain Montessori Charter School believes that ongoing professional development for its Board members is vital in order for the board to govern the school in an informed manner. Upon charter authorization, the MMCS Governing Board will apply for the Colorado League of Charter School's STAGE 6 Grant. This grant is a planning grant awarded to schools that are approved to open and can be used to receive customized governance training or, if the board has already received governance training, the grant can be used for professional development based on a school's need. Additionally, this grant can be used for admission for two individuals (a board representative and an administrative representative) to the League's annual conference.

In keeping with this position, Mountain Montessori Charter School encourages the participation of its Board members at Governing Board conferences, conventions, workshops and seminars that provide legitimate educational experiences related to school operations in general and charter school operations specifically. The Board Chair or designee shall report monthly on upcoming in-services and conference opportunities for Board members. The Board Chair will also investigate and arrange in-house, in-service opportunities for board members when issues lend themselves to local study. Members who attend these various programs shall share information, materials, and recommendations that result from the session by reporting on the program to the entire Board. Incoming Board members will be supplied with a Board Member manual and documents specific to the history, policies, and procedures of Mountain Montessori Charter School. The Board Member manual will include, but not be limited to:

- The Mountain Montessori Charter School charter application and contract;
- Other legal documents such as Articles of Incorporation (Appendix F3), Bylaws (Appendix F4), policies, etc.;
- Charter school mission, vision, and strategic plan;

- The educational plan of the charter school including educational philosophy, learning outcomes for students, curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment methods, etc.;
- Board structure and operations including policies, description of Governing Board's responsibilities, overall committee structure and responsibility descriptions for each committee, decision-making methods, organizational chart, list of current Board members, titles, and all affiliations;
- Colorado open meetings/open records law;
- Staffing structure, job description of Head of School, and the position performance review procedures;
- Finances including Mountain Montessori Charter School's financial history, current financial condition and long-range financial plans, previous year's audit and budget, the current annual budget, the school's investment and banking procedures and other relevant financial information;
- School statistics and annual report;
- The CDE's Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook;
- Other documents as deemed necessary by the Head of School or Governing Board

A copy of all Board documents will be kept on file in the school office.

Colorado Nonprofit Corporation

Mountain Montessori Charter School will be an independent charter school and will be operated as a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation, pursuant to Colorado law upon approval of this charter. Mountain Montessori Charter School will constitute itself as a Colorado non-profit public benefit corporation pursuant to Colorado law and is in the process of obtaining 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status upon charter authorization and approval. The school shall be governed pursuant to the Bylaws adopted by the incorporators, and subsequently amended pursuant to the amendment process specified in the Bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter, the Charter Schools Act, and all other applicable laws.

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will abide by the adopted policies and state and federal laws, rules and regulations, unless specifically waived. The MMCS Governing Board will operate as a policy setting Board in accordance with the Bylaws of Mountain Montessori Charter School. The responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the school and the assurance of achieving the Board's long-term goals will be delegated to the Head of School. One of the Board's primary roles is to assure that the Head of School is operating in accordance to the Board's directives and executive limitations. The MMCS Governing Board has or will:

1. Determine the school's Mission, Vision and Purpose and ensure that the school is on the correct path to follow the Mission, Vision and Purpose.
2. Determine all school policies in accordance with the school's Mission, goals and educational program.
3. Create and maintain Staff and Parent Handbooks (to be developed upon charter authorization).
4. Select and evaluate the Head of School.

5. Provide proper financial oversight and assist in developing and approving the annual budget.
6. Ensure adequate resources are provided for the organization to fulfill its Mission and its short and long term goals.
7. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability. All Board members, as well as employees, will annually sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement (Appendix F5). Board members will also be required to sign a Board Member Agreement (Appendix F6).
8. Be responsible for final accountability for the school's academic success, organizational viability and faithfulness to the terms of the contract with the Charter School Institute.
9. Recruit and orient new Board members, assess Board performance, and assure ongoing Board member training and development.
10. Review performance in meeting prior year's goals and establish new annual goals.

Upon approval of this charter application, the Mountain Montessori Charter School founding Governing Board will begin the search for a Head of School. The founding Board plans to select and hire a Head of School by January 2016.

Upon hiring a Head of School, the Board will undertake an extensive and comprehensive briefing for the Head of School on activities to date, including but not limited to, a review of legal documents created and filed by the Governing Board, Governing Board governance and structure, a review of the charter application, a detailed explanation of the Governing Board duties and Head of School responsibilities, and the contract negotiated between MMCS and CSI. It is likely that the Board and Head of School will undertake a strategic planning session that will cover short-term and long-term goals and objectives for the school.

Number of Governing Board Members, How Selected, and Term Limits

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will consist of an odd number of voting members; no less than 5, no more than 7, not including the 2 ex-officio members. The Board size will consist of the following:

a. Two parent elected voting members, elected at the annual Parent Council meeting in May. They will serve two year terms with no term limits. One parent position will be elected in odd years and the other in even years. One parent representative on the initial board will serve a three year term.
b. Three to five Board elected positions will be voting positions and consist of community members who have specialized skills that can assist the Board in maintaining fiduciary integrity of the school (financial, legal, facilities, accounting, grant writing, etc.). Each position will serve a two year term, with no more than two consecutive term limits. To ensure that these positions are staggered, one community

representative on the initial board will serve a three year term. Interested community members may file an application to be considered for one of these positions. These positions, as they become open, will be nominated and voted upon by the Governing Board at the annual meeting as indicated.

c. The Head of the School will also serve as a non-voting member to facilitate communication with the Board.
d. One faculty-elected member, elected at the annual meeting, by the faculty, will **serve in a non-voting** capacity to facilitate communication between the faculty and the board. This person will serve a one year term with no term limits.

Board Recruitment Efforts

Mountain Montessori Charter School is currently recruiting board members to fill our remaining three positions.

We are utilizing the following networks in seeking appropriate candidates for board membership:

- Prospective Parents
- Members of the Steamboat Springs Business community
- Members of the Steamboat Springs Fundraising community

We plan to recruit the remaining Board members over the course of 2015 and 2016 with a Full Governing Board by June 2016.

Mountain Montessori Charter School is mindful that effective school governance requires competence in a broad range of areas. Nine areas have been identified as especially important skills to have on the Governing Board. The Governing Board will actively seek out parents and non-parent community members to fill these roles, with the desire to create a well-rounded, professional and experienced Board:

1. Facilities management
2. Budget management and finance
3. Personnel management
4. Fundraising
5. Marketing and public relations
6. Information Technology
7. Community relations and multicultural competence
8. Statutory and regulatory compliance/legal experiences

9. Montessori educational background

Governing Board Meetings

The Governing Board will meet once a month when school is in session, with a minimum of ten meetings per calendar year. Notices for meetings shall be published and posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, the notice will state time, place and purpose of the meeting in accordance with Colorado's Open Meeting Law. A quorum will be a majority of the Board members in office at the time of any meeting, and a vote of the simple majority of board members will be an official decision for any binding action. However a two thirds majority vote is required to amend the school's bylaws.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Governing Board may be held whenever called by the Board Chair or at the request of any two Board members. Notice of such a meeting shall be given personally, and e-mailed to each Board member at least three (3) days before the day on which the meeting is to be held. Notices for special meetings shall be published at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting, the notice will state time, place and purpose of the meeting in accordance with Colorado's Open Meetings Law. The notice will be posted on the Mountain Montessori Charter School website and in the administrative offices of the school.

Emergency Meetings

Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair or at the request of any two Board members with less than 24 hour notice only if an actual emergency exists which would not permit the meeting to be a Special Meeting. The minutes of the meeting must describe the emergency justifying less than 24 hours notice of a meeting.

Commitment to Nondiscrimination

Mountain Montessori Charter School shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, including, without limitation, the constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Open Meetings Law

Mountain Montessori Charter School acknowledges and agrees that it is subject to the provisions of the Colorado Open Meetings Law, C.R.S., § 24-6-401 et seq., and that it will comply with the provisions of such law in connection with all of its activities.

Governing Board Officers

The Officers of Mountain Montessori Charter School shall be the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. All Officers shall be members of the Mountain Montessori Charter Governing Board. Officers shall be chosen annually at the first meeting following the appointment and election of new Governing Board members at the annual meeting. The powers and duties of each Officer are outlined below:

Chair: The Chair shall, subject to the direction and supervision of the Governing Board,: (1) be the chief executive officer of the corporation and have general and active control of its affairs and business and general supervision of its officers, agents and specified employees; (2) preside at all meetings of the Governing Board; (3) see that all resolutions of the Governing Board are carried into effect; and (4) perform all other duties incident to the office of Chair and as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the Governing Board. The Chair shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees and may be designated chairperson of those committees by the Governing Board.

Secretary: The secretary shall (1) keep the minutes of the proceedings of the Governing Board, and the members (if any); (2) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law; (3) be custodian of the corporate records and of the seal of the corporation; (4) keep at the corporation's registered office or principal place of business within Colorado a record containing the names and addresses of all members (if any); and (5) in general, perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the president or by the Governing Board. Assistant secretaries, if any, shall have the same duties and powers, subject to supervision by the secretary.

Treasurer: The treasurer shall (1) have the care and custody of all its funds, securities, evidences of indebtedness and other personal property and deposit the same in accordance with the instructions of the Governing Board; (2) monitor compliance with all requirements imposed on the corporation as a tax exempt organization described in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (3) upon request of the Board, make such reports to it as may be required at any time; and (4) perform all other duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such office by the president or the Governing Board. Assistant treasurers, if any, shall have the same powers and duties, subject to the supervision by treasurer.

Standing Committees: The Governing Board may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Board members in office, establish standing committees. The Governing Board may also establish other committees, as it may from time to time deem necessary to assist in the governance and operations of Mountain Montessori Charter School. At a minimum, said committees shall include an Executive Committee, a School Accountability Committee, and a Finance Committee. All committee chairs shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board Members. Non-members may also be permitted to sit on committees and vote. Such committees shall have and exercise only the power and authority specifically prescribed and granted by the Governing Board in the resolutions establishing them. Committees may only make recommendations to the Governing Board.

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

1. self-management of the Board (orienting and training new Board Members, evaluating the Board and key staff persons); and
2. interviewing and presenting new Board candidates to the Governing Board for vote; and
3. reviewing personnel policies and employee manuals prepared by the Head of School; and 4. acting as the grievance committee for employees of Mountain Montessori Charter School; and
5. such other responsibilities as may be prescribed by the Board from time to time.

School Accountability Committee: As required in C.R.S. § 22-11-401 to 406, this committee will:

1. adopt school goals and objectives for the improvement of education in the school;
2. adopt a plan to improve education achievement, reduce the gaps in performance of groups within the school, increase the ratings on the state accountability report, and assure the school's accreditation status;
3. make recommendations to decisions affecting the educational process are advancing or impeding student achievement;
4. report to students and parents, as well as the Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board on the educational performance of the school and providing data for the appraisal of such performance;
5. make recommendations to the Head of School on the expenditure of all school grants;
6. make recommendations to the Head of School on safety issues related to the school environment;
7. assist in the creation of the school's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP);
8. Charter renewal-pursuant to the terms of the authorizer contract, the School Accountability Committee will activate its charter renewal process two years prior to the charter renewal date. This committee is

responsible for assuring that all material and data collection systems are in place to provide a comprehensive picture of the school's performance and state of the school.

In concert with the renewal cycle this the School Accountability Committee will perform a comprehensive status analysis in all vital areas of school performance including annual stakeholder satisfaction, student achievement, teacher and administrative quality and efficiency, fiscal health, and sustainability. The results of this analysis will assist the school in developing a strategic plan for the next five years of operations.

Finance Committee: This committee shall assist the treasurer and administration in their efforts to keep accurate accounts of all monies of the Corporation, received or disbursed; Review the deposit of all monies, electronic fund transfers, drafts and checks; Assist administration in the care and custody of the corporate funds and securities; Review the monthly bank statements; Review the policies and procedures of administration related to the power to endorse for deposit all notes, checks and drafts received by the Corporation; Review the proper procedures related to vouchers therefore; Render to the Board Chair and the Governing Board, whenever required (at the monthly Board meetings), an account of all of the transactions of the organization as compiled by the Administration of the Corporation of the financial condition of the Corporation, sign, in the name of the Corporation, instruments requiring a second signature of the Governing Board; and perform such other duties and have such other powers as, from time to time, may be prescribed by the Governing Board or by the Board Chair.

Advisory Committee: Advisory members may assist the Governing Board in establishing long- or short-term working committees to carry out necessary functions in order to realize the vision of Mountain Montessori Charter School. Advisory members will not exercise Board functions.

Parent Council: The Parent Council will be made up of parents/legal guardians of children currently attending the school, and grandparent volunteers. The Parent Council will ensure the voice of the school's parent community and its students' will be heard. The Parent Council will nominate and elect the parent representatives on the Governing Board. The Parent Council will also be responsible for overseeing the volunteer program and fundraising. Please see refer to the Parent and Community Involvement section of this application for further details.

Commitment to Continued Improvement

The Mountain Montessori Charter School Governing Board will receive annual training on the topics of finance, care and loyalty responsibilities and best practices. Board members will sign a Mountain Montessori Charter

School Ethical Conduct Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement annually and will be expected to complete all Colorado Department of Education Board training modules within 3 months of being elected to the Board. The Board will operate with confidence and effectiveness within the governance structures previously outlined. By allowing all interested in the school to have a voice, we will create a school community where everyone feels supported and appreciated. Through a balanced and high functioning governance structure, we will enable a healthy school culture and, therefore a place where children will thrive.

Head of School

The Head of School is fully responsible for the daily administration of the Charter School. The responsibilities of the Head of School shall include but not be limited to the following (refer to Appendix K for Head of School job description):

- Acts as Liaison between the Charter School and its district, parents, and community at large.
- Remains current with legislation and educational trends affecting the Charter School.
- Is responsible for on-going monitoring of the budget and drafts the annual budget for approval by the Board.
- Secures facilities as necessary for the Charter School as directed by the Board.
- Is a non-voting member of the Governing Board
- Is responsible for the day to day functioning of Mountain Montessori Charter School
- Is responsible for developing & recommending draft policies and procedures for the Board's approval.
- Is the initial point of contact for dispute resolution
- Is responsible for the school leadership & milieu
- Is responsible for student/staff discipline
- Is responsible for Professional Development activities
- Is responsible for ensuring that the curriculum aligns with the mission, vision and the standards.
- Is responsible for developing the Mountain Montessori Annual Accountability Report.
- Monitors all elements of academic accountability.
- Is responsible for staff hiring/firing
- Is responsible for monitoring the on-going student data collection system

Employment Policies

A DRAFT Employee Handbook is included in Appendix F9. The DRAFT Employee Handbook describes the relationship between the school and the employees.

Enrollment Policy

Mountain Montessori Charter School welcomes all students and strives to create and maintain a diverse student population. MMCS does not discriminate against applicants or their families on the basis of: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, parent's marital status or political affiliation, or any other protected status. This enrollment policy is designed to meet the requirements of C.R.S. § 22-30.5-104 (3), ensuring access to the school for all, from academically low-achieving students to exceptional students, and including students with special needs. This enrollment policy is also intended to comply with federal guidelines to receive federal startup funding.

It is anticipated that enrollment requests will exceed the capacity of the school both in the first year of operation and in subsequent years. Considering this, Mountain Montessori Charter School will adhere to the following criteria for enrollment into the school:

Currently enrolled students have priority for enrollment in Mountain Montessori Charter School for the following school year. Beginning in January, parents, guardians, or legal custodians of the students currently attending MMCS must declare their intentions to re-enroll in the school in the next academic school year. The Mountain Montessori Charter School website will post a reminder to parents/legal guardians of the need to complete and return re-enrollment forms, copies of the re-enrollment forms, and the final day the forms will be accepted. This intent to re-enroll information will also be sent to parents/legal guardians via email. It is the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to return the re-enrollment forms NO LATER than January 31st. MMCS will work in partnership with Integrated Community to translate all of the above correspondence in all other necessary non-English languages.

On the first business day of February, the Head of School will determine the number of spaces available for new students in each grade level for the upcoming school year. If there are more applicants for positions than available spots, the Head of School will conduct a lottery. Priority for available Kindergarten through 8th grade spots will be allocated to the following groups:

1. Children of Founding Families
    a. Children of "founding families" are defined as 1) children of current or former Mountain Montessori Charter School Board Members (or Steering Committee); or 2) children with an Intent to Enroll Form, in Start-up year, received by June 30, 2016, AND whose families have completed a minimum of 20 hours of volunteerism with MMCS by August 15, 2016. In subsequent years, these families must also submit a re-enrollment form by January 31st.

2. Children of full-time Mountain Montessori Charter School staff.
3. Siblings of returning Mountain Montessori Charter School students.
    a. Should there be more siblings of returning Mountain Montessori Charter School students than enrollment openings for a given grade level, enrollment shall be offered by computerized random selection from this priority group for the designated grade level.
    b. Sibling means: any child/children living in the same household or with a common parent(s)/legal guardians in separate households. This includes children who become siblings by marriage and/or adoption. Any sibling born while a student is enrolled may retain that status even if the original student graduates from Mountain Montessori Charter School before he/she reaches Kindergarten. If sibling priority is forfeited more than once, sibling priority will no longer be honored.
    c. Any sibling offered a position in the first semester must enroll or forfeit their position, and are then subject to general lottery rules.
4. All district residents on the Enrollment List.
5. All non-district residents on the Enrollment List.

The number of children of founders/employees given priority enrollment shall not exceed 20% of the total MMCS enrollment in any given academic year. In the event these two groups exceed the 20% limit of the total population in any given academic year, priority within this group shall be given to:

1. Children of current or former Mountain Montessori Charter School Design Team or Governing Board members.
2. Children of full-time staff; and
3. Children with an Intent to Enroll form in the start-up year, received by June 30, 2016, AND whose families have completed a minimum of 20 hours of volunteerism with MMCS by August 15, 2016. In the subsequent years, these families must also submit a re-enrollment form by January 30 of each year.

Any children from these three categories who fall outside of the 20% limit shall be eligible for the general school lottery. If necessary, founding families will be placed in order of the number of volunteer hours they have contributed prior to August 15, 2016 to determine which families will be entered into the lottery.

Lottery Eligibility:

1. Prior to enrolling in the lottery, interested parents/legal guardians of potential students are strongly encouraged to attend an informational workshop. The Head of School will notify MMCS' partner, Integrated Community of the Lottery and the informational workshop as a means to reach out to the ELL population and the at-risk population. The workshops will be lead by MMCS Staff, providing an overview of Montessori as it applies to child development, the academic content of the Montessori curriculum, and details about Mountain Montessori Charter School and the enrollment process. The informational workshops will be held once a semester while school is in session. Dates, times and location for the workshops will be listed on Mountain Montessori Charter School's website and will also be advertised in the local newspaper. The Executive Director of Integrated Community has agreed to provide a staff member to provide translation services for non-English speaking families (see Appendix G2).
2. Parents who wish to be considered for the lottery must complete an enrollment form by January 31st. The Administrative Assistant will compile a database of all families with completed enrollment forms in order to ensure their inclusion in the lottery.
3. Placement in a program is determined by the student's age as of October 1st for students entering Kindergarten or 1st grade in the upcoming school year. If the incoming student is enrolling in 2nd through 6th grade, he/she will be placed in the grade level which corresponds to the grade level he/she would be entering in his or her former school. Each lottery wait list will remain active for one school year. In order to participate in the subsequent year's lottery, parents/legal guardians must indicate that they want their child to be considered for that lottery, and must update their enrollment form by January 31st.
   Further policy regarding the lottery system will be determined by the Governing Board.
4. Any potential student who is offered a position and declines placement in Mountain Montessori Charter School will lose any and all lottery positions for that particular student. Students my reapply for the lottery the following day; however their names will be placed at the end of the compiled wait list.
5. After available spots for each grade level have been filled by the lottery, remaining students will be placed on an "order drawn" list that will become the wait list for openings which may arise in the upcoming school year. After November 1st, no new student will be enrolled in the current school year.

Lottery Dates:

Mountain Montessori Charter School's lottery for available positions in the upcoming school year will be held on the second Wednesday in February, unless MMCS notifies publicly otherwise. Families interested in having their child/children included in the lottery must have completed an enrollment form for each child, and have submitted it to MMCS by January 31st. Parents/legal guardians whose children are selected in the lottery for available spots

in the upcoming school year will be notified the same day by phone of their child/children's selection. If the parents cannot be reached on the same day, the Administrative Assistant will continue to attempt verbal notification for the next four (4) days. If parents/legal guardians are not reached during that time, they will forfeit their child/children's position in the lottery, and their child/children's names will be placed at the bottom of the wait list. Spanish and other non-English notifications will be provided for those parents/legal guardians who have indicated Spanish or another non-English language as the preferred language. Mountain Montessori Charter School must receive a verbal confirmation of intent to enroll each selected student no later than five (5) business days after the lottery and notification, and parents/legal guardians must complete an Enrollment Packet within ten (10) days after the lottery notification.

If a family does not respond to the lottery notification after five (5) business days, their child/children's name(s) will be withdrawn and that available spot will be offered to the child at the top of the wait list. Should a position in the school become available from August 1st through October 10th, parents/legal guardians with children on the wait list will have two (2) days upon verbal notification to notify Mountain Montessori Charter School of acceptance of those positions. MMCS will attempt to contact parents/legal guardians for two (2) days only during this time period. It is the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of a potential student to maintain current contact information with the school.

Kindergarten Lottery:

1. Eligible applicants may participate in the lottery for Kindergarten up to two years and seven months prior to starting Kindergarten. Parents/legal guardians interested in participating in this early lottery must follow the same steps outlined above in Lottery Eligibility and Lottery Dates. Parents/legal guardians whose children gain a spot in the Kindergarten may or may not choose to enroll their children in the MMCS preschool program. If they choose to enroll in the preschool program, then they will be able to continue into the public charter portion of MMCS without participating in the lottery a second time. If they choose not to enroll their student in the MMCS preschool program, they may wait to enroll their child into the Kindergarten for the school year position allocated in the early lottery. ("Charter School Program", Title V, Part B, Non-Regulatory Guidance, C-6, p. 13).
2. Mountain Montessori Charter School will offer both full-day and half-day Kindergarten positions. The half-day positions will be offered free of charge due to public funding received by the school. Full-day Kindergarten position will require tuition to cover the portion of the school day not covered by public funding. MMCS will strongly encourage full-day enrollment for each applicant, though it will accommodate those families who are admitted through the lottery and prefer the half-day Kindergarten

option. Based on discussion with other public Montessori schools in Colorado, the demand for full-day Kindergarten is high, with reports of 90% enrollment for full-day Kindergarten. MMCS anticipates a similar demand for full-day Kindergarten.

3. Details of the tuition-based preschool and full-day Kindergarten are outlined in the preschool enrollment section. Whether a child is enrolled in full-day Kindergarten or half-day Kindergarten, all Kindergarten students will be assessed for academic and social preparedness before being allowed to enter 1st grade.

Preschool Enrollment

Applicants for the preschool program at Mountain Montessori Charter School must be at least three years old as of October 1st of the upcoming school year. Children up to six years of age as of October 1st of the upcoming school year may also enroll. Children must be fully potty trained with the ability to go to and from the restroom independently. Applicants must also be able to express their needs and ideas to adults, as well as take direction from adults.

Three and four year old students enrolled in the preschool program attend school five days per week. There is an option to attend half-day or full-day. All enrolled Kindergartners will strongly be encouraged to attend the full-day Kindergarten program. In alignment with the Montessori Method of education, children in Kindergarten normally attend a full day of school, five days a week. Full-day Kindergarten is especially important for newly enrolled students, in particular, for those students without prior Montessori experience. The extra time in school allows students to adjust to Montessori methods. Half-day Kindergarten students will be accommodated. The preschool program will follow the same school calendar as the elementary and middle school programs for the school.

Children with Previous Montessori Experience

Children may apply for enrollment to Mountain Montessori Charter School without previous Montessori experience. Parents/legal guardians of children applying for enrollment without any previous Montessori experience will be required to participate in a Montessori Transition Program. Due to the different environment and practices in a Montessori school, the transition program serves to ensure student success at Mountain Montessori Charter School. Applicants who do not have previous Montessori experience will have the same chance of enrolling at the school as an applicant with prior Montessori experience.

Montessori Transition Program

As part of the enrollment process, a transition workshop will be scheduled for all families transferring from other schools. The workshop will be conducted a week prior to school beginning for the academic year. The participants will include the student, parent/legal guardian, the Lead Teacher for each class, and the Head of School. Once attending school, teachers will assess and monitor students to ensure they are successfully transitioning into the Montessori program.

Waitlists

Mountain Montessori Charter School will keep two waitlists: sibling and enrollment. As spots become available, students will be selected from these lists in the following order:

1. Sibling Waitlist-Siblings of enrolled students who were not granted enrollment due to lack of space at their grade level, in the order their enrolled sibling was drawn from the initial lottery.
2. Enrollment Waitlist-Students not granted enrollment in the initial lottery in the order they were drawn.

Withdrawal Policy

Students withdrawing from Mountain Montessori Charter School will be asked to complete a withdrawal packet which includes a parent survey/questionnaire regarding reasons for withdrawal from the school, the contact information for the new school, and a release form so that MMCS is legally authorized to send any pertinent academic records and all legally required documents such as IEP's to the new school.

Transfer Policy

Parents/legal guardians of students transferring to MMCS mid-year will be required to submit signed transfer paperwork and meet with their child's new teacher at least one day before the child can begin school. Teachers will be required to meet with transfer parents within 2-3 days of the time they are informed by the office of a new transfer student being assigned to their class. The orientation meetings are important for building a relationship between the new parents/student, educating the parents about the nature of the program, and informing the teacher about the students' level and academic/social progress so that the student can begin with high-quality, differentiated instruction from the first day the child enters the school. After November 1st, no new student will be enrolled in the current school year.

MMCS will request academic records, including IEP's , from the student's previous school. Parents/legal guardians must provide IEP documentation or inform the office that an IEP exists at the time of submission of the transfer paperwork.

Enrollment Goals/Projections

After consulting with various other charter schools and public Montessori schools throughout Colorado, Mountain Montessori Charter School will start out with minimum grade levels and maintain steady growth. Montessori curriculum is a progressive program of education, building upon skills and knowledge acquired in previous years. Montessori differs significantly from other methods of education, therefore, transitioning into a Montessori program can be challenging for children entering into a Montessori school after 1st or 2nd grade.

The growth in enrollment numbers below reflects the desire of Mountain Montessori Charter School Design Team to manage student transition into our school to ensure overall success of the program. The chart outlines Mountain Montessori Charter School's anticipated growth from the first year of operation through its fifth year. In the first year of operation, MMCS is projected to enroll 94 students in grades Kindergarten through 6th grade. The preschool is projected to have 32 students in the first year, for a total student population of 126 students. In year five, MMCS projects 124 enrolled students, Kindergarten through 8th grade. The preschool is projected to have 36 students enrolled in year five, bringing the total student enrollment in that year to 160. ***Mountain Montessori Charter School requests the right to adjust the projections in the chart below to meet Montessori best practices in alignment with the final enrollment demographics.***

	Projected Number of Students by Year				
Classes	**YEAR 1 2016**	**YEAR 2 2017**	**YEAR 3 2018**	**YEAR 4 2019**	**YEAR 5 2020**
PreK-3 yr old	16	16	16	17	18
PreK-4 yr old	16	16	16	17	18
Kindergarten (5 yr old)	16	16	16	17	18
Total Primary	48	48	48	51	54
First (6 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Second (7 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Third (8 yr old)	18	14	14	15	18
Total Lower Elementary	54	42	42	45	54
Fourth (9)	8	11	10	10	9
Fifth (10)	8	11	9	9	9

Sixth (11)	8	11	9	9	10
Total Upper Elementary	24	33	28	28	28
Seventh (12)			9	10	12
Eighth (13)			9	10	12
Total Middle School	0	0	18	20	24
Total # students	126	123	136	144	160
Total # funded by PPR	87.28	84.28	97.28	102.86	116.44

Projected enrollment numbers for year two decrease purposefully to account for those families that may decide a Montessori based program is not for them. Further, the decrease in enrollment takes into account students who will have graduated and a potential lull in enrollment due to families taking a "wait and see" approach to a new start-up school in the community.

Mountain Montessori Charter School will open in the fall of 2016 with two Primary classrooms, two Lower Elementary classrooms and one Upper Elementary classroom. Total enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year is projected to be 126 students. At full implementation (2021), MMCS will serve 160 students in Early Childhood Education through 8th grade.

Projected Number of Classes by Year

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Pre-K & K	2	2	2	2	2
Lower E	2	2	2	2	2
Upper E	1	2	1	1	1
Middle			1	1	1
Total # classes	5	6	6	6	6

Student Discipline

Mountain Montessori School of Conduct (adapted in part and with permission from Ft. Collins Montessori Charter application)

At MMCS our goal is to help each student attain the independence, self-confidence, and skill to become self-disciplined. The school will provide a community with structure and order that aids students in the development of self-discipline and respect for self and others. Our common goal is the creation of a supportive educational environment where a love for learning is fostered. With this, there are certain rights, responsibilities, and consequences that contribute to a healthy environment.

A special technique is necessary for the teacher who is to lead the child along their path of discipline and self-mastery (reference The Montessori Method, Maria Montessori). The MMCS community will offer a positive attitude toward children and own an awareness of the developmental psychology of students. Students will be taught that school is a peaceful place based upon mutual respect and care for the community. Teachers and staff model and emphasize appropriate behaviors, and teach students problem solving skills and conflict resolution from the very earliest ages. Part of the Montessori Model is helping children master inner discipline through natural consequences. Teachers will explain and make sure that children understand limits, the reasons for limits, and how to stay safe and secure. All limits can be traced back to three fundamental and basic responsibilities of every member of the MMCS community:

- We respect ourselves
- We respect each other
- We respect our surroundings

Peace Curriculum: Inherent within the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy is the peace curriculum, and with that, the goal to teach children to be skilled peacemakers. In MMCS, peace curriculum will be tied into every day works and common interactions with teachers. This curriculum includes the following guidelines:

- Students are taught how to interact with others appropriately with compassion, respectfulness, and conflict resolution.
- Students will be taught how to actively listen to each other and guided on how to empathize with each other, as well as how to respect and welcome differences.
- Children will learn that making good choices is their responsibility and their own right.
- Students will be encouraged to use communication skills to the best of their developmental ability in order to resolve problems with others.

- Preschool/Kindergarten students will be given a lesson on, and asked to use the "Peace Rose" in assisting in conflict resolution. (see Appendix Q for an "example peace rose lesson")

It is our intention as a school to allow children the opportunity to master this inner discipline to the best of their ability. However, in the event that MMCS must take a more formal direction, MMCS will provide consequences based on C.R.S. 22-33-106 "Grounds for suspension, dismissal and denial of admittance" (located in F8 "CRS 22-33-106").

Suspension Procedure:

In the misfortunate event of possible suspension, the following steps must be taken

1. Documentation of unacceptable behavior and/or any grounds for suspension as listed in C.R.S. 22-33-106
2. Meeting with staff member(s) and Head of School to discuss charges and allegations
3. Written notification to parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of suspension including
    a. A statement of charges against the student
    b. A statement of the basis of the allegation
    c. Documentation signed by the Head of School authorizing the suspension
4. Informal Hearing where the student is given the opportunity before the Head of School to deny or admit to the allegation(s).
5. The suspended student must leave school immediately, and will not be allowed to attend any school activities on or off campus until the student is reinstated in the school
6. Final meeting with Head of School and parent(s)/guardian(s) for reinstatement to occur
    - The Head of School may decide on an in school or out of school suspension as he/she sees fit.
    - Under C.R.S. 22-33-106 1a, 1b, 1c, or 1e, the Head of School may suspend a student for a period of up to five (5) days
    - Under C.R.S. 22-33-106 1d, the Head of School may suspend a student for a period of up to ten (10) days

Student Dismissal Procedure:

In the most severe cases where the Head of School is considering dismissal of a student, the following steps must be taken:

1. Written notice

a. Head of School will give written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student with pending dismissal at least five (5) days prior to the contemplated action
b. Written notice will be mailed to the last known address of the student and handed to parent(s)/guardian(s) if possible
c. The contents of notice must include the following
    - Basic allegations leading to the contemplated dismissal
    - Date of a hearing if requested by the student or parent(s)/guardian(s) including time, date, and location
    - Statement that the student may be present during hearing and may be accompanied by their parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or legal representation
    - Statement that failure to participate in hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights

2. The offered hearing will be conducted by an ad hoc discipline committee consisting of the Head of School, and two other staff. No members of the discipline committee are permitted to discuss the details of hearing with anyone outside of the committee. The hearing will be conducted as follows:
    - In a closed session except those deemed necessary by the discipline committee, the student, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or legal representation.
    - Any additional individuals may be admitted only if they have pertinent information but only to the extent necessary to provide such information and to answer questions related to such information. These individuals must not be offered any other information relating to the hearing.
    - Any information/testimony will be presented under oath only if requested by either party.
    - A sufficient record of the proceedings will be kept by an unrelated third party to enable a prepared transcript if either party should request it, at the expense of the requesting party.
3. The discipline committee will render a written decision no later than five (5) school days after the hearing. The written decision will be delivered to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) and to the MMCS Governing Board.
4. The discipline committee may establish conditions for readmission
5. Duration of dismissal may not extend beyond the current school year

Appeal Process:

In the event that an appeal is requested, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Written decision by the discipline committee must be made to the MMCS Governing Board with new evidence no more than 10 days after a decision is rendered.

2. The appeal will consist of review of new facts, arguments and information presented.
3. The Board may vote to affirm, reverse, or modify the decision. This vote is to be documented by the minutes of the meeting
4. The Board's decision will be reduced to writing for the purpose of further judicial review pursuant to state law.

Re-admittance:

It's the school's policy to assist students in any way possible to enable them to complete their program. Students who withdraw or are dismissed may be reinstated at the discretion of the discipline committee, and the Head of School.

Students shall be readmitted to school after dismissal only after a meeting between the Head of School and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) has taken place unless the Head of School is unable to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) or if the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to appear for scheduled meetings. In this case, the Head of School may choose to readmit the student.

Procedure for Re-directable Behaviors in all grade levels:

Many inappropriate behaviors can be considered teachable moments and give staff the opportunity to re-direct the child. These behaviors do not include physical contact with another student, but may be disruptive situations for the school community. These teachable moments will be addressed as follows:

1. The teacher will redirect student and encourage him/her to engage in his/her work.
2. If no positive response is being made by step 1., the teacher will help the student find a place in the classroom to calm his/her body and observe. At this step, verbal communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) is strongly recommended.
3. If disruption continues or escalates after step 2., the student will then be escorted to the office by the teacher and remain in the office, supervised and no more than 10 min, and as appropriate to the child's age. This is not a "time out" but rather, a chance for the child to reset themselves and will be explained to the child as such.
4. If the child is sent to the office as represented in step 3 twice in one day, written documentation and a phone call to parent(s)/guardian(s) is required
5. If the student reaches step 3 three times in one day, the child will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the Head of School. At this time a behavioral action plan will be presented and discussed. Written documentation to parent(s)/guardian(s) is required at this step.

Aggressive Behaviors:

The following list consists of behaviors that will be considered unacceptable and will be handled as such. These behaviors are not limited to this list and teachers will use their discrepancy to decide how each case should be handled with the support of the Head of School when needed:

1. Hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing
2. Biting
3. Misuse of materials
4. Intentional destruction of materials or possessions of others or school
5. Inappropriate language (swearing, taunting or bullying language, speaking disrespectfully to other students or adults
6. Bullying behavior

If any single or combination of these behaviors are experienced more than once in a single school day, written documentation is required and notification of parent(s)/guardian(s) is required

If any single or combination of these behaviors persists after written documentation and notification of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), a behavior action plan is required

Behavior Action Plans:

Behavior action plans for either re-directable or aggressive behaviors will be the responsibility of the teacher and the school psychologist. Teachers will write and implement behavior action plans to share with parents before the student may return to class. The Head of School must also be present at this meeting. The goal of the behavioral action plan is to observe, explore and document accommodations/modifications in the class. Teachers will work with the student to come up with a plan on how to correct behavior in class. This may include physical activity, mental stimulation, positive reinforcement, sessions with the school psychologist, etc. The input of the student is important in the behavior action plan. The behavior action plan will be put in place for four (4) weeks. During this period, daily documentation of progress, regress, or continuing behavior is required. If minimal or no progress is being observed after the four (4) week behavior action plan, a meeting with the Head of School, the teacher, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be requested to discuss appropriate alternatives. At this point a referral for a formal hearing of dismissal or suspension may also be considered.

Insurance

Mountain Montessori Charter School will purchase and carry any authorizer or state mandated insurance coverage at the limits recommended by the Charter School Institute. This will include but may not be limited to:

- Directors and Officers Insurance
- General Liability Insurance
- Property Insurance (unless otherwise covered by our landlord)
- Business Personnel Coverage
- Educator's Legal Liability Coverage
- Abuse and Molestation Coverage
- Worker's Compensation

We have spoken to Eric Slinger at HUB International Insurance to educate us on the necessary types of insurance coverage needed and the different types of policies required (refer to Appendix Z for quoted Insurance coverage). In addition to the above coverages, Mountain Montessori Charter School will require all Special Education personnel to carry Professional Liability coverage.

In order to provide safety for all students and staff, Mountain Montessori Charter School will adopt and implement full health and safety procedures and risk management policies at our school site in consultation with the school's insurance carriers and risk management experts.

Transportation

Due to budgetary constraints, it is not the intent of Mountain Montessori Charter School to provide transportation to and from school at this time. Creating a transportation option will be revisited annually by the Governing Board to determine the feasibility of offering transportation to and from school for students. MMCS will facilitate families in networking to implement a carpool program. Mountain Montessori Charter School will attempt to restrict field trips to be within walking distance or to use the free public bus service. The City of Steamboat Springs provides a free fixed route transit service, known as Steamboat Springs Transit (SST). Year-round transit service is provided daily around town and between the downtown and Ski Resort Mountain Base area. This free transit service will be taken into account when planning possible field trips.

Food Service

Due to budgetary constraints, it is not the intent of Mountain Montessori Charter School to provide food service. Students will be required to bring their own lunches daily. Parents will be encouraged to provide nutritional, organic, sustainable, whole foods for lunch. Individual classrooms will assign a snack schedule monthly to share in the responsibility of bringing a snack. Care will be taken to accommodate students with food allergies and food restriction guidelines will be implemented if necessary. MMCS will provide a refrigerator and microwave dedicated to food services. It is customary in Montessori schools for children to bring their own lunches.

In the event a child forgets his/her lunch or a student(s) is/are not able to bring a lunch MMCS will provide a filling and nutritious option through the following methods:

1. When assigning the monthly snack schedule, each classroom will be asked to have the assigned student's family to bring five (5) more than the allocated number in the class. The extra five (5) healthy assigned snacks from each classroom will be used to give to those students who do not have a lunch that day or are unable to regularly provide their own healthy lunch.
2. As the seasons permit, fresh, healthy organic food will be served from the school's community garden to those students who do not have a lunch that day or are unable to regularly provide their own healthy lunch.
3. Upon charter authorization, MMCS will explore developing partnerships with local restaurants to receive food donations on regularly scheduled weekdays as well as engaging in a business relationship to provide food service once the school can afford to budget for food service.

Requested Waivers

Pursuant to the Charter Schools Act, Mountain Montessori requests waivers of certain Colorado Revised Statues listed below. As per CSI application requirements, these waivers are also formally requested using the CSI specific form located in Appendix S. Each statue is identified and the reason for each request given as well as a replacement plan. The waivers will enable the school to better meet its mission, goals, and objectives, and implement its educational program. The MMCS budget has been developed under the assumption that these waivers will be granted. Although a replacement plan is identified with each waiver requested, additional replacement policies and refinement of the replacement plans will be developed.

C.R.S. § 22-9-106 Local Board of Education—Duties—Performance Evaluation System

This provision requires school districts to adopt written evaluation systems for all licensed personnel and outlines the requirements for such evaluation system.

Rationale for Waiver: In order for Mountain Montessori Charter School to function according to its unique needs and design, the Head of School and MMCS Governing Board must develop and adopt its own system of evaluation.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for designing and implementing a personnel evaluation system, rather than the Charter School Institute. A description of the personnel evaluation system that will be used at MMCS is in Appendix L2 contains the Colorado Department of Education Teacher Evaluation which MMCS will use until a MMCS-specific rubric is created. Appendix L3 contains the Mountain Montessori Head of School Evaluation Rubric.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute.

Evaluating Impact: Since teacher performance has a critical impact on the performance of the entire school, the impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: With this waiver, MMCS will be able to implement its program and evaluate its teachers in accordance with its own evaluation system, which will be consistent with the school's goals and objectives. This will benefit staff members as well as students and the community.

C.R.S. § 22-32-109 (l)(f) Boards of Education—Specific Duties—Personnel

This provision requires the local board of education to employ all personnel and fix their compensation.

Rationale for Waiver: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and providing its own training. Therefore, MMCS requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Charter School Institute Board of Education to the Head of School and MMCS Governing Board. The success of MMCS will depend upon its ability to select and employ its own staff and to train and direct that staff in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the goals and objectives of the school. All MMCS staff will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for personnel matters rather than the District. A teacher contract will be drafted and approved by the MMCS Governing Board.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, MMCS will select, employ and provide professional development for its own teachers and staff, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-32-109 (l) (n) (I) Boards of Education—Specific Duties—Length of Academic Session

This provision grants the local board of education authority to determine the length of time during which the schools of the district must be in session during the following school year.

Rationale for Waiver: The Charter School Institute Board has granted to MMCS Governing Board the authority to determine the length of time during which the school will be in session.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for establishing a school calendar that complies with the statutory minimum requirements for planned teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact during the school year.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school must operate within its budget and the costs of the school's calendar have been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: MMCS expects that as a result of this waiver it will be able to implement its curriculum and schedule in a manner that ensures students meet the educational standards of the school.

C.R.S. § 22-32-109 (l) (t) Boards of Education—Specific Duties—Educational Program

This provision grants the local board of education authority to determine the educational program to be carried on in schools of the district and to prescribe textbooks.

Rationale for Waiver: The Charter School Institute Board has granted to the Governing Board of MMCS the authority to determine the educational program and textbooks to be used in the school.

Replacement Plan: The MMCS educational program and curriculum is detailed in this charter application.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school will operate within its budget and the costs of the school's educational program and curriculum have been included in the budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in the Charter School agreement between MMCS and the Charter School Institute.

Expected Outcome: MMCS expects that in being granted this waiver, it will be able to implement its curriculum and ensure that students meet the educational standards of the school.

C.R.S. § 22-32-110 (1) (h) Boards of Education—Specific Powers—Terminating Personnel

This provision makes the local board of education responsible for terminating personnel.

Rationale for Waiver: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and terminating its own employees. Therefore, the school requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Charter School Institute Board of Education to the Head of School and Board of Directors of MMCS. The success of the school will depend in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own staff and to terminate individual staff members should they not perform in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the school. All MMCS staff will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for personnel matters rather than the Charter School Institute.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, MMCS will select, employ and provide professional development for its own teachers and staff, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by this Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-32-126 Principals—Employment and Authority

This provision authorizes the local board of education to employ principals.

Rationale: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing the principal/Head of School, its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and providing its own training. Principals/Head of School employed at MMCS will be employed on an at-will basis. Therefore, MMCS requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Charter School Institute Board of Education to the Governing Board of MMCS. The success of this school will depend in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own principal/Head of School and staff in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for these matters rather than the Charter School Institute. The MMCS principal/Head of School and teachers will have flexibility in structuring professional development and school policies to meet their needs.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, MMCS will select, employ and provide professional development for its principal/Head of School in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-63-201 Employment –License Required

This provision prohibits the board from entering into an employment contract with a person who does not hold a teacher's certificate or letter of authorization.

Rationale: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including selecting the hiring criteria for and employing its own staff. The success of this school will depend in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own staff in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will hire Highly Qualified staff, as required by federal law, who may or may not possess current Colorado teaching licenses.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, MMCS will select and employ teachers and staff, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-63-202 Employment Contracts—Duration

This provision prescribes specific elements of the annual term or non-probationary teacher contracts used by districts.

Rationale: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including selecting, hiring, and terminating its own staff. The success of this school will depend in large part upon its ability to employ its own staff in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will use its own form of employment agreement or contract, reflecting "at will" employment practices.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, MMCS will select and employ teachers and staff, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-63-203 Probationary Teachers—Renewal and Non-renewal of Employment Contract

This provision provides for contract with probationary teachers and allows for non-renewal and renewal of employment contracts.

Rationale: MMCS will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including selecting, hiring, and terminating its own staff. The success of this school will depend in large part upon its ability to employ its own staff in accordance with this Charter School Agreement and the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will use its own form of employment agreement or contract, reflecting "at will" employment practices, rather than annual term contracts.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Charter School Institute. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, MMCS will select and employ teachers and staff, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by the Charter School Agreement.

C.R.S. § 22-63-206 Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act—Transfer of Teachers

This provision permits transfer of teachers between schools upon recommendation of district's chief administrative officer.

Rationale: MMCS is granted the authority under the Charter School Agreement to select its own teachers. The Charter School Institute should not have the authority to transfer its teachers into MMCS or transfer teachers from MMCS to district schools, except as provided for in the Charter School Agreement.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will hire teachers on a best-qualified basis. Teachers who wish to transfer from MMCS may follow district procedures.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Charter School Institute or MMCS.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: MMCS expects that as a result of this waiver it will be able to manage its own personnel affairs. Consistent with the terms of this Charter School Agreement and the Colorado Charter School Law, MMCS will provide the opportunity for teachers to transfer into the district if they so choose.

C.R.S. § 22-63-301 Transfer Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act—Grounds for Dismissal

This provision outlines the grounds for termination of non-probationary status or mid-term termination of an annual contract.

Rationale: The success of MMCS in accomplishing its mission, vision, goals and objectives is dependent primarily upon the talents, skills and personal commitment of its teachers. The school must be able to terminate employees who cannot deliver its educational program successfully. All employees of MMCS will be employed on an "at-will" basis.

Replacement Plan: Continued employment at MMCS shall be subject to an annual satisfactory performance evaluation. Teachers who are rated unsuccessful may be terminated by the school.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Charter School Institute or MMCS. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, MMCS will be able to provide instruction in accordance with the philosophy and mission, vision, goals and objectives as stated in this Charter Proposal.

C.R.S. § 22-63-302 Transfer Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act—Procedures for Dismissal

This provision outlines the process for terminating a non-probationary teacher.

Rationale: The success of MMCS in accomplishing its mission, vision, goals and objectives is dependent primarily upon the talents, skills and personal commitment of its teachers. The school must be able to terminate employees who cannot deliver its educational program successfully. All employees of MMCS will be employed on an "at-will" basis.

Replacement Plan: Continued employment at MMCS shall be subject to an annual satisfactory performance evaluation. Teachers who are rated unsuccessful may be terminated by the school.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Charter School Institute or MMCS. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, MMCS will be able to provide instruction in accordance with the philosophy and mission, vision, goals and objectives as stated in this Charter Proposal.

C.R.S. § 22-63-401 Transfer Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act

This provision authorizes a local board of education to adopt a salary schedule and place teachers employed by the district on the schedule.

Rationale: MMCS should be delegated the authority to determine compensation rates, in accordance with the Charter School Agreement. The workday and work year in MMCS may be different from that of the District and compensation will be adjusted accordingly.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will adopt its own salary schedule. The school will set competitive rates for each level of teachers it employs. MMCS' Head of School will determine the placement of teachers on the salary schedule. The district's salary schedule will be used as a guideline for developing the MMCS salary schedule.

Duration of the Waiver: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Charter School Institute or MMCS. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, MMCS should be able to attract qualified personnel and provide instruction in accordance with the philosophy and mission, vision, goals and objectives as stated in this Charter Proposal.

C.R.S. § 22-63-402 Services –Disbursements

This provision prohibits disbursement of district monies to teacher without a valid teacher's certificate, letter of authorization or written authorization.

Rationale: MMCS should be granted the authority to hire teachers and principals that will support the school's mission, vision, goals and objectives. The school will seek to attract a Head of School and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado certificate, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or professional experience. All employees of MMCS will be employed on an "at-will" basis.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will, where possible, hire certified principals and teachers. However, in some instances it may be advantageous for the school to be able to hire Heads of School and/or teachers without a certificate and who possess unique background and/or skills or fill the need of the school.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Charter School Institute or MMCS. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, MMCS will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background filling all staff needs.

C.R.S. § 22-63-403 Payment of Salaries

This provision governs payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher.

Rationale: MMCS should be granted the authority to develop its own employment contracts and terms and conditions of employment. The school will be operating differently from other schools with a unique curriculum

for which having the proper teaching staff is essential. Not every teacher who is successful in the regular public school will be successful at MMCS. All employees of MMCS will be employed on an "at- will" basis.

Replacement Plan: MMCS will be responsible for personnel matters rather than the District.

Duration of the Waivers: MMCS requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Charter School Institute Board. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2021.

Financial Impact: MMCS anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Charter School Institute or MMCS. MMCS must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

Evaluating Impact: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to MMCS, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the MMCS will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background, filling all staff needs.

School Management Organization

Mountain Montessori Charter School does not plan to contract with any School Management Organizations or Charter Management Organizations.

Section I: Location & Facility

The Mountain Montessori Charter Governing Board is actively working to find a location for a facility that can accommodate and support our student population and program in a financially viable way. As part of our location search, Mountain Montessori Charter School is working with a commercial broker, Jim Cook with Colorado Group Realty. Possible locations to date include: leasing land at Perry- Mansfield Performing Arts School & Camp in the Strawberry Park area, leasing/purchasing land near Walton Creek Road & Highway 40 area, leasing/purchasing land neighboring the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. In all instances, modular construction would be used to build the school.

In searching for a facility location, the goal is to find a location and build a facility that can support the expected student population in year five. Mountain Montessori Charter School has identified the following requirements for a suitable location for the facility:

1. Located in or near Steamboat Springs, Colorado.
2. Safe surroundings to house a Preschool, Elementary school, and Middle School
3. Meets fire, ADA, and Routt County regulations for use as a school facility.
4. Meets Colorado regulations for use as a child care facility for mixed-age (3 to 6 years old) classrooms.

Funding:

MMCS intends to apply for a Community Facilities Direct Loan through USDA-Rural Development in order to build and furnish the modular school. The Governing Board Chair, Kristen Rockford, has made contact and received the Pre-application forms and paperwork from Dave Carter, USDA-RD Loan Specialist. The USDA Loan line item in the budget is based on an $800,000 loan at 4.25% interest, 35 year term, and no down payment. Funds for a land/lease payment are allocated at $4,000 per month per Jim Cook's recommendation. It is our goal that all facilities expenses including land rent, facilities related expenses, and loan repayment will make up less than 20% of our overall budget.

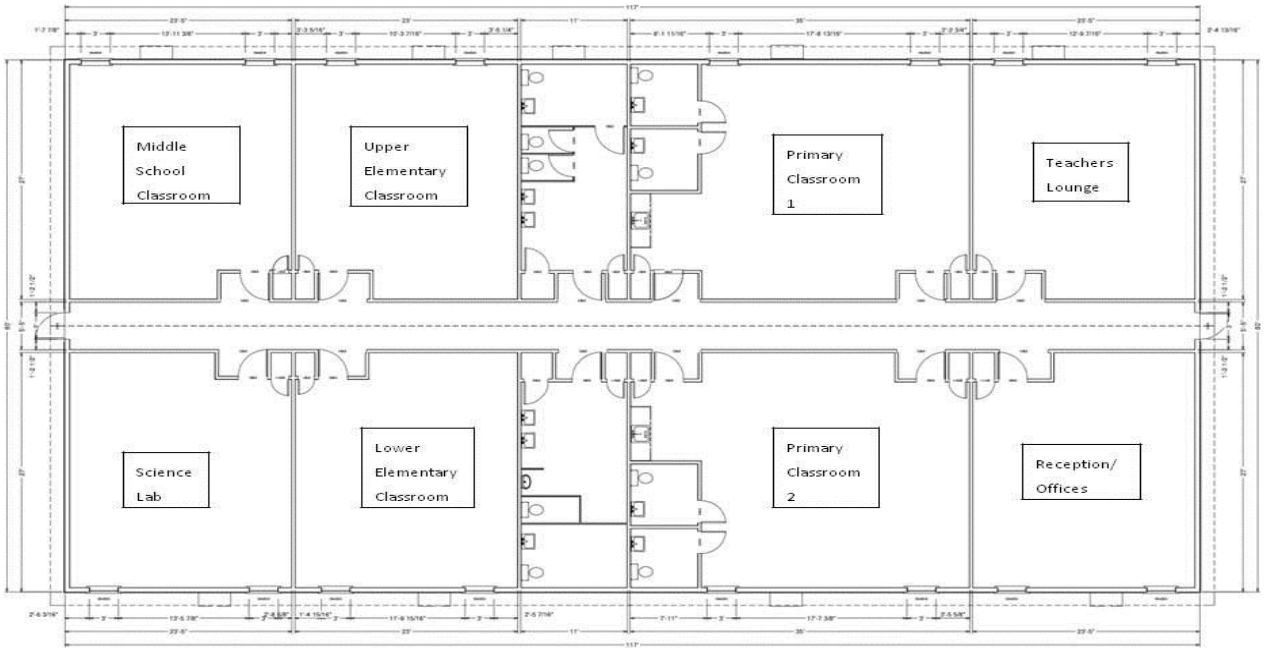
Permits and Inspections:

Governing Board Chair, Kristen Rockford, and realtor, Jim Cook, have met with several employees of the Routt County Building Department & the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department regarding the zoning and permitting process of locating a school within limits of the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County. MMCS will submit facilities proposals to the Planning Department and participate in their Pre-application review process. This

process will ensure that MMCS is aware of any complications or conflicts with potential site locations and city planning considerations, that buildings have appropriate occupancy rates, and that MMCS is aware of any and all permits required for any improvements needed on a potential or selected site. MMCS will adhere to all building and zoning regulations per the City of Steamboat Springs Community Development Code and Colorado Revised Statues.

Facility Needs Assessment:

Due to our slow growth model, Mountain Montessori Charter School will require a smaller space initially than at full implementation. The ideal space would allow us to morph and change the use of each room as the school grows. The following architectural drawing provides an ideal design of the modular school at full capacity. This design is a 60'x120' building than can be built at $90 per sq ft or approximately $650,000 including the building, engineering to Colorado standards, delivery, assembly of modules, skirting, and finish out exterior and interior. An additional $20,000 is needed to provide steps, ramps, and decks and canopy at exterior doors.



The following chart details our anticipated full enrollment and resulting space needs.

SPACE NAME	**SIZE (sq ft)**	**NUMBER**
Primary Classrooms	35 sq ft/child x 54 children = 1,890 ft^2	2 classrooms
Lower Elementary Classrooms	20 sq ft/child x 54 children = 1,080 ft^2	2 classrooms
Upper Elementary Classroom	20 sq ft/child x 28 children = 560 ft^2	1 classroom
Middle School Classroom	20 sq ft/child x 28 children = 560 ft^2	1classroom
Individual washrooms	11x27 sq ft = 297 ft^2 x 2 = 594 ft^2	2 washrooms
Reception/lobby	300 ft^2	1
Office	300 ft^2	2 @ 150 sq ft each, one for HOS and one for the front office
Multipurpose Science Lab	600 ft^2	Varied use including Special Ed., Computer Lab, Art, Testing
Teacher's Lounge/Supply Room	600 ft^2	1
SUBTOTAL	6,484 ft^2	
Circulation (20 % of subtotal)	1,297 ft^2	Cubbies will be built in hallway
GRAND TOTAL	7,780 ft^2	

Space for art and library materials will be available in each classroom. Therefore, MMCS has not set aside a separate room for these activities in the first five years.

Classrooms:

Primary Classrooms will need to meet licensing requirements including:

- Be located on the 1st floor
- Have at least 35 sq ft/child of child space (980 sq ft per classroom) or approximately 1000 sq ft large
- Have windows or natural light (strong preference)
- Have running water and bathrooms in the classroom
- Be approx. ¼ - 1/3 linoleum with the rest carpeted
- Be of a shape such that the whole room is visible from one vantage point
- Have immediate access to or be located as close as possible to the playground.

Elementary & Middle School Classrooms will need the following:

- Be approximately 560 sq ft in size
- Have windows or natural light (strong preference)
- Be of a shape such that the whole room is visible from one vantage point

Location Needs Assessment:

The use of a school is allowed in commercially zoned sites within the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County. Schools can be allowed in other zone districts but only with a Conditional Use Permit. Unfortunately, there are very few locations within the City of Steamboat Springs that are commercially zoned with an adequate lot size to accommodate the school footprint, parking, and the outdoor environment. With that in mind, MMCS is actively looking for options outside of City limits. The ideal lot size is 3-5 acres. This will allow for the footprint of the school, 36 parking spaces (1 space/ staff member and 1 space/6 children), and a large outdoor environment to house a greenhouse, growing beds, barn, and the like.

Site Determination:

The process of selecting the ideal site depends on many factors. Because we are considering purchasing/leasing land and building the school, the first priority is location. The site must be located within Steamboat Springs or a 5-10 minute driving distance from Steamboat Springs. Second, the site must be large enough to accommodate the school, parking, and outdoor environment. Third, the cost must be approximately $4,000 per month mortgage or rent payment. The final decision will be made by the Governing Board with a majority vote.

Site 1

Perry Mansfield Performing Arts School & Camp

Perry-Mansfield is recognized as the oldest continuously-operating performing arts school and camp in the nation. The school is located on 76 acres in Strawberry Park, just outside of the town of Steamboat Springs and serves 200 students each summer in programs that include an arts discovery program for pre-teens, an equestrian day camp, an arts training junior camp, a young artist intensive and a pre-professional intensive program in dance and theater. MMCS is in the negotiation process with the Perry-Mansfield Board of Directors to create a land lease that will allow MMCS to utilize some of their existing buildings, rent some of their land, and install the modular school.

http://perry-mansfield.org

Perry-Mansfield is an exciting prospect because it poses a win-win for both the charter school and the performing arts school. Both schools will benefit from the improvements made to the campus. Because Perry-Mansfield operates as a non-profit organization, they have only been able to do upgrades and repairs as funds allow. In 1995, Perry-Mansfield was admitted to the National Register of Historic. MMCS will utilize two of the existing historic buildings: the Julie Harris Theater and Conrad Hall.

The Julie Harris Theater departs from the traditional rustic architecture of the camp. It was constructed in 1958 from a design by Canadian architect Willard Sage, an actor on staff at the camp. The building evokes the aesthetic of Frank Lloyd Wright and his Taliesin West studio. The rock walls of the buildings slope dramatically, in an

exaggeration of a "battered" wall and are composed of local rock and set in a red-dyed mortar. The reception area of the Julie Harris Theater focuses on a beautiful round rock fireplace centered in the middle of the room. This area will serve as the lunch dining area. The theater will have multiple uses including a gymnasium for physical fitness, theater for performing arts, studio for visual arts, and auditorium for large meetings and community functions. The Conrad Hall can be utilized for many different ways including the Middle School classroom, art studio, yoga studio, woodworking shop, and more.

The modular school schematic was designed with the Perry-Mansfield location in mind. This schematic doesn't include a cafeteria or gymnasium because those areas will be located in the historic buildings.

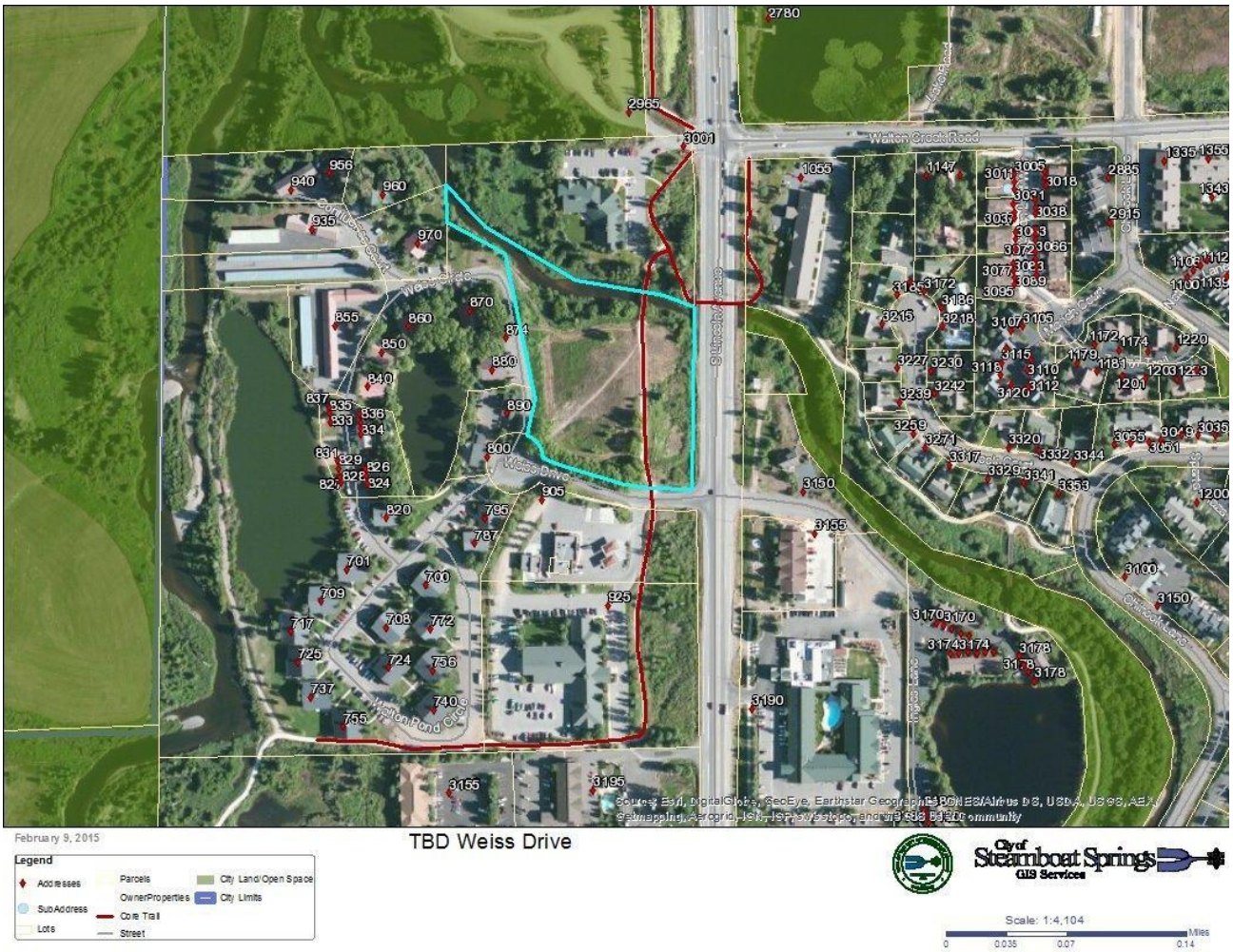
Exterior of Julie Harris Theater

Reception Area of Julie Harris Theater

Site 2

TBD Weiss Drive

This commercially zoned vacant piece of land is 4.07 acres and located near the intersection on Walton Creek Road and Highway 40. MMCS made contact with the land owner but has not entered into negotiations at this time. MMCS is considering leasing or purchasing the land.



February 9, 2015

TBD Weiss Drive

Legend

Addresses
SubAddress
Lots
Parcels
OwnerProperties
Core Trail
Street
City Land/Open Space
City Limits

City of Steamboat Springs GIS Services

Scale: 1:4,104

0 0.035 0.07 0.14 Miles

Site 3

TBD Captain Jack Drive

MMCS is currently in the process of contacting the land owner and considering leasing or purchasing the land. This 4 acre location neighbors the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) main office. RMYC is a 501(c)3 established in 1993 by the City of Steamboat Springs in response to a community demand for more youth employment, educational, and recreational opportunities. RMYC recruits youth and procures projects including building and maintaining trails, bridges, and fences, watershed restoration, campgrounds and parks, beetle kill mitigation, and hazardous fuels reduction. The program incorporates comprehensive education focusing on career development, leadership, healthy lifestyles, environmental education, and civic and social responsibility.

These are the top sites Mountain Montessori Charter School has considered for facility location options. As the application process is underway, the circumstances of these sites are subject to change. We continue to keep options open and consider additional facility locations.

Schedule for obtaining a facility

Our commercial broker, Jim Cook, continues to search for properties that may be considered. Once the charter is approved in June, we will begin negotiations with one or more of the property owners. We will finalize a location and business deal in August 2015. This timing will allow for a 6-12 month period purchase, order modular school, and set & stitch prior to the August of 2016 opening.

Acknowledgements

The culmination of this submitted application would not have been possible without the willingness and generous support of time, resources, and experience of the following:

Steamboat Springs Montessori Preschool: Clare Berkey, Sharon Ort, Jennifer Day

North Routt Charter School: Brandon LaChance

Steamboat Springs School District RE-2: Dr. Brad Meeks, Marty Lamansky

Colorado League of Charter Schools: Lori Ventimiglia and Kathy Zlomke

Charter School Institute: Janet Dinnen

Fort Collins Montessori: Frank Vincent

DCS Montessori: Sheila Wolfe

Compass Montessori: Amy Malik

Salida Montessori: Leslie Kemp

Yampatika: Sonja Macys

Colorado Realty Group: Jim Cook

Perry Mansfield

Integrated Community: Sheila Henderson

Sundance Studio: Kristen Rockford

Yampa Valley Medical Center: Judy Zuccone and Susan Ring

City Market

Community Volunteers: Meg Henry and JoHanna Hall

Our Predecessors who got the ball rolling….the 2002 Steamboat Springs Montessori Steering Committee

Lastly, to keep the light in the eyes of our children: Jacob, Olivia, Samantha, Taylor, Annabelle, and Matty, and all of the children in Steamboat, we dedicate our efforts to you.

Application Components Checklist

To confirm that you have reviewed your application for completeness, this checklist MUST be signed, dated, and submitted along with your application materials.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS CHECKLIST		
BEFORE THE APPLICATION		
Before Applying	Ensure a Letter of Intent has been submitted to the Institute. If the intent is to locate in a district that retains exclusive chartering authority, obtain permission to apply to CSI in the form of a resolution. Include this evidence with your materials.	☑
PRIMARY APPLICATION COMPONENTS		
Executive Summary	This section serves as a concise explanation of the proposed charter school and with the Letter of Intent, identifies who is submitting the charter application.	☑
Vision and Mission	The vision statement describes how the charter school will look once it is in operation or the big picture view. The mission statement is how the school intends to make that a reality.	☑
Evidence of Need & Support	This section demonstrates an understanding of the anticipated student demographics, as well as evidence of support from interested students, parents, and community leaders. It should also describe the plan for reaching and accommodating a diverse student population, and describe opportunities available for involvement from external stakeholders.	☑
Leadership	This section outlines the processes that will result in the recruitment of a highly qualified leader.	☑
Education Program	This section should include a description of the school's educational program, research-based evidence for this selection, as well as its alignment to Colorado standards.	☑
Serving Students with Special Needs	This section describes the processes that will be used to address the needs of students with special needs, including students who are gifted/talented, English-Language Learners, Special Education, identified for development of a 504 plan, at-risk or high-risk students, and students with disabilities.	☑
Goals, Objectives & Pupil Evaluation	This section describes the goals and objectives the school will use to evaluate its programmatic and student success, as well as the process by which a school will improve student academic achievement in alignment with State and Institute accountability expectations and accreditation rules. This section should also detail a clear plan for evaluating student performance, including a description of internal assessments, the process used for early detection of academically at-risk students, and how pupil performance will drive instruction and professional development efforts.	☑
Budget & Finance	This section should include a plan for revenues and expenditures, as well as a plan for compliance with Institute, state, and federal accounting and reporting requirements.	☑
Governance & Operations	This section should describe the governance structure, the processes involved in board selection and development, as well as standard policies needed for compliance with Institute and state requirements.	☑
Facilities	This section should include location options, as well as a plan for the proposed space that includes fun allocation and needs assessments.	☑
ADDENDA		
Food Service	This section should detail the plan for a school lunch program, including provisions for students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch.	☑
Transportation	This section should include a description of the school's transportation and convey alignment with the budget.	☑
Online	This section should detail the plans for the online component of the program.	☑
Education Management Provider	This section should detail the plans and include a copy of the proposed contract with the management or service provider.	☑
AFTER YOU COMPELTE THE APPLICATION		
After Applying	If the intent is to locate in a district that retains exclusive chartering authority, ensure a copy of the application has been sent to the local school district governing board, as well as the school district accountability committee. Forward evidence of this communication to the Institute.	☑

Kristin Rockford
Signature

March 11, 2015
Date