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- Packet includes LMS Bylaws, Insurance Coverages, and 5 and 10 year budget projections

Lowcountry Montessori School's Mission Statement

Lowcountry Montessori School's mission is to provide an authentic Montessori program building a foundation of lifelong learning.

Educational Plan and Capacity

Evidence of Need and Support

The need for a Montessori charter school in Beaufort County and the surrounding area is indeed great. Over the past ten years, we have had great success with enrollment of students at all levels. We have a consistent wait list at most all levels each year. As of this writing, our waitlist has 381 students on it.

The families who seek a free Montessori education over a traditional one have little access to it. Beaufort County School District established a public Montessori magnet program in 2011 that accommodates 50 elementary-aged students; however, this program only covers the elementary level through fifth grade, and more students are on a waiting list than there are students who are actually enrolled. There is another public school in Bluffton that has a Montessori Program that goes up through eighth grade.

Several successful private Montessori schools exist but the demand for a free elementary, middle and high school education is so great in today's economy. Lowcountry Montessori School is still the only public school in the state of South Carolina to offer a Montessori High School Program. Charleston County Schools have been planning to expand to high school, but have been unable to do so thus far.

To address these overarching issues in our local educational system, Lowcountry Montessori's program provides a free Montessori education for

primary aged students through high school. Our program creates an avenue for children who graduate from lower-level Montessori programs (private and public) to continue their Montessori education at no cost. Lowcountry Montessori also accommodates students who are currently challenged in traditional school environments and need or desire an alternative, as well as families who are simply interested in experiencing the difference a Montessori education can make.

Shannon Erickson, SC House District 124 has publicly offered her support to Lowcountry Montessori. Additionally, former Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling has also expressed his support for Lowcountry Montessori.

Curriculum and Instructional Model

Instructional Model:

Montessori is a presence in more than 3000 schools across America. About 570 of these are U.S. public Montessori schools, including neighborhood, magnet, and charter schools. There are an estimated 20,000 Montessori schools worldwide. Lowcountry Montessori School is the first and only public Montessori school in South Carolina that offers a Montessori high school.

There is a small but growing body of well-designed research comparing Montessori students to those in traditional schools. These suggest that in academic subjects, Montessori students perform as well as or better than their non-Montessori peers. In one study children who had attended Montessori schools at the preschool and elementary levels earned higher scores in high school on standardized math and science tests. Another study found that the essays of 12-year-old Montessori students were more creative and used more complex sentence structures than those produced by the non-Montessori group.

The research also shows Montessori students to have greater social and

behavioral skills. They demonstrate a greater sense of fairness and justice, for example, and are more likely to choose positive responses for dealing with social dilemmas. By less stringent measures, too, Montessori students seem to do quite well. Most Montessori schools report that their students are typically accepted into the high schools and colleges of their choice. And many successful graduates cite their years at Montessori when reflecting on important influences in their life. (www.AMShq.org)

Additionally, in a study conducted by Angeline Wollard and published in Science Magazine, results showed that students in a Montessori magnet program did better on standardized tests, were more creative and had a greater sense of community. The study followed the students for three years. And a longitudinal study of high schools in Milwaukee Public Schools showed that high schoolers who had been enrolled in a Montessori program from the ages of 3 to 11 years old outperformed the other students in math and science. Additionally, a study by Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi found that students in Montessori schools had a more positive engagement in school. This research is evidence that a Montessori curriculum serves *all* children in all areas. And students who have better academic performance and greater social and behavioral skills, as produced by the Montessori curriculum, will obviously be more productive citizens.

LMS believes that the Montessori curriculum should be available to all of our children, not just those able to pay private school tuition. Maria Montessori broke molds for women in the sciences and also focused on inclusion of all people to the extent that the pervasive thinking of the time allowed for. Following the lead of the American Montessori Society, with their equity initiative, Lowcountry Montessori School will continue the important work that promotes equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity. This work includes and is not limited to gender, including gender identity, race, religion, origin, culture, LGBTQ+, and focuses on equality for all people. Part of the focus in our school is to move towards more diversity in our staff and student population.

Areas of Instruction for Lower and Upper Elementary:

Students will achieve mastery in the following areas of instruction:

language (includes reading, writing, poetry, spelling, creative writing, grammar, research, memory games, word study, sentence analysis, and library skills); *science* (includes biology, botany, astronomy, physical science, ecology, geology, zoology, and earth science); *mathematics* (includes systems of numeration, algebra, fractions, geometry, memorization of facts, decimal systems, basic operations, measurement, and problem solving); *cultural studies* includes geography, history, zoology, geology, anatomy, ecology, music, art, art history, drama and botany. “Going out” also plays an important role in the Elementary Program.

Educational Structure:

- Mixed-aged classrooms are essential. This promotes collaboration as opposed to competition, and also allows children to move through the curriculum at their own pace.
- Children, not teachers, will be the focus at LMS. LMS teachers will be especially capable of “following the child,” adjusting strategies and timetables according to the needs of individual students. Children will receive lessons based on their readiness for the lesson, not on their age. Each child will follow their educational path based on their own interest and ability level.
- The classroom atmosphere at LMS will be warm and relaxed. The Montessori environment is meant to feel more like home than school. Tremendous attention is paid to creating a safe, secure, orderly environment where children feel in control of their own daily routines, are free to work alone or together, and work in partnership with their teachers who are more like mentors or coaches than authority figures.
- Daily schedules at LMS will be flexible. In collaboration with the teacher, students develop their weekly work plans, which they will complete by the end of the week. Students are then expected to schedule their own work each day, which instills time management skills and

accountability early in their development. This method teaches that education is enjoyable, fosters a love for life-long learning, and produces responsible, independent adults.

- Continuous and careful observation and evaluation of the students' progress allows LMS teachers to consistently address the needs of struggling students.
- Children and adults at LMS will work together as a cooperative group. Much like in a family, everyone works together to help meet the collective needs of the group. Older students in a Montessori classroom are expected to help with the care of the physical environment as well as the care of the younger children. Through modeling and teaching what they've learned, knowledge and good social skills are reinforced in the older children.
- Interactions between students at LMS will be cooperative and collaborative, rather than competitive. Montessori teachers are trained not to compare students to one another and the working relationship among classmates is collegial and collaborative. It is not unusual for children in a class to celebrate when a peer "gets" a work for the first time or masters a new material.
- Each LMS classroom will be a meticulously-prepared environment, with classroom materials organized in such a way that children can choose their work freely. A wide variety of work will be made available to match an equally wide variety of interest and ability levels among students in each class. Classrooms will be set up to invite inquiry and discovery. Classrooms at LMS will continuously change to meet students needs.
- Individual development and progress will be a constant focus in the classroom. While each student will be an important part of the community of learners, each student will also be treated as a unique individual. LMS teachers will carefully monitor and track each student's development, and gently guide each student to take the next step as he or she demonstrates readiness.
- Learning activities will be hands-on. Maria Montessori stated,

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”

Whenever possible, LMS students will have direct, personal hands-on contact with either real things under study or with concrete models.

- Learning activities will be spontaneous. Learning activities at LMS will involve the most freedom possible within reasonable and safe limits.
- Learning activities at LMS will be self-correcting. The specially designed materials with which they will work will have control of error built in. Students will receive immediate feedback on their progress.
- Students will gain self-confidence in their abilities. Teachers at LMS will break lessons down into logical segments. Each new task will be presented with precise direction and clear demonstrations. Tasks will typically be presented in a logical sequence, so that each new task builds on a task children will have already mastered. As a result of clear, simple instructions and logical sequential activities, student confusion and uncertainty will be minimized, and students' confidence in their abilities to learn will continuously increase.
- Students will learn to be good stewards of the environment and to accept individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.
- Universal values will be taught. Beyond teaching children polite behavior, LMS will seek to instill in each child basic universal values including self-respect, acceptance of the uniqueness and dignity of each person we meet, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, honor, individual responsibility, and courage to speak from the heart.
- The curriculum will be international in heritage, focus, and perspective. Students representing diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds will be enthusiastically welcomed at LMS. The curriculum will consciously promote a global perspective and aim to teach history in the most accurate of ways.
- Social responsibility will be developed through community outreach programs allowing children and adults to make meaningful differences

in the lives of others.

Guidelines for Montessori in the Public School Sector : In addition to incorporating each of these essential elements identified as part and parcel of any authentic Montessori program, LMS will also align its curricular and leadership strategies with a standards document designed for public Montessori schools. Aptly called “Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools in the Public School Sector,” this document has been agreed upon by the three major Montessori organizations in the United States, namely: American Montessori Internationale - United States, American Montessori Society, and the North American Montessori Teachers Association. This document, which is presented in the Appendix, provides guidelines for Montessori teachers, Leadership, recruitment and parent education, curriculum/environment, assessment, and professional development.

Middle and High School Educational Program: The Lowcountry Montessori School Secondary Program (middle and high school) represents an integration of South Carolina core standards and educational requirements, the most current research on the developmental needs of adolescents, the Montessori approach to education, research-based learning theory and teaching methods, and the predictions of the skills needed to lead a productive life of continuous learning and cooperation. Consistent with all Beaufort County schools, Lowcountry Montessori seeks to provide the environment and experience that will allow students to flourish academically, having our overarching goal as educators focused on helping our students develop into independent, responsible, critical thinkers, and compassionate individuals. This coincides with Maria Montessori’s vision for education as a system that allows students to physically access the world, and in turn, to develop into charitable stewards of their environment and community.

Adolescents operate at a crucial stage in development of the social skills necessary to acquire a true capacity for compassion, empathy, and

understanding – the foundation for peaceful dialogue and cooperation that is the vision of Montessori. Nonetheless, very few Montessori Secondary programs exist - let alone public programs. This is why Lowcountry Montessori School acknowledges its Secondary Program as the cornerstone for its success within South Carolina and within Beaufort and Jasper Counties. Only one other public Secondary Montessori program exists within Beaufort County and it is a magnet program implemented by Beaufort County Schools and is located in Bluffton. Lowcountry Montessori School's program is a pioneer for Montessori middle and high school in Beaufort County, but also extends Montessori Secondary education to the public sector north of the Broad River that separates the county..

Lowcountry Montessori School's Middle and High School programs operate within the framework established by Dr. Elisabeth Coe's School of the Woods (Middle and High School) in Houston, TX – the first Montessori Middle School program accredited by AMS (The American Montessori Society). However, we recognize many differences between the setting of School of the Woods and Lowcountry Montessori School, especially in terms of location, student population and background, and the public and private sectors. Therefore, while operating within the framework established by Dr. Coe, LMS has individualized its approach to optimally serve the Beaufort and Jasper County communities.

Lowcountry Montessori School's Garden Program: This serves as a laboratory where all LMS students conduct scientific research on the natural world. Students learn organic farming techniques and practice recycling organic waste, water and power in order to create a self-sustaining source of food for their community. All food produced is either enjoyed by the entire school community in the form of a school picnic, sold as a product in a class business, or donated to a local food shelter. Permaculture principles with growing plants, including edible plants, are implemented on the grounds of the school and this also creates an opportunity to learn about sustainable

practices within an outdoor classroom.

Middle School Program: The middle school program shall operate according to a schedule based on a 5-week cycle. Natural World (the study of science and the natural universe) and Social World (the nature and history of human civilization), rotate weeks during each cycle. Personal World, Language, and Math are the only subjects applied to a daily schedule. During the final week of each cycle is Enrichment Week, where students work on projects and field exercises that not only integrate all subjects together, but also apply those subjects to the broader perspective of a world community.

Each cycle within every year exists as a cohesive theme of subject matter. The subject matter is organized as follows: Math (pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and precalculus); Natural World (the study of science and the natural universe); Social World (the nature and history of human civilization); South Carolina State History; and Language (grammar, literature, poetry, study of conventions). Additionally, LMS Middle School students will have six integrated arts each year. Integrated Arts (IAs) are designed to give students a taste of the different arts. The first three cycles, they will rotate through the arts and the last quarter, they will be able to choose the art that they would like to delve deeper into.

Students also participate in a “Community Meeting” time, a highly-organized, student-run meeting which may involve physical exercise, mental challenges, music listening and study, as well as collaborating with teachers to establish community rules and boundaries. Another unique feature of LMS Middle School is the class business run by the students, who will learn and then utilize their knowledge of currency, economy, marketing and human incentive to earn support for a cause of their choice.

Land Lab is experienced twice a year in the MS program. Students spend

three days and two nights in a place that is primitive and experiential. They participate in community building and learn practical life skills in nature, history of cultures and geographic areas and sustainability practices.

High School Program: LMS High School curriculum is experiential in that students have opportunities to participate in internships, service learning, give back programs and other such hands-on experiences. We strive to maintain relevance within our curriculum design and will consistently update the curriculum to suit the preparedness of its students to successfully move them forward.

The LMS High School curriculum is designed to conform to South Carolina state academic standards and to contain subject matter and diversity while teaching the interconnectedness of all academic subjects in order to promote systems thinking. High school students focus on recognizing universal patterns among natural, linguistic, mechanical and other kinds of systems so that they may develop their skills in problem-solving. LMS believes that if students can recognize the interconnectedness of systems within our universe, they will also hold the knowledge and creative tools necessary to become our society's next generation of pioneers and innovators.

LMS High School students earn high school credits in compliance with the state standards, and the curriculum offered allows all students to meet the South Carolina State High School Diploma requirements. LMS provides all required courses in the areas of language arts, math, science, and history. Spanish and French classes meet the foreign language requirements. Course electives are offered in a variety of different subjects so that the students are free to explore their areas of greater interest; however, some requirements within the electives portion of the student's portfolio will be established.

Culinary 1 is a requirement for graduation at LMS. Another graduation requirement for LMS includes passing 50% of the Self-Construction Strands taken. These Self-Construction Strand classes include *Personal and Social Responsibility*. This class looks at the choices that individuals make and how

that impacts their own lives, society, and the social responsibilities of self and groups. In 10th grade, students take *Public Speaking*. They have successfully completed the 9th grade class and are taking the information that they have learned about themselves and are practicing putting their perspectives on to paper and communicating it with an audience.

In 11th grade, students take *Theory of Knowledge*, A year-long philosophy course in which students study Western and Eastern thought, both current and ancient philosophy. They also write their own life philosophy based on their own research and acquired knowledge. In *Senior Thesis*, Seniors will conduct a year-long research project based on interest. Students write a thesis paper, do a research project, create a presentation and present their knowledge in an approved format to share with the community. It is a culmination of their four years in the Montessori High School environment. Exceptions to these LMS requirements must be approved by the LMS Leadership Team.

Electives will be available in different subject areas so that students may choose courses that fulfill LMS and state requirements for obtaining a South Carolina High School Diploma. LMS High School students will also enjoy Intercession Weeks, where they will engage with their environment and community building.

Other things that are implemented within our community to foster the tenants of a Montessori education at the High School level include service learning and a give back program. During service learning, students dedicate time to non-profits on and off campus. This happens during half day Fridays. Examples of this service learning include working in a lower level classroom with students, going to organizations such as an animal shelter or thrift shop to help with needed activities, and learning about the environment and sustainable practices within our community.

Give Back students work on campus during a class period for academic credit. This gives them skills to help them develop into competent,

compassionate, and capable members of our society. In exchange the students are able to come late one semester or leave early.

Dual enrollment for high school students is encouraged for those who are academically ready. This is not something that happens during our normal school hours. It is something that is supported by our school and the student does it after school hours.

AP courses are not taught at LMS because it goes against our philosophy of teaching to the test. We do however offer support for students to study for the exam by pairing them with a person that can mentor and help them with preparation and we will then pay and oversee the testing portion of this process.

Professional Development: All Lead Guides in core classrooms will receive Montessori Training. The school requires this and this is also an alternative certification process for our staff. LMS also attends professional development conferences, presents at these conferences and offers staff to seek out professional development that is in line with their own professional goals each year. LMS also offers all required professional development as well as professional development that is observed as being needed to help our staff implement best practices in the Montessori environment.

Virtual Offerings: LMS is set up to have e-learning for unforeseen challenges. We utilize Google Classroom as our format to carry out synchronous and asynchronous learning when appropriate.

Serving Students who Learn Differently

Maria Montessori first developed the method in order to meet the needs of children who learned differently. She was told that the children she first

worked with were “unteachable.” She found through much observation and trial and error that every child had the capacity and desire to learn given the proper materials and a prepared environment.

LMS has at least two full time special education teachers in place yearly, along with other interventionists that work with students who need more academic remediation. LMS complies with all aspects of Child Find from referral through eligibility. The school publicly posts information regarding the Child Find process on our website and on school grounds.

Lowcountry Montessori uses the inclusion model with learning different students and pulls them out of the classroom for services, if needed. LMS contracts with the appropriate related service providers in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in school activities. These include, but are not limited to, PT, OT, speech, and a psychologist for testing. LMS also understands the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and complies with these requirements, which includes appropriately certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications.

Regarding IDEA 613(e) (1) (B), LMS complies with all federal and state laws regarding accommodations for students with disabilities and does not discriminate against individuals who are believed to have disabling conditions. The school adheres to the criteria for eligibility, reporting, and official records for accommodations under Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

LMS faculty and staff receive professional development on an ongoing basis

so that students who may qualify for special services are identified in a timely manner and so that instructional delivery and interpersonal relations are conducted appropriately and effectively. Compliance with applicable regulations will be guaranteed on a case-by-case basis.

LMS also provides ML services for students who speak English as a second language.

Our special education teachers are trained in the MACAR training program which is Montessori Applied to Children at Risk for Learning Differences, the SEE Program, Montessori Pathways, and other programs that the SPED Coordinator and Reading Coach deems appropriate.

One of the great assets of a Montessori education is that it is inherently individualized to meet the needs of the child. We do this for everyone, not only the ones who learn differently. However, due to our passion and capability of addressing the needs of students who learn differently, our population has soared. Word of mouth from parents has this community seeking us out. Because of this, we consistently have around twice the percentage of students who learn differently when compared to other public schools.

Goals and Objectives and Assessment Plan

As is true for each school in the Beaufort area, the overarching goal of Lowcountry Montessori School is to provide an educational experience that will enable all students to meet academic standards set by the state, and prepare them to become responsible citizens and lifelong learners.

By definition, however, charter schools must bring something new and innovative to the district in which they aim to operate. In order to justify taxpayer support, charter schools must demonstrate that they provide new

opportunities for student achievement which do not already exist in the District. Charter schools, in essence, are the government's way of stimulating and investing in new ideas in the education marketplace.

The driving force of Lowcountry Montessori School is to provide an exceptional educational experience which will allow all students to excel in academics and standards set by the state and also to prepare them for the global world which we live in today. Montessori Education focuses on developing innovating minds, free thinkers and a love of learning.

Charter Goals

1. 85% of students in grades K-8 will meet their predicted growth as determined by MAP scores or an equivalent assessment on the reading and math portions. An additional 10% will come within 5 points of their growth prediction for reading and math.
2. LMS will maintain an average graduation rate of 80% or higher for the school year 2024-25 through 2026-27. The school will increase its graduation rate to an average of 82% in the years 2027-28 through 2029-2030. The school will increase its graduation rate to an average of 84% in the years 2030-31 through 2033-2034. The school will take into account the non-diploma track students in their school narrative each year, since these students count against the rate, and we have a lot of families that have students with academic challenges that are being taught life skills to function in society.
3. LMS will maintain a 50% passing rate of 70 or above for Algebra I and a 50% passing rate of 70 or above for English II EOC exams. We will average a 2% increase in these rates during the school years 2024-25 through 2026-27. We will average an additional 2% increase (52%) in these rates during the school years 2027-28 through 2029-2030. We will average an additional 2% (54%) increase in these rates during the school years 2030-31 through 2033-2034.

4. LMS will provide a supportive environment for employees, as operationalized by ratings on confidential employee questionnaires.

At least 80% of employees will report satisfaction with the learning environment. LMS will increase this percentage by 2% every three years until it reaches 90% satisfaction.

At least 80% of employees will report satisfaction with the physical and social environment. At least 80% of employees will report satisfaction with home and school relations. LMS will increase this percentage by 2% every three years until it reaches 90% satisfaction.

5. LMS will be responsive to charter school parents, as operationalized by ratings on confidential parent questionnaires.

At least 80% of parents will report satisfaction with the learning environment. LMS will increase this percentage by 2% every three years until it reaches 90% satisfaction.

At least 80% of parents will report satisfaction with the physical and social environment. LMS will increase this percentage by 2% every three years until it reaches 90% satisfaction. At least 80% of parents will report satisfaction with home and school relations. LMS will increase this percentage by 2% every three years until it reaches 90% satisfaction. These percentages will be maintained throughout the ten year charter.

Assessment Plan

The Montessori Method uses unique assessment tools that are self-correcting; each child accepts responsibility for his/her own education. Feedback is immediate and without judgment, which empowers the child; reinforcing a sense of self- pride.

Student Achievement and Progress Evaluation: LMS uses a combination

of assessments developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, as well as all standardized tests required by the State of South Carolina Department of Education.

Montessori Inspired Assessments : The role of assessment in the Montessori classroom is to grant feedback to the child so that they can master the concept presented in the curriculum. Weekly Work Plans are prepared by the student along with peer feedback. Teachers monitor student's portfolios, assess completed work, maintain a tracking system of mastered concepts, and observe their progress throughout the year.

Weekly Work Plans : The Weekly Work Plan helps the child organize his or her day/week and makes sure that the child is engaged in all areas of the curriculum. Daily/weekly goals are expected but are different for each individual child and at different grade levels. Work plans are periodically shared with parents.

Mastery through Repetition : The Montessori environment provides the child with the opportunity for repetition so that the child can work on a chosen work and repeat the work until mastery is accomplished. This process builds confidence as well as independence and a reduced need for teacher feedback.

Teacher Observation Throughout the Year: Observation is an excellent tool for classroom management. By observing how the students interact within the environment and with each other, the teacher is able to adjust the environment to meet the needs of the children. Every child is an individual, yet an important member of the whole classroom community.

Student Portfolios: The Student Portfolio is referenced throughout the year in order to evaluate the level of mastery of a given concept within the

curriculum; revisiting an area before moving on is noted. Students will have the opportunity to showcase their work to family and friends during Celebrations of Learning.

Tracking Concepts Mastered: Tracking sheets and checklists are used to record the Montessori lessons that have been presented, practiced, improved upon and mastered by each student. Tracking sheets and checklists are divided by subject, year, and topic of study. These will be used to keep track of each child's progress and aid in aligning the Montessori concepts with the state's academic standards.

Assessing Completed Work: Assessment of work done throughout the day in the classroom helps the teachers evaluate if the child is grasping the concept. The teacher is also constantly evaluating completed work. This immediate evaluation of finished products gives the child feedback on the quality of their work; reinforcing pride in their accomplishments and nurturing positive self-esteem based on effort.

Peers as Sources of Feedback: Montessori students often work together and often in this setting, they correct each other's mistakes, in the hope of getting it right. Cooperation is the centered focus; not competition; the children are not graded. Montessori students also serve as teachers; children give lessons to each other. The ability to teach a lesson learned, demonstrates pure understanding of that information.

Standardized Testing : LMS will use the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) for grades K-8, which is given three times a year. MAP is used to assess the areas of strengths and gaps in learning. We will also do MAP testing with high school students, if needed, to assess progress or if they are in need of interventions. LMS will use the state standardized testing to assess the areas of strengths and weaknesses and to track student advancement. Students in

grades 3-8 will take this test; parents can compare and contrast the results of other public schools in their district. In grades nine through twelve, students will take EOC exams in the State required courses.

Academic Assistance: MAP testing results in the fall will be used in conjunction with other Montessori assessments by the guide to address any gaps in learning. Montessori concepts and materials will be used for this. If a child seems to be underperforming in a given area, the Guide and or the Reading Coach/Administration will recommend that child for the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. This RTI process is built into the Montessori Method by teaching, assessing, reteaching, or moving ahead, if the child is ready.

Remediation is a foundational part of the method and will be practiced conscientiously at LMS. If a child is moving exceptionally slow through the curriculum, this will be an indication that the child needs some diagnostic and remedial intervention. If this is the case, a team of professionals and parents will meet to review the appropriate interventions. A more formal written RTI plan will then be put into place.

This RTI plan will include the type of intervention, dates to begin, and checkpoints for examining results and outcomes related to the child's learning. Interventions can include the emotional, physical, and social realms, as well as academic. This incorporates the idea of teaching the whole child. Discussion of RTI is also addressed in the Serving Students with Special Needs and Evaluating Pupil Performance sections.

Interventions are to include, but are not limited to vision and hearing testing, speech screenings, behavioral plans monitored by home and school, and/or sessions with counselors for emotional issues. Academic interventions include but are not limited to more one-on-one time with teachers, shortened length of assignments, the addition of research based programs, breaks for activity,

and using cues from students on how they learn best and using those techniques when giving lessons. If these techniques do not produce positive outcomes, other interventions will be tried and/or recommended. Diagnostic tests may be recommended to rule out a learning difference. If the child qualifies for special services, then the procedures of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act would be put in place.

Organizational Plan and Capacity

Governing Board

Model of Governance: A board of directors with a structure of officers, by-laws, and delegation of management to a Director of the school.

Governing Board: The LMS Board of Directors is an odd number consisting of 9 members, a board chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer.

Board Meetings: Board of Directors meetings will be held at least six (6) times per year and conducted by the Board of Directors in accordance with all provisions of the current law and any amendments as they may be enacted. The Board may designate Standing Committees as described in the LMS Bylaws.

Responsibilities of Board of Directors: The Board of Directors for LMS will govern in accordance with the Charter School Act of 1996. The Board's focus is to develop broad policies to further the mission of the school, to ensure compliance with the Charter, and to provide sound fiscal management. The Board is responsible for selecting, employing and evaluating the performance of the School Director.

Bylaws: See the end of the document

Leadership Structure

The South Carolina Public Charter School District is the sponsor of Lowcountry Montessori School. The LMS Board of Directors is responsible for employing the Director of the School (Director). The Director shall select and employ all school staff, who will report to the Director. The Director may be tasked to coordinate the agreements that directly affect day-to-day operations of the school at the discretion of the governing board. The School Director will report to the Board on all contract matters.

The Director's function is to plan for, control, coordinate, supervise and direct the school in accordance with the purposes, policies, plans, procedures and programs authorized by the board in accordance with the mission of the school. The board will rely on the Director to provide professional administrative leadership and will delegate to the Director the authority for the management and execution of day-to-day school activities, including management of personnel and instructional leadership. The Director will serve as the liaison between the board and the school. The Director is responsible, within the guidelines established by board policy, for the direction and coordination of students and staff in their efforts to reach educational goals adopted by the board and those listed in this Charter.

The Director's specific responsibilities will also include, but not be limited to, employment and retention of quality staff; preparation of annual budget for board approval; oversight of learning assessment processes and maintenance of accurate and current student and personnel records. The Director, within the limits of the law and board policy, is the Leadership authority of the school and is responsible for a thorough knowledge of all laws, regulations and instructions governing the position.

Evaluations: The board shall develop a systematic means of annually evaluating the Director's effectiveness in implementing the objectives expressed in policies. The Director has the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of all other school personnel.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): The governing board and the staff of LMS will comply with all state and federal laws and regulations as amended, school policies, and professional ethics, including the Freedom of Information Act and will design its policies regarding student records, administrative records, and meetings in accordance with S.C. Code Title 30 Chapter 4. LMS will comply fully with Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). All Board of Director meetings will be conducted in public according to the stipulations of the FOIA, except for matters prescribed in Section 3-40-70.

Statements of Liability and Indemnification: The Corporation shall, to the maximum extent permitted by the Nonprofit Act, indemnify each of its Directors, officers and agents against expenses, judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with any proceeding arising by reason of the fact that any such person is or was an agent of the Corporation. The Corporation shall assume liability for the activities of the School and agree to hold harmless the sponsoring school district, its servants, agents, and employees from any and all liability, damage, expense, causes of action, suits, claims, or judgments arising from injury to persons or property or otherwise that arises out of the act, failure to act, or negligence of the school, its agents and employees, in connection with or arising out of the activity of the School.

Employees

Employment Process: In advertising for a position, LMS will post the position in places that will provide a good pool of candidates (such as our website,

www.cerra.org, Indeed, SCPCSD, American Montessori Society, the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina, etc.). LMS will also communicate with Montessori Teacher Certification program liaisons, as well as the American Montessori Society and the Association Montessori Internationale, the two central voices of Montessori education.

The Director will be responsible for hiring faculty and staff. Selected candidates will be interviewed personally, preferably in person but virtually if necessary; if possible, analyzing teacher portfolios and observing teacher classroom demonstrations will also be part of the selection process, as well as including staff who would work closely with the candidate. Extensive background checks will be conducted on all interviewed applicants to verify past experiences and ensure the safety of our children. All employees and others serving in an official capacity may be subject to fingerprinting, SLED and FBI background checks.

LMS teachers will be certified as required by South Carolina statutes and will meet the highly qualified guidelines established by the No Child Left Behind Legislation or as amended by federal or state law. We may employ skilled, selected non-certified personnel to provide institutional services or to assist instructional staff members as instructional assistants in compliance with the laws of the State of South Carolina. We will not employ an individual to provide instructional services if the individual's certificate or licensure as an educator is suspended or revoked by this or any other state, as per South Carolina Statute. We reserve the right to mandate whatever testing of employees is deemed necessary to protect the students. We will not violate the anti-discrimination provisions of The South Carolina Education Equity Act.

Teacher Evaluations: LMS will comply fully with ADEPT, which is South Carolina's system for assisting, developing, and evaluating professional teaching. Based on state expectations (i.e., the ADEPT Performance

Standards) that are aligned with nationally recognized professional standards, the ADEPT system forms a seamless continuum for educators throughout the entirety of their careers. Additionally, LMS will utilize the Montessori Guidance Document created by the ADEPT program administrators for Montessori programs.

The School Director and educational support staff will conduct frequent informal teacher observations to identify strengths and professional growth targets. Additionally, the Director will formally observe teachers in the classroom between one and four times a year, depending on the teacher's level of experience. Informal collegial dialogue about systemic improvement of student work will be ongoing throughout the year. Formal check-ins with staff will occur 2 - 3 times a year with staff and one or more members of the Leadership Team, including the Director and Assistant Directors. The Director will be responsible for directing performance improvement for or taking disciplinary action against LMS employees.

Terms and Conditions of Employment: The timeline, process, and forms utilized will be shared with staff at the beginning of the school year and through staff development and/or training events. Teachers will maintain daily and weekly records of presented lessons and which children received each lesson. This record is to be easily accessed at any time to share with the Leadership Team and parents. The Employee Handbook containing policies and procedures will be distributed annually, at the beginning of each school year, with each employee signing a certificate of receipt. The LMS Board of Directors has the opportunity to review the handbook annually and update as needed. Policies and procedures within the handbook will adhere to all state and federal laws governing educational organizations.

Grievance and Termination Procedures

Teacher Employment and Dismissal Procedures

1) LMS will adopt the procedures for the employment and dismissal of teachers outlined in S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-410 *et seq.* (1990).

2) LMS will maintain a high standard of excellence and a formidable code of ethics to ensure the safety and well-being of the students. We expressly reserve the right to discharge employees after exhausting an internal due process hearing. Violation of the following infractions will result in immediate disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning to termination. Infractions shall include, but not be limited to, the following: absenteeism and tardiness; poor performance; insubordination; violation and/or lack of enforcement of school rules; breach of confidentiality; theft; harassment; misconduct with students; cheating; failure to keep valid teaching license; misuse of property; fraud, dishonesty, and/or false statements; threats and/or weapons in the workplace; and substance abuse.

There may be other circumstances in which an employee of LMS may be disciplined and/or terminated. LMS retains the discretion at all times to immediately terminate an employee or to decide what level or type of discipline is warranted, if any. Employees of LMS are *at-will* employees of Lowcountry Montessori School and can be terminated at any time without prior disciplinary action.

Lowcountry Montessori School shall not be required to use any of the following steps of discipline or use them in any particular order, but retains the discretion at all times to determine the nature and severity of discipline and/or termination. In the event it becomes necessary to discipline an employee, the following steps of discipline may occur at the discretion of LMS: verbal warning; written warning; final warning; probation; and/or termination. The employee's right to a hearing before the Board of Directors is described in the next section, as the Board has the authority to hear employee grievances.

Grievance Procedure for School Employees

1. Lowcountry Montessori School (“the School”) follows the statutory provisions of Article 5, Chapter 25 of Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, (1976 as amended), concerning the Employment and Dismissal of Teachers.
2. All employees of the School are considered employees *at will*, as defined by the laws of the state of South Carolina.
3. In the event that an employee is dissatisfied with the Director’s resolution of an issue, including but not limited to termination of employment, then the employee may file a written appeal with the Board of Directors after first notifying the Director in writing of his/her intent to appeal. The Board may decline to hear an appeal. Any decision of the Board regarding an appeal shall be final.
4. No person associated with a grievance shall be the object of administrative reprisal, sanction, or penalty of any kind for either activating or participating in the grievance procedure.
5. The procedure prescribed herein shall be adhered to in processing employee complaints under Title I of the Education Amendment of 1972 (Sex Discrimination).
6. This process shall only be followed for employees of LMS and does not apply to contracted services provided by others.

Enrollment:

The targeted population for LMS is Beaufort and Jasper County children ages three through twelfth grade. Efforts have been made, and will continue to be made, to conduct outreach to areas in these counties so that the LMS student body reflects the diverse cultural and socio-economic make-up of the surrounding areas. Such efforts will continue to include media coverage, personal contacts, community meetings, and school presence at events.

Racial and cultural diversity is celebrated in the Montessori classroom and LMS will be diligent in its outreach effort in order to ensure that the student body has a richly diverse staff and student body.

The community receives information about Lowcountry Montessori School and any upcoming lottery and enrollment deadlines through social media posts on the school's Facebook and Instagram accounts, our website, signs posted around town, and at any outreach events attended by the school. We find that word of mouth is our largest outreach tool.

The school opened its doors with kindergarten through ninth grade. We currently serve three year olds through twelfth graders. The following chart calculates the approximate number of students at full buildout.

Student Enrollment Projections Form

Student Enrollment Projections for 10-Year Charter

Name of Charter School: Lowcountry Montessori

SCHOOL YEAR	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34
Pre-K	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
5K	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
First	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Second	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Third	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Fourth	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Fifth	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Sixth	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Seventh	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Eighth	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Ninth	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Tenth	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Eleventh	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Twelfth	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
TOTALS	477	477	477	477	477	477	477	477	477	477

According to the Coalition of Essential Schools, over 100 research studies have shown that students in small schools do better in every area of student attitudes, including attendance and graduation rates, attachment to school, extra-curricular participation, and disciplinary incidents. It also states that their academic achievement goes up in test scores, grades and critical thinking skills. The benefits of small school size go hand and hand with flexible teaching practices, such as teaching teams, multi-aged grouping, cooperative learning, alternative assessments, and an experiential learning focus. These practices are the hallmark of the Montessori classroom and will provide the sense of community which will foster the same sense of stewardship and responsibility outside of the school both now and as they reach adulthood.

Typically small schools give students more responsibility for their own learning. Student attitudes towards school in general and toward particular school subjects are more positive in small schools. Students have a greater sense of belonging in a small school and minorities are more positively impacted by attending small schools. Enrollment at Lowcountry Montessori School at the beginning of the 23-24 school year is currently 388. We are planning an expansion on our campus and will add 75 - 100 students once that occurs. Our goal is to remain a small school with enrollment around 450

and not exceeding 500.

By incorporating community service throughout the curriculum, Lowcountry Montessori School will strive to teach children how to live within a community and how to be contributing members of society; this is a key driving component of the Montessori curriculum. The Montessori method encourages children to see the world from a global perspective and the curriculum encourages the child to be a part of the community.

Service learning is incorporated into the curriculum by having Peace Projects in the Primary through Upper Elementary grade levels, Middle School students have two Land Labs a year and a service component is interwoven in these trips, and in High School students choose a non-profit they would like to volunteer for and on half day Fridays the students spend the morning from 8:30am - 11:30am in service to that agency. High School students are also able to receive credit for assisting in different areas of the school as a Give-Back Class. Examples of these projects include assisting in a primary or elementary class, with the gardening program or the Front Office.

Lowcountry Montessori creates an environment that mimics real life scenarios. With the development of the Middle School and High School programs, students run a business as part of the curriculum. Thereby students will learn, in a hands-on manner, market research, implementation and analysis, accounting, production of a product, and service accountability.

A central feature in the curriculum will be the school garden, which will serve as a laboratory where all LMS students can conduct scientific research on the natural world. In the school garden, students will produce organically grown food for use in the kitchen and food labs. The school garden will be available for use as a tool for all areas of curriculum, utilizing experiential learning to develop the whole child.

Receipt and Processing of Applications: LMS accepts applications for the Lottery held in February between October 1 - January 31st of each year for the following school year. They will be processed in the following ways:

Postal mail: Applications for enrollment may be mailed to Lowcountry Montessori School at 749 Broad River Drive, Beaufort, SC 29906. LMS personnel will collect postal applications and date them according to postmark. E-mail: Applications for enrollment may be e-mailed to LMS. LMS personnel will print a copy of emailed applications and date them according to the date and time received. The email system tracks date and time of submission. On-line: An on-line application is available www.lowcountrymontessori.com. LMS personnel will print a copy of on-line applications and date them according to the date submitted. The on-line system will track date and time of submission.

In person-on-site: LMS will accept applications on site in our Front Office. The Director will designate personnel who will collect applications and date them according to the date of receipt.

*LMS will notify parents either by email confirming the receipt of the application. Any applications received after January 31st will be considered on a first- come/ first-served, space-available basis.

Priority Enrollment and Conduct of Drawing: If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available slots, a drawing will be used to determine who gains admission. All applicants who would like to attend LMS must submit an application prior to the published deadline. Any applications received after the published deadline will be placed at the end of the waitlist in the order of which they were received. Any students drawn after all seats are filled in a particular grade will be placed on a wait list in the order they are drawn. The drawing will be duly publicized and conducted in a public meeting. All priority preferences will be considered in the following order:

1. Child(ren) of LMS employees. If staff disenrolled their child, they will no longer have staff priority.

3. Applicant sibling(s) of a currently enrolled and attending student.

4. Applicant sibling(s) of an accepted applicant applying for the same academic year

Priority enrollment for children of LMS employees cannot constitute more than 20% of the enrollment of the charter school. Siblings who are applying for the first time will receive preference only after one of the sibling(s) has been drawn. A student is only considered to have priority status in year one of his/her attendance. Therefore in subsequent years, that student is considered as already enrolled and will not count towards priority status.

Lowcountry Montessori School Lottery Process: The drawing will proceed as follows: For each family that applies, LMS personnel will create a lottery number. This number will be the same for each member of the family and will be differentiated by attaching the grade level for each student the family applies for a spot. For example, a family is assigned 100. Their children would be 100-K, 100-5, 100-9 if they had a kindergartner, fifth grader and ninth grader. If they have children in the same grade, it would be delineated by a letter. For Example 100-KA, 100-KB.

*All lottery information will be verified by LMS personnel against the application.

1. Each family will have an envelope with the children's lottery numbers in the envelope.. The outside of the envelope will note the number with grade level of each child applied for each family.

2. Each envelope will then be placed in a container, in numerical order. The container will be stored in a secure locked location.

3. PreK 3 will be drawn last and Pre-K 4 will be drawn second to last.

4. A community representative, not associated with LMS, will push the third party button on the computer that randomizes the order of what grade

should be picked and in what order, regarding K-12th grade.

5. Once grade level order has been established, the community representative will push the button for the randomized order of each grade level.

6. Each envelope will be opened and the applicant's drawing number will be called out and placed on the board.

7. This will continue until all envelopes have been drawn for that grade level.

8. Once all available seats have been filled, the process will continue with the rest of the applicants going on a wait list in the order they are drawn.

9. In the event that a student is drawn in a subsequent grade level, is eligible for a slot and has a sibling on the waitlist in another grade, that sibling would move up to the appropriate spot on the waitlist.

10. This will be repeated for each grade level until all grades and all cards have been drawn. Following the drawing, notifications of seats will be shared within 72 hours on the LMS website and announced on the school's social media accounts. Within 10 business days, LMS will send out Enrollment Packages to all students who were picked in the drawing via email. Families will then have 10 business days to return the Enrollment Package via email, regular mail, or in person. The envelope must be postmarked accordingly to be accepted. Any Enrollment Packages that are received late or are not returned to LMS will constitute that slot being offered to the next child on the waitlist. Beginning in the month of July each year, seats offered may require a 48 hour acceptance period in order to fill seats in a timely manner.

Students Outside the District: Because LMS is sponsored through the South Carolina Public Charter School District, there will be no out-of-district students. The district covers all students residing in SC.

Student Appeals Process: The drawing will be the final and binding result for admission. In the event that LMS denies admission to a student for reasons other than the result of the drawing, the student may appeal to the governing

board of Lowcountry Montessori School. In the event that a suitable resolution cannot be decided, then the student may appeal to the SC Public Charter School District Board of Trustees. The appeal to both groups must be within 10 business days in writing and state the grounds on which the appeal is based. The decision of the SCPCSD shall be binding and final without the right of appeal (Section 59-40-50(c) (1)).

Student Conduct, Discipline, Suspension, and Expulsion Procedures

Montessori discipline emphasizes non-punitive, positive methods, which avoids personal humiliation and takes age and maturity into consideration. LMS will communicate any infraction of the rules and expectations by students to their parents in a timely manner in order to maintain a cooperative effort to encourage children to become aware of the natural consequences of their actions. LMS uses restorative practices with discipline. This process is about taking accountability in the situation, repairing the relationship and having logical consequences. LMS will fully comply with S.C. Code Ann 59-63-235; expulsion of any student bringing a firearm to school. LMS will follow guidelines and regulations set forth by DSS.

Expectations: Respect for people and property; children are guided to develop age appropriate behavior through grace and courtesy lessons, role-playing, modeling, guidance lessons, and discussions.

Preventive Guidelines: Positive expectations of behaviors are set up and reinforced by all staff and Elementary classrooms receive lessons by the Counselor. All classrooms come up with behavioral expectations together that they agree to and post in the classrooms to refer to in times of need. Community Meetings and Peace Tables or other Conflict Resolution and Restorative Practice opportunities are established ways to discuss challenges in the classroom.

Procedure for discipline of challenging behavior : When an undesired

behavior occurs, the child is reminded of the expected behavior and a dialogue of how to correct the behavior occurs with the adult outlining the correct behavior if the child doesn't come up with it on their own. If the behavior continues, the child is removed from the situation with regard to natural consequences (Ex. if the child is demonstrating that working with a friend is not a successful situation, that choice is no longer available to them for a period of time) and redirected to positive work choices.

If the challenging behavior continues, the Guide has several options to assist the child in changing their behavior: Peace Conversation between those involved; Peace Table for a student to calm themselves or to meet with another person who is involved; Having a Restorative Circle; Meeting with the Counselor, if needed and appropriate; Taking a walk to reset if needed and appropriate; Time in the Garden, if needed and appropriate; Visiting one of the dogs on campus that are available for calming, if needed and appropriate; Using a pre-established plan for self-regulation; Referring the child to the office for a designated time to reset, for the remainder of the day, or asking that the child be picked up from school.

If the behavior doesn't change, the student's file is annotated, parents are notified, and a conference is scheduled between the Guide, Leadership, and parents/guardians to develop a plan to address the behavior. If the student was sent to the Office with a referral, the Leadership Team will contact the parent/guardian and set up a meeting to address the challenging behavior.

If the above has not worked and cooperation with the child and/or parents is not evident, a child may be placed on a Behavior Expectation Plan that would lead to expulsion if not followed. Expulsion cannot be an alternative if parents have not been fully informed of the intervention strategies tried. Expulsions are the decision of the LMS Board of Directors.

Discipline Policy for Abusive, Destructive, and Obscene Language and/or

Behavior: The use of abusive language and/or behavior will not be tolerated. The student will be removed from the environment at the first occurrence and parents will be notified. For those instances in which a student's behavior poses a continuing disruption to the class or where the health or safety of the students is impacted, LMS reserves the right to suspend a student's enrollment until a meeting with the parents and the Guide can be held. A Referral will be put in the student's file and reported as an incident in PowerSchool. Recommendations for further evaluation and support strategies will be discussed; in cases of behavioral issues, modifications may be required to ensure continued enrollment.

The primary criteria for re-admittance is the parental support of the school policy and professional recommendations and the student's own ability to modify behaviors. LMS reserves the right to terminate enrollment for the protection of students, leadership, teachers, volunteers and all other school personnel. In compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C.1232) the above policies will be given to parents and students at the beginning of the school year and they will sign a statement of notification. See Appendix for a copy of the Student Handbook.

Disabled students will be addressed in accordance with state and federal law. Under IDEA of 2004, the continued provision of FAPE will remain with the LEA. A student must appeal an expulsion in writing to the LMS Board; a decision will be made within five (5) business days. Alternative educational instruction will be used during expulsion and until the final decision.

Parental grievance may begin with the involved parties (Guide, leadership, etc.) within ten days following the event or the gained knowledge of the event. The parent shall have the right to present the grievance in writing to the Director within three days of the discussion or within ten days following

the event. The parent may request in writing to meet with the Board of Directors via the Director within five days of the Director's response to the grievance. The Director will present the grievance, all correspondences and responses to the Board; a decision will be made within ten working days. Employees of the school may include a request for a hearing before the Director. Failure of the parent to attend the hearing shall end the grievance procedure.

Parent and Community Involvement

One of the founding principles of the Montessori curriculum is the celebration of diversity. In order to create this diversity within Lowcountry Montessori School, the Director, Board and staff will continue community outreach throughout the county and surrounding areas. This will include, but not be limited to, parent and community education, community events and advertising throughout the school year.

Parent and community member involvement will be continually sought out and encouraged in a number of ways. Parents and community members will be asked to serve on the Lowcountry Montessori School Board of Directors and will be active in the annual election of board members. The LMS Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all decisions and activities of the school, however, the Board Members will consult often with the Director and educators at LMS and the parents of the students for input in all major decisions which will impact LMS. Also, LMS will take steps to keep parents, community members, and LMS employees well informed about LMS's progress.

LMS maintains that informed parents will be involved parents. LMS will use parent workshops and other family-oriented activities to involve parents in the school in order to ensure parents understand Montessori methods and the most important principles taught by a Montessori education. It is LMS's belief that the more parents understand the Montessori philosophy and

teaching methods, the more enthusiastic and involved they will want to be with school functions and promoting the school as a much needed institution of learning. Additionally, parents will be encouraged to visit the school and sit in on classes to see the Montessori method in action and to see how their children are being impacted. LMS will provide parents many opportunities to volunteer their time and talent; such as serving on committees, helping with class projects, attending field trips, participating in school activities, belonging to the LMS Parent Teacher Organization and attending organized school functions which will foster family involvement and enrich the lives of LMS students and help further outreach into the community.

LMS has established community partnerships with various businesses and service providers such as First Federal Bank, HELP of Beaufort, CAPA, Spring Island, Habitat for Humanity, and others. The Board of Directors will continue to seek out partnerships within the community in order to develop relationships between the school, students, staff, parents and businesses. LMS plans to continue to seek out and develop relationships with various service organizations in the community.

Transportation

LMS will not provide transportation to students.

Business Plan

Budget and Finance

Non-Profit Corporation Status: LMS is organized as a non-profit corporation which has filed for incorporation under the South Carolina Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1994, Chapter 31, Title 33, S.C. Code (the “**Nonprofit Act**”).

Annual Budget: The Board of Directors will determine the business and

financial services protocol for Lowcountry Montessori School. The Charter Committee is exploring alternatives for our financial management and will ultimately select the process that best suits our fiscal needs as well as establishes us as sound stewards of public funds. Our spread-sheet formatted, LMS Five-Year Budget and Ten-Year Budget is included. This budget has been prepared in accordance with the State Department of Education (SDE) Financial Accounting Handbook, with reference to the Funding Manual and the Single Audit Guide. The Board of Directors will adopt an Annual Operating Budget during May preceding the start of the Fiscal Year and will receive and approve Monthly Financial Statements during the operational Fiscal Year.

Revenues: Revenue account codes used in the attached budget are in accordance with the SDE Financial Accounting Handbook for South Carolina school districts.

Expenditures: Expenditure account codes used in the attached budget are in accordance with the SDE Financial Accounting Handbook for South Carolina school districts. Anticipated expenditures follow the same budget codes (Fund, Function, Object) that are required of school districts operating in South Caroli

Annual Audit: Our annual audit is a statutory requirement; accordingly, we will comply with all aspects of this mandate. We will partner with an auditor with prior charter school auditing experience and best meets our needs. The audit will engage our financial and administrative operations and will, in compliance with law, be conducted in the same manner as all schools in our school district. LMS will adhere to accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures and requirements of our sponsor, which are those for all public schools operating in South Carolina by: • Establishing policies and executing the corresponding internal fiscal control procedure to properly account for all revenue and expenses as directed in the Financial Accounting Handbook and Funding Manual. LMS will maintain

appropriate records on a by-transaction basis thereby establishing our financial management system as “audit ready” at the conclusion of any given transaction. LMS will also make required reports (on-call, monthly, quarterly, annually) to appropriate agents and agencies. LMS will also ensure that all accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures and requirements will comply with the published specifications of the Office of District Auditing and Field Services contained in the (a) Single Audit Guide, (b) Financial Accounting Handbook, and (c) Funding Manual. The Board of Directors will receive, review, and approve the Auditor’s Report prior to official reporting.

Pupil Accounting System: In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the South Carolina Pupil Accounting Manual and the South Carolina Student Accountability Manual, we will adhere to the reporting procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to all public schools in South Carolina. Reports will be maintained and filed according to district, state, and federal requirements

Negotiated Services Documentation: LMS thoroughly reviews all options and proceeds with the protocol that best meets our financial needs and best sets us as sound guardians of public funds when it comes to negotiating services.

Facilities

A Montessori-Inspired Facility: Indoor and outdoor spaces honor Montessori principles. Our facility has been designed with this in mind. Each and every classroom space has access to outdoor spaces. These spaces are important in providing connection to nature and movement. LMS is currently in the process of adding a dedicated high school space, community meeting space, culinary kitchen, cafe, science lab, yoga room, open air gym, maker’s space, and art space. These spaces have also been designed with the outdoors in mind

Insurances

Workers' Compensation Insurance: The South Carolina Workers' Compensation Law is designed to provide medical care to bring about the earliest possible recovery from the injury, a percentage of wages and salary lost during the injured employee's disability, and, in case of death, compensation for the deceased employee's dependents. Workman's Compensation insurance is currently held through The Hartford. See attachments for coverage.

Selective Insurance coverages: These policies are designed to match or exceed the minimum limits required by the South Carolina Tort claims Act S.C. Code Ann. § 15- 78-120 (Supp. 2011). LMS holds:

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY COVERAGE, COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY COVERAGE, COMMERCIAL AUTOMOBILE COVERAGE, COMMERCIAL INLAND MARINE COVERAGE, COMMERCIAL UMBRELLA COVERAGE, COMMERCIAL ABUSE OR MOLESTATION COVG, COMMERCIAL CRIME COVERAGE SCHOOL, and BOARD LEGAL LIABILITY.

Other Insurance Lowcountry Montessori holds Flood Insurance Policies on each of the three current buildings and will cover the additional spaces.

Indemnification: Lowcountry Montessori School assumes the liability for the activities of the charter school and agrees to hold harmless the school district, its servants, agents, and employees from any and all liability, damage, expense, causes of actions, suits, claims, or judgments arising from injury to persons or property or otherwise that arises out of the act, failure to act, or negligence of the charter school, its agents and employees, in connection with or arising out of the activity of the charter school.

Conclusion

Wall Street Journal writer Peter Sims writes, “Ironically the Montessori Educational approach might be the surest way of joining the creative elite which are so over-represented by the schools alumni that one might suspect a Montessori Mafia: Google’s founders, Larry Page, Sergi Brin, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Video Game Pioneer Will Wright, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Whales, not to mention Julia Childs, and Rapper P. Diddy Combs.” He continues, “Is there something going on here? Is there something about the Montessori approach that nurtures creativity and inventiveness that we can all learn from?” We think so.