



Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

Annual Report

(Including the World's Best Workforce Report)

2016-2017

Submitted to:

Volunteers of America

on November 1, 2017

by Liesl Taylor, Head of School
Chris Bewell, Director of Business Operations
Elizabeth Coenen, Board Chair

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Introduction

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is the first and only AMI recognized public Montessori Charter School in the Midwest, and one of the few in the country. As such, and to honor our mission and the children we serve, we must not stray in our approach amidst the pressures of implementing high fidelity Montessori in the public sector. We must remain steadfastly tied and true to our founding principles and bring that about for the children we serve each day.

Montessori education is not given as a curriculum. Montessori education is an *aide to life* encompassing all areas of development and in the context, always, of community. In Dr. Montessori's own words, "*This is education, understood as a help to life; an education from birth, which feeds a peaceful revolution and unites all in a common aim... Mothers, fathers, politicians: all must combine in their respect and help for this delicate work of formation...*" (*The Absorbent Mind*) The idea of the Formation of Man is not an idea Doctor Montessori started with when she began her work with children. She formulated the idea as she thought about children's natures in terms of human potential. As she supported children in becoming fully integrated human beings, she saw as their goal, taking their place within humanity. Dr. Montessori said, "*The task of the child is the formation of man orientated to his environment, adapted to time, place, and culture.*" (*The Formation of Man*)

This compels us to operate with significantly different goals than the goals we are familiar with in traditional education.

As Dr. Montessori studied, she was aware that in the fifth century BCE, Aristotle's contribution to the education of young children was the first scientific argument that education be based on human nature; this was novel and remarkable. Doctor Montessori was also aware that a Roman by the name of Marcus Quintilian, in 35 – 95 CE, believed that children had a natural capacity to contribute to their own development. After Aristotle and Quintilian, the approach to education lost sight of the notion of the nature of the *human being* being at the center of the approach, meaning that the nature of the very person we are seeking to educate has not been a deciding factor in the consideration of traditional educational philosophies.

In Montessori Education, the child is the central agent of the method. At Cornerstone, we embrace the human tendencies and the developmental characteristics of the children we serve and use those as guiding factors. We are finally now relishing in the fact that there is scientific evidence to support what Dr. Montessori discovered and what we know. Pediatric Neuropsychologists are able to list conditions, most of which are key components in Montessori classrooms, which aid in optimal brain development! Yet we are still under tremendous pressure to focus energy on giving information and tabulating results dictated by traditional approaches. To truly serve children, and to address many of the most prevalent issues that have been plaguing traditional education for decades in the United States, we must work to stay grounded in the pedagogy that resulted from Dr. Montessori's profound work.

When we are committed to education being an aide to life, we are asking Authorizers, Board Members, Educators and Parents to dramatically shift their thinking and then act in a way to support that shift. We must think differently about our approach and act to support our convictions quite simply because we desire dramatically different outcomes for our children.

MISSION

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School's mission is to support children from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds living in or near St. Paul's East Side through a rigorous and high-impact Montessori program that empowers them to make positive decisions, develop self-discipline, and create a true sense of responsibility for themselves and others in their community.

VISION

The vision of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is a world-class, cross-cultural elementary learning community featuring the powerful and highly differentiated Montessori curriculum, which comprehensively prepares children to achieve at high levels and to excel as leaders in the 21st century. It will provide the highest quality education to all children, regardless of their socio-economic or cultural backgrounds.

In 2016-2017, CMES served children ages 5-12 in all-day Kindergarten and Elementary Montessori Environments in a 10-month program starting after Labor Day and ending in early June.

To note – CMES is an active 501(c)(3) nonprofit trust institution as noted in the Charities section of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson's website (*See Appendix B.*).



Statement of Purposes

This is the Annual Report for Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES) and, as part of our first section, as outlined in law [*Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.16 Subd 2*] and directed by our authorizer Volunteers of America (VOA), we begin with a statement of purposes.

To wit:

- 1) CMES will improve pupil learning and child achievement:

CMES will do so by implementing an Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)-recognized program that individualizes learning for each child while also helping all children learn to work together respectfully and productively in the learning environment.

- 2) CMES will increase learning opportunities for pupils:

CMES will do so by first and foremost offering a public, AMI-recognized Montessori option on the East Side of St. Paul. Heretofore, Montessori education was available primarily in private schools with a few public schools sprinkled in, severely limiting the option for less affluent families.

Second, though no less important, CMES will provide numerous opportunities for learning with the context of the AMI Montessori environment. The classroom design by its very nature encourages and nurtures choice and the natural development of academic and social skills. Moving away from seat time, bells, and teacher-directed learning, CMES prides itself on truly and naturally individualizing learning for each child.

- 3) CMES will encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods:

Though Montessori education took shape in 1909 with AMI forming in 1929 to protect the integrity of Dr. Maria Montessori's work, AMI-certified Montessori instruction is **the** innovative approach for the 21st century. In stark contrast to factory-style schools with an increasing emphasis on drill-and-grill approaches to improve test scores, authentic Montessori education offers a viable and innovative alternative.

More specifically (and this is illustrated throughout this report) – Dr. Montessori literally wrote the books on differentiating instruction. Each child moves at his or her own pace in his or her own manner. The learning environment allows for this multiplicity of children's approaches to the materials.

- 4) CMES will measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes:

Using the Optional Local Purpose Assessments (OLPA) tests in mathematics and reading to establish baseline data and areas in need of remediation or exceptional challenge for children 3rd grade – 6th grade in the Fall of the year, CMES will extend its individualized instruction by looking at standardized test data as a way to focus and inspire learning in areas of need. Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in Math, Reading, and Science will be given in the spring as one measure of proficiency in those subject areas. Lastly, CMES piloted in one classroom environment, an independent assessment tool to gauge learning and growth within the AMI-certified Montessori environment and will expand its use in the coming year.

- 5) CMES will create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

CMES staff members have a unique opportunity to blend AMI-certified training with Minnesota state standards and expectations. As they weave these two approaches together to maximize child success, each educator will explore new territory from at least two unique perspectives. Using both as a foundation for making wise decisions about the school environment and curriculum will be paramount to making CMES an outstanding place of learning for all children.

Per state guidelines [*Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.16 Subd 2*], this report begins with a background about who CMES is, who authorizes us, and who attends CMES. Then we move onto how CMES operates. We look at finances, committees, board composition, and licensure. The last section looks at the work we do with children in grades K-6: their performance, our innovative programs, and our future plans to maintain and sustain CMES far into the future.



Authorizer Information

Volunteers of America (VOA) is CMES's authorizer and has been since the school's inception. VOA is committed to uplifting all lives through its mission to help people "gain self-reliance, dignity, and hope," according to its website, voamn.org.

In addition to providing numerous services to those in need since 1896, VOA also "offers authorization to Minnesota charter schools ... [that] provide successful learning opportunities to children in small, educationally creative settings. Authorization includes strong oversight, accountability and resources to help charter schools succeed."

CMES is proud to be associated with an organization of such integrity and determination to support underserved communities.



Volunteers of America of Minnesota

Main Contact: Stephanie Olsen, Manager VOA Charter School Authorizing Program

Address: VOA-MN Education Center, 924 – 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Cell: 612-270-1998

E-Mail: solsen@voamn.org.

For a description of VOA's oversight as well as reporting/accountability requirements for Cornerstone Montessori Elementary, see Appendix A.

School Governance

School Governance Model

CMES staff, Board of Directors, and Head of School work together to create a program that supports the growth and achievement of all children enrolled at CMES. The Board of Directors, whose responsibilities include hiring and reviewing the performance of the Head of School, oversees the school. The Board entrusts the operations and management of the school to the Head of School and supervises the Head of School in this role. The staff collaborates on the program with the Head of School, who approves all programmatic decisions and presents them to the Board. The Director of Business Operations, in managing the finances of the school in conjunction with the consulting financial management firm, supports the Head of School. The Head of School and the Director of Business Operations report to the Finance Committee, which prepares and presents information to the Board of Directors for approval and oversight.

See Appendix F for a copy of the Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School By-Laws.

Site Operations Committees

Board Level

Finance: Chris Bewell, Liz Coenen, Melissa Santrach, Liesl Taylor, and Sandra Schmidt of SandMark Services LLC (our financial management firm)

Governance: Chris Bewell, Liz Coenen, Andrea Galdames, Melissa Santrach

Head of School Evaluation Subcommittee: Liz Coenen, Molly O'Shaughnessy (MTCM)

Communication and Development Committee: Chris Bewell, Amanda Cina, Liz Coenen, and Melissa Santrach

School Level

Parent Involvement Committee (Part of Title I): Amy Dvergsdal, Yulonda Hayes, Connie Gottfried, Sarah Stocco, Kara Viswanathan, Darci Karl (parents), and Liesl Taylor (Head of School)

Reading Well by 3rd Grade Literacy Plan Committee/Child Study Team: Amber Osterkamp (Lower Elementary Teacher), Suzi Splinter (Special Education Teacher), Molly McDermott (Children's House Guide), Cynthia Crooks (ELL Teacher), Jessica Goff (Upper Elementary Teacher), Megan Reimer (Literacy Specialist), Liesl Taylor (Head of School)

District Advisory Committee: (Part of WBF): Chris Bewell (Program Administrator), Cynthia Crooks (ELL Teacher), Liza Davis (Community Member/Parent), Jess Goff (Upper Elementary Teacher/Parent), Catherine Kennedy (Support Staff/Parent), Molly McDermott (Kindergarten Teacher), Frankie Nesbitt (Support Staff/Grandparent), Estefani Paz Garcia (Support Staff/Parent), Megan Riemer (Literacy Specialist/Parent), Liesl Taylor (Head of School), Sara Wade (Lower Elementary Teacher)

2016-2017 School Year Charter Public School Board

This table contains information for ALL board members.

2016-17 Election Date: May 16, 2017

Name	Board Position	Group Affiliation (if teacher, file folder #)	Skills	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Phone Number	E-Mail Address	Member Meeting Attendance Rate
Amanda Cina	Trustee	Parent		6/17/16	7/1/16	6/30/2019	651-336-1135	amandacina@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12
Elizabeth Coenen	Board Chair	Parent	Runs non-profit organization	5/19/2015	7/13/10	6/30/2018	651-493-7194	elizabethcoenen@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/12
Andrea Galdames	Trustee	Community Member	AMI-certified Montessori teacher	5/20/2014	7/1/14	6/30/2017	612-220-2923	andreagaldames@cornerstone-elementary.org	9/12
Jessica Goff	Trustee	Teacher – file folder # 391619	AMI-certified Montessori teacher	6/17/16	7/1/16	6/30/2019	651-774-5000	jessgoff@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/12
Julianne McDermott	Trustee	Community Member	AMI certified Montessori teacher	5/20/2014	7/1/14	Resigned 11/15/16	612-716-6077	juliannmcdermott@cornerstone-elementary.org	2/5
Julie Richards	Vice Chair	Parent		5/20/2014	7/1/14	6/30/2015	571-435-5350	julierichards@cornerstone-elementary.org	8/12
Melissa Santrach	Treasurer	Community Member	Previous Montessori Board Chair	5/19/2015	12/15/09	6/30/2018	651-303-3796	melissasantrach@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12
Liesl Taylor	Ex-Officio	Head of School	AMI-certified teacher	NA	NA	NA	651-774-5000	liesltaylor@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12

Policy Additions and Changes Adopted in FY 2016-2017

200 Series

223: On Going Board Training 11-15-2016

500 Series

534: Service Learning 11-15-2016

VOA Site Visit Report Highlights

VOA provided the following feedback to the school following the November 22, 2016, Fall Visitation.

School Mission and Vision: CMES serves as a model for Montessori best practices as it exists in the same facility as the Montessori Center of Minnesota and collaborates on professional development and training of new teachers. CMES is an Association of Montessori International (AMI) recognized school. The facility and instructional supplies are age appropriate – designed to meet student needs at a student’s level. The design of each classroom encourages and nurtures choice and the natural development of academic and social skills. The vision and mission are displayed in the facility, contained in all publications and on the website. With regards to the community and service aspect of their learning program, students have the opportunity to engage in “going outs,” where the students conduct research and then go out into the community for a practical experience or service opportunity. The day the authorizer was at the school, a group of 4-6th grade students were “going out” to the Merrick Food Shelves to volunteer (demonstrating responsibility for themselves and their community).

School Culture and Learning Environment: The health and safety section of the VOA-MN Compliance Binder contained numerous inspection reports as evidence of compliance. The authorizer verified that CMES has an “Emergency Procedures” manual. The school is also in the process of updating their Emergency Management systems, for example to include a speaker system within and to the outside of the facility in the event that one is necessary. The school has already developed a relationship with the local police department and welcomes police to spend time on their campus, even doing their routine officer paperwork, to maintain a presence and awareness of the school.

With regard to parent engagement, CMES hosts five events a year that the school sponsors and four that the Montessori Center sponsors, nine in total. Meetings are targeted to further parent awareness of Montessori and further school awareness of the cultures and diversity of the families and community they serve. The school also incorporates parents into planning school events and learning material building.

The schools trained floating substitute teacher has developed a teacher/child friendly version of the state standards (into “I Can” statements) which are then incorporated into the children’s work journals. The students conference weekly with their teachers about progress on their journal and the teachers conference with the Head of School monthly regarding student progress meeting the state standards. The teachers are also regularly engaging in collaborative communication regarding student progress covering the state standards and monitoring whole child development.

Compliance: The VOA-MN Compliance binder was reviewed by the authorizer and verified to be complete with exemplary organization.

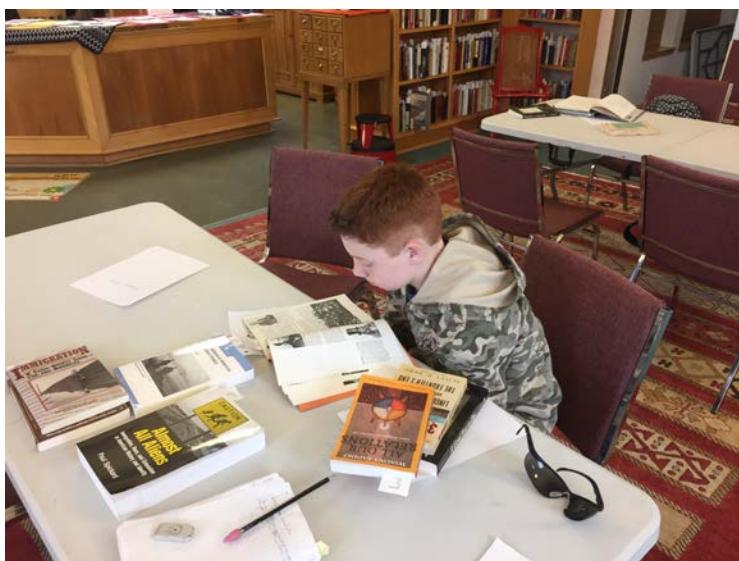
The school employs six classroom teachers (K-6), ten licensed teachers when including ELL, special education and literacy specialist. Head of School Taylor conducts two informal meetings a month (every other week) with each teacher (lead guides) as part of Ms. Taylor’s informal teacher observations process. During the meetings

with the lead guides and Ms. Taylor the observation rubric is discussed as well as the year's schoolwide and teacher selected areas of focus. The school utilizes the Montessori Guide Effectiveness Rubric for the end of year formal Head of School classroom teacher evaluations. Ms. Taylor has also recently been trained in the Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS) system which she plans to also incorporate into observations and evaluations.

The school has a very thorough multi step employee hiring process, which incorporates the Head of School, various teachers and often the Director of Business Operations. Employment offers are ratified by the board. The school has benefited from an intentional effort to have staff who are Montessori trained in other positions and can move into classroom positions (paraprofessionals, floating substitutes, etc).

The school is meeting their enrollment goals and has waitlists in all grades.

Special Populations: The school contracts with Indigo Education for Special Education Director Services. The Indigo representative is Amanda Wilmot who is at the school for a half day each week. The entire special education team meets weekly during the school year.



Board Training

Required Statutory Training Completed by Seated Board Members

Name	Governance Basic Training Completed	Finance Basic Training Completed	Employment Basic Training Completed
Amanda Cina	9/22/2016 St Paul College Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	10/21 – 10/31/2016 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	10/11/2016 St Paul College Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Elizabeth Coenen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring	12/18/2010 Beltz, Kes, Darling & Assoc Mark Beltz and Chuck Herdegen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring
Andrea Galdames	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke
Jessica Goff	3/11/2017 Avalon Charter School Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	11/18 – 11/28/2016 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	3/11/2017 Avalon Charter School Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Julian McDermott	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke
Julie Richards	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke
Melissa Santrach	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring	12/18/2010 Beltz, Kes, Darling & Assoc Mark Beltz and Chuck Herdegen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring

Ongoing training in financial matters occurred as part of the audit presentation in October. The auditor details every component of the financial reports and guides the board members in developing a deeper understanding of the financial condition of the school.

Its School Business Manager presented proposed budget revisions to the Board. During these presentations, Sandy Schmidt (SandMark Services Inc) goes over every component of the school's revenue and expenses, elaborating on any changes to state or federal law and their impact on the school's financial condition. These sessions are very dynamic and interactive, allowing for the active participation of each board member.

As a member of Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS), board members are invited to various seminars and presentations throughout the school year with other member charter schools. Notices of these events are passed along to board members.

These board training sessions were held during scheduled board meetings during the 2016-17 school year for all school board members.

- August 16, 2016: Open Meeting Law Presentation and Discussion (Liz Coenen)
- September 20, 2016: 2015-2016 MCA Results, Part 1 – Review & Presentation (Liesl Taylor)
- November 15, 2016: FY2015 – 2016 Audit Presentation (Nick Sigurdson, Clifton Larson Allen, LLP)
- October 18, 2016: ESABA: An Opportunity for Board Development & Community Outreach (Melissa Santrach)
- October 18, 2016: 2015-16 MCA Results, Part 2 – Data Review and Presentation (Liesl Taylor)
- December 13, 2016: Summary Presentation of Travis Wright Workshop: The Effect of Trauma (Melissa Santrach)
- January 17, 2017: CMES 2016-2017 Operating Budget Revision – Review and Presentation (Melissa Santrach)
- February 21, 2017: Upper Elementary Student Presentations
- May 16, 2017: CMES FY2017-2018 Operating Budget – Review and Presentation (Melissa Santrach)

Additional trainings attended by individual Board Members:

Amanda Cina

- Course 100, Charter School Governance - 9/22/2016, St Paul College, Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director
- Course 200, School Finance - 10/21 – 10/31/2016 (online) MACS, Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
- Course 300, Employment in Charter Schools - 10/11/2016, St Paul College, Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
- Webinar on 3/22/2017 - Top Ten Pitfalls of Open Meeting Law in 2017

Elizabeth Coenen

- MACS Public Policy Forum, September 29, 2016.
- October 6, 2016 “How Our Stories Determine Our Leadership” (leadership and communication workshop presented by author, Diane Millis)
- October 31, 2016 “CharterSource Peer Learning Community: Board Recruitment & Orientation”
- November 22, 2016 “Elementary Curriculum & Assessment” (CMES Parent Education)
- December 9, 2016 “Racial Equity Training 1” (Northside Funders Group)
- January 13, 2017 “VOA Conference”
- January - June 2017 “Human Systems Dynamics Professional Certification”
- February 9, 2017 “ESABA February 2017 Member Meeting - Meet the Electeds”
- March 2, 2017 “Plan in Complexity: Make It Work Where You Stand” (Human Systems Dynamics Institute Virtual Workshop)
- March 6, 2017 “Talking with Children About Race” (CMES Parent Education)
- March 22, 2017 “Top Ten Pitfalls of Open Meeting Law in 2017” (CharterSource Webinar)
- April 6, 2017 “Thrive in the 21st Century: Simple Rules That Work” (Human Systems Dynamics Institute Virtual Workshop)
- May 4, 2017 “Go! Leadership for Complex Times” (Human Systems Dynamics Institute Virtual Workshop)

Andrea Galdames

- No additional trainings reported

Jess Goff

- Course 100, Charter School Governance - 9/22/2016, St Paul College, Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director
- Course 200, School Finance - 10/21 – 10/31/2016 (online) MACS, Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
- Course 300, Employment in Charter Schools - 10/11/2016, St Paul College, Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director

Julianne McDermott

- No additional trainings reported

Julie Richards

- PEAR Institute: SEL Clover Model and HSA train the trainer
- Weikart Center: Quality Coaching Train the Trainer
- Weikart Center: Making Meaning of Data Train the Trainer
- Weikart Center: Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool Train the Trainer and External Assessor training
- MN Dept. of Education: Restorative Practices Primer, Conferencing to Repair Harm, Circle Training,
- Twin Cities Social Justice Fair 2016
- Overcoming Racism Conference 2016
- YIPA Fest (Youth Intervention Programs Association) 2016
- Sprockets: Community Advisory Council member 2013-2016
- Sprockets: Strategic Planning Committee member 2016-2017
- Violence Prevention Action Committee member/co-chair 2015-present
- Workshops I Lead:
 - Build an Inequitable School
 - Implicit Bias
- Courses I Teach:
 - Ambassadors for Youth: 8-week learning academy focused on adolescent brain development, trauma, de-escalation techniques and youth work best practices
- Train the Trainer Series
 - Clover Model of Social Emotional Learning (Harvard/PEAR Institute)
 - Holistic Student Assessment for Social Emotional Learning (Harvard/PEAR Institute)
 - It's That Easy: Helping parents talk to their Children about Sex
 - IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) certification
 - Otto Bremer Youth Development Summit: Creating Equitable Spaces (facilitator)
 - Summer Summit on Adolescent Health, University of MN

Melissa Santrach

- 2016 Nonprofit Fundraising Conference, July 21, 2016 - Sponsored by MN Council of Nonprofits. Day-long conference featuring variety of speakers with insight and ideas on fundraising.
- East Side Area Business Association Monthly Meetings, October 13, 2016, December 8, 2016, and February 9, 2017 - Built awareness of CMES and networked with East Side community leaders and policy makers. Worked on board recruiting!
- "Too Afraid to Learn: Supporting Young Children with Challenging Lives" October 12, 2016 - Presented by the Montessori Center of Minnesota, this all-day workshop by Dr. Travis Wright was an

eye-opening introduction to understanding the effect of trauma on young people. I summarized this workshop and presented it to the full board at our December board meeting.

- “Top Ten Pitfalls of Open Meeting Law in 2017: What Your Charter School Board Needs to Know” March 22, 2017 - This Webinar, presented by BoardEffect, covered the basics of Open Meeting Law and how it is to be implemented in charter schools.
- Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Project Fair, March 27, 2017 - Attended the school’s Project Fair, which featured big work done by the Elementary students.
- Small Family Foundations in Minnesota 2017, April 27, 2017 - Annual review by MN Council of Nonprofits of local small family foundations, their giving priorities, and ways to approach.
- MACS Legislative Summary, June 5, 2017 - Eugene Piccolo presented this webinar on the final results of this year’s Education Bill.
- Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Sixth Year Graduation, June 9, 2017 - Attended the 6th Year Graduation Ceremony at Cornerstone.



School Management

2016-17 School Management and Faculty Information

This table contains information for ALL members of the school management/administrative team and also includes faculty employed by the school who did not serve as a classroom teacher (e.g., curriculum coordinators, social workers, counselors, administrative assistance, paraprofessionals, custodial, technology, librarians, etc.).

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 16/17	Not Returning 17/18
Christine Bewell		Director of Business Operations	6		
Hayley Bahnemann		Special Education Assistant	2		
Thomas Fendt		Classroom Assistant	1		
Molly McDermott		Classroom Assistant	1		
Frankie Nesbitt		Special Education Assistant	3		
Nadiya Rapp		Building Float	3		X
David Shubat		Special Education Assistant	1		
Liesl Taylor	424839	Head of School	6		
Anne Thao		Special Education Assistant	3		X
Andi Zimmerman		Classroom Assistant	1		

School Management

The school is led by the Head of School who is hired and held accountable for the success of the school by the Board of Directors. The Head of School reports to the Board of Directors monthly and is reviewed annually by the Head of School Review sub-committee of the Accountability Committee.

The Head of School oversees all aspects of the school, manages all staff and, specifically, is the pedagogical leader of the school. The Director of Business Operations manages many operational aspects of the school (e.g., the lunch program, busing, MDE MARSS reports, etc.). In the classroom environments the teachers are supported in their work and guided by the Head of School. The Head of School observes in the classroom and meets with teachers on a weekly basis to discuss lessons and student progress. The teachers are responsible, with the support of assistants, for supporting the growth and development of each Cornerstone student.

See Appendix C for the 2016-17 CMES Organizational Chart that describes the structure of the CMES management team.

Administrative Professional Development

Liesl Taylor, our Head of School:

- February 16-20; AMI Refresher Course, including Key Note by Dr. Ross Greene on positive approaches to children struggling with behavior in schools and “The Calculating Mind; Cultivating Discovery, Persistence, Problem-solving”
- Book Study; *The Art of Coaching Teams; Building Resilient Communities that Transform Schools* by Elena Aguilar

Chris Bewell, our Director of Business Operations:

- ADM Webinar – MDE – August 18, 2016
- FNS School Nutrition Essentials Webinar – MDE – October 25, 2016
MDE Compensatory Revenue Reporting Webinar – MDE – October 27, 2016
- Employment Law for Charter Schools Workshop – Booth Law Group – November 17, 2016
- Food Safety Requirements for Vended/Catered Sponsors Webinar – MDE – November 22, 2016
- MDE Title I, II & III Overview Workshop – MDE – May 4, 2017

Head of School Professional Background

Liesl Heide Taylor is Head of School of the Cornerstone Montessori Schools in partnership with the Montessori Center of Minnesota. She came to Cornerstone as a guide with ten years of experience in public charter Montessori environments, to join the team founding the elementary program in 2011. Liesl assisted on the Montessori Center of Minnesota's elementary teacher-training course, assessing student work and mentoring new teachers for three years prior to beginning her work in administration. Liesl holds her AMI Elementary Certificate from the Montessori Center of Minnesota and her Elementary State Teaching license with a specialty in 5-8 Science, from St. Scholastica. Liesl's undergraduate degree is in Psychology and Family Studies from St. Olaf College. Prior to her Montessori career, Liesl worked in Early Intervention as a Cognitive Development Specialist and, later, in Parent Education. Liesl found Montessori through her three now-grown Montessori children, who are boundless inspiration to her and who fuel her passion to increase access for all children to high quality Montessori programs.

School Leader Review – 2016-2017

The Head of School Evaluation Committee completed a comprehensive process for evaluation of Cornerstone's Head of School, Liesl Taylor. The Head of School Evaluation committee consisted of CMES Board Chair Liz Coenen, President and Director of Primary Training of MCM Molly O'Shaughnessy.

Having completed a three-year evaluation cycle at the close of the 2015-2016 school year, the committee and the Head of School reviewed the process and the evaluation survey and made the decision to shift to a more qualitative method of gathering input. The Head of School conducted individual meetings with each staff member and met regularly with the CMES Board Chair and the President and Director of Training of MCM. In addition, the committee reviewed the 2016-2017 Parent Survey responses. The survey responses indicate that significant progress has been made in addressing concerns raised in the 2015-16 survey. The surveys also cited opportunities for continued growth and development – all of which were being actively addressed by the Head of School and Staff.

To conclude the 2016-17 year, the committee met with the Head of School to share reflections of the year. The Head of School addressed the goals and challenges she offered at the beginning of the year and commented on the things that went as planned as well as how she modified the plan as the year unfolded. Overall, each area was thoroughly and thoughtfully attended to so that by year's end significant advancements were made in all areas. The reflections from the 2016-17 year will become the basis for the Head of School's 2017-18 professional development goals.



Staffing / Teaching Faculty Information

Teaching Staff Information

Nine of the ten teachers at CMES are licensed in their area of instruction. One teacher, Suzi Splinter is working towards Special Education licensure completion and received a Personnel Variance for the 2016-2017 year.

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 16/17	Not Returning 17/18
Susan Buerger	392840	Special Education teacher	4		X
Kristen Campbell	471882	Kindergarten teacher	6		X
Cynthia Crooks	267424	ELL teacher	6		
Jessica Goff	391619	Upper Elementary teacher	4		
Mara Johnson	486194	Upper Elementary teacher	3		
Amber Osterkamp	455024	Lower Elementary teacher	3		
Megan Riemer	396133	Literacy Specialist	2		
Kristin Schoenherr	469500	Kindergarten teacher	1		
Suzanne Splinter	332621	Special Education teacher	3		
Sara Wade	407070	Lower Elementary teacher	2		

Academic Professional Development – Staff

All Staff Inservice Trainings

- The entire staff meets 5 times annually to engage in Professional Development trainings pertinent to growing in the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to carry out our mission, i.e. providing high quality Montessori education for ALL children. Specifically, during the 2016-2017 academic year, meetings and topics were as follows:
 - Pre-program week, August 29-September 2, 2016; understanding signs and symptoms as well as addressing Secondary Trauma and Compassion Fatigue
 - Thursday, October 20; Understanding the Self Care wheel and committing to routines of Self Care and Staff Care
 - Friday, October 21, 2016; Day-long training with Dr. Travis Wright on understanding the affects of Trauma on children's abilities to access education successfully and how to work most effectively with children experiencing trauma
 - Friday, March 3, 2017; Evaluating Self and Staff Care; Preparing for your role during Parent Teacher Conferences
 - Post Program Week, June 12 – 16; evaluating our program relative to our start up and the Article, "Serving Children in Crisis in a Montessori Setting". Where are we now? How does this inform where we are going?

Lead Guide/Specialist Meetings (Bi-monthly): Head of School and all lead teachers and specialists (Special Education Teachers, Literacy Specialist, ELL Teacher)

Standing Agenda

- Immediate issues/concerns
- Sharing – successes, challenges, assessments, progress towards goals.
- Supporting our support staff
- Lesson planning discussion (informed by observation, children's work, assessments)
- Child study (reserve at least 20 minutes for this discussion, longer if needed) and intervention discussion.

Level Meetings (Bi-Monthly): Lead Guides and assistants, aides, paraprofessionals and all specialists; Head of School attends one per month. Level Lead/Program mentor facilitates meeting

- Immediate issues/concerns
- Systems and routines ~ collaboration
- Intervention discussion for children who need additional support.

Additional Staff Development Training by Individual:

Susan Buerger

- Wednesday, July 19; Tools for Anxious Youth
- Tuesday, August 8; Bridging the Relationship Gap: Addressing Trauma and Promoting Resilience in Children.

Kristen Campbell

- February 16-20; AMI Refresher Course, including Key Note by Dr. Ross Greene on positive approaches to children struggling with behavior in schools and "The Calculating Mind; Cultivating Discovery, Persistence, Problem-solving"

Cynthia Crooks

- Integrating Pronunciation into ESL Lessons - 2 hours
- Understanding Immigrant and Refugee Trauma - 1.5 hours

Jess Goff

- School Board Training - Course 100, Charter School Governance - 9/22/2016
- School Board Training - Course 200, School Finance - 10/21 – 10/31/2016 (online)
- School Board Training - Course 300, Employment in Charter Schools - 10/11/2016

Mara Johnson

- PACER Symposium ADHD & Mental Health - August 15, 2017
- MTIPS Upper Elementary Montessori Math - July 15-16, 2017

Amber Osterkamp

- April 28-29, 2017; "Building Powerful Numeracy".
- August 7, 2017; MCRR Summer Literacy Workshop: Systematic Literacy Improvement: Putting the Pieces Together

Megan Riemer

- Overview of the Orton-Gillingham Approach from the Dyslexia Training Institute on Dec. 2, 2016 for 20 hours.
- August 7, 2017; MCRR Summer Literacy Workshop: Systematic Literacy Improvement: Putting the Pieces Together.

Kristin Schoenherr

- February 16-20; AMI Refresher Course, including Key Note by Dr. Ross Greene on positive approaches to children struggling with behavior in schools and “The Calculating Mind; Cultivating Discovery, Persistence, Problem-solving”

Suzanne Splinter

- University of St. Thomas courses: 3 credit hours each
 - **Spring**
 - Survey of Exceptionality
 - Elementary Academic Interventions
 - Secondary Academic Interventions and Transition Planning
 - Social, Emotional Behavior Interventions
 - **Summer**
 - Behavior Management
 - Educational Assessment
 - Fundamentals for Students with Mild to Moderate Needs

Sara Wade

- AMI Elementary Training Course, Summer Two

Staff Turnover and Staff Longevity

This year we had ten licensed staff members, one with a personnel variance. Eight of these staff members plan to return to the classroom next year. One Special Education teacher is moving to a different position at a private educational institution. One special educational assistant is continuing her education full time to become licensed. One Montessori trained staff member is leaving to become a lead guide in another program. One Montessori trained guide and kindergarten teacher is changing her focus and working with the Montessori Center of Minnesota in their Primary Guide Training Program. The retention rate for licensed staff is at 80%; for overall staff, our retention rate is 80% (or 16/20).

School Admissions and Enrollment

It is our intention to provide high quality AMI instruction to families of the East Side. Included below are the admissions policies in the Board manual.

Also included in this section is the demographic information about the children who attended CMES this past year. We have a few more male versus female children (52%-48%), approximately 16% of Cornerstone children are Hispanic and 27% are African-American. 44% percent of CMES children qualify for free and reduced lunch, 16.5% of children receive special education services at CMES, and 9% of children qualify for limited English proficiency services (LEP). CMES children reside in St. Paul more than anywhere else (67% with 20% coming from Maplewood/Oakdale/North St. Paul and Woodbury and 13% from the Twin Cities Metro area).

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Enrollment Policy

Under Minnesota law, Cornerstone's enrollment process starts with an enrollment period. The enrollment period will be November 1 – December 1. Notice of this enrollment period will be made public through postings in community centers and newsletters targeting the Phalen Village community and on the school's website.

The Board of Directors prior to the start of the Open Enrollment period will approve the enrollment model for each grade. This enrollment model will accommodate slight over-enrollment to account for likely child attrition.

Enrollment Preference: As required in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School must offer preferential enrollment to siblings of children currently enrolled at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. As allowed for in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Cornerstone Montessori offers preferential enrollment to children of school employees. **Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School may not and will not give preference to children of the private pre-school Cornerstone Montessori School. Any family from Cornerstone Montessori School who wants their child to attend Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School must participate in the enrollment and lottery process.** Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is a public school and as such, the enrollment process may not consider eligibility based on intellectual ability, aptitude, measurement of achievement, or any other specific characteristic of children whose enrollment form is received in a timely manner.

Enrollment Process: Current children of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School are considered enrolled for the purpose of determining the number of openings for the following year. On the first day of the Open Enrollment period, the number of openings in each grade level will be determined and the Open Enrollment process will begin. Prospective new children must submit enrollment applications by the Open Enrollment deadline.

If openings still exist in any grade after the Open Enrollment deadline, enrollment applications received after the deadline will result in admission on a first-received, first-enrolled basis. In the event post-deadline enrollment results in a full class and later enrollment applications are received, those children will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which the applications were received.

Lottery Process: If more enrollment applications are received during the open enrollment period than available openings in any grade, a public lottery for those openings in those grades must be held. Each of the grades is subject to the lottery process.

The lottery, if necessary, will be conducted on December 10. If December 10 falls on a weekend or holiday, the lottery will be held on the next business day following the weekend or holiday.

The lottery will be conducted by a third-party, unrelated to school staff, board, or applicants. It will occur in a public meeting with adequate notice. The children who are not chosen will be placed on a waiting list in the order their names are drawn.

Upon admission, Cornerstone may require additional information about enrolling children including information on special education needs, health care summaries, family background, and family routines and habits.

Kindergarten Enrollment: Prospective children entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before September 1 of the school year for which they are applying.

Non-Discrimination Statement: No child may or will be denied admission to Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, or intellectual or physical ability. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is a tuition-free school. Students from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

*Board Approved October 18, 2011
Revised August 28, 2012*

Acceleration & Retention Policy

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School accepts children into grade levels based on their age on or before September 1 of the school year with 5 years being the age for acceptance into Kindergarten. Cornerstone will provide each child with an educational environment that provides optimal challenge and meets the child's developmental needs. Due to the nature of the Montessori environment and the training of the teacher, which covers multiple ages and the multi-age classrooms, lessons can often be remediated or accelerated to meet the needs of each child.

Cornerstone staff members – teachers and administrators – will continually and consistently assess the needs and development of each child to determine the best environment for each child. Decisions to advance or retain a child will be made by the Head of School in conjunction with the child's parents and will be based on staff experience and assessment of the needs of the child.

Board Approved May 17, 2011

Please see Appendix D for a copy of the CMES Application Form and Appendix E for a copy of the Student Enrollment Form.

Enrollment Process

When a child is admitted to Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, the family is notified and is required to complete the Student Enrollment Form and return it to the school by the stated deadline. Once CMES receives the Student Enrollment Form, an enrollment packet is given to the family for completion. The enrollment packet includes the following forms: Health Information, Emergency Information, Home Language Questionnaire, Computer and Internet Usage Contract, General Permission Slip, Parent Permission for Child Pickup, Parent Directory Permission, Family and Cultural Information, and Immunization Records.

Student Background and Demographics

2016-17 School Year	October	%	June	%
Total # of Students	133	-	132	-
Females	62	46.62	64	48.48
Males	71	53.38	68	51.52
American Indian	4	3.00	4	3.03
Asian	14	10.53	14	10.61
Black	39	29.32	36	27.27
Hispanic	20	15.04	21	15.91
White	56	42.11	57	43.18
Free & Reduced	58	43.60	58	43.93
Special Ed (incl. 504)	23	17.29	22	16.67
LEP	12	9.02	12	9.09

Resident District	2016-2017	
	#	%
St. Paul	90	67.16
North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale	21	15.67
Washington County/Woodbury	6	4.48
Inver Grove Heights/Cottage Grove/Eagan	3	2.24
Roseville/Little Canada	3	2.24
Minneapolis	9	6.72
New Brighton/Brooklyn Park	2	1.49

As demonstrated in these two tables, CMES works predominantly with children living in St. Paul with close to 44% that qualify for free and reduced meals. In the past, children fitting this profile would not have had access to AMI-certified Montessori instruction; this data reminds us that we are making progress towards fulfilling our mission.

Student Attrition

We began the school year with 37 children on the Kindergarten waitlist, 7 children on the 1st Grade waitlist, 12 children on the 2nd Grade waitlist, 8 children on the 3rd Grade waitlist, 3 children on the 4th Grade waitlist, 1 child on the 5th Grade waitlist and 1 child on the 6th Grade waitlist. One family moved their child to a St. Paul Public School in their neighborhood. One family moved their child to a private school closer to their home. One family selected to home school their child. Two families moved their children into other charter school programs. Several new families enrolled their children during the school year. We began the school year with an enrollment of 133 children and with the movements and decisions of families, total enrollment was 132 by the time the school year ended. Our Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the 2016-17 school year was 131.83. Over the course of the year, we served a total of 140 children, meaning that 6% were not retained, putting our retention rate at 94%. For the 2017-18 school year, we see waitlists continue to grow for Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Grades, a sure sign that word has spread about CMES's impact on young people's lives.

Student Enrollment and Attrition Rates

This table identifies the 2016-17 end of year enrollment and an estimated 2017-2018 enrollment. Data based on end of year Average Daily Membership (ADM).

School Year	Total	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Attrition/Retention Rates
2011-2012	58	21	22	15					89%
2012-2013	81	22	23	22	14				96%
2013-2014	102	22	21	18	21	17	2	1	94%
2014-2015	118	19	23	19	16	25	16	0	91%
2015-2016	129	24	18	21	15	16	22	13	93%
2016-2017	132	21	18	18	21	18	19	17	94%
2017-18 est.	137	24	24	18	17	20	19	15	



Academic Program / School Performance

Established with VOA before the school opened, our goals for academic excellence are clearly articulated, challenging, and critical to CMES's long-term success in supporting children on the East Side of St. Paul.

During our sixth year at CMES, we are truly out of the 'start-up' years. With the stability of a committed, highly trained and qualified staff, established environments serving the full complement of ages, and a year ago becoming the first and only AMI accredited public charter elementary school in the Midwest, we are increasingly able to build on that foundation, refining and improving details that will most affect positive growth academically and developmentally for all of our children. We continue to closely measure and address our challenges, seeing the opportunities for bigger strides forward as we pursue our goals and high expectations – namely, that each child will be allowed an environment that fosters them to grow to their full human potential and to meet and exceed grade-level performance as measured by state, nationally-normed, and Montessori-based assessments. This year we were able to dedicate more time together as a staff analyzing trends in academic progress as well as areas in which our children are not demonstrating adequate proficiency. We again prioritized resources and energy towards lagging skills in addition to helping the children navigate standardized assessments when the approach varies so greatly from the type of learning and experience we know is optimal. In 2015-2016, when reading proficiency scores decreased state wide, we were able to see ours increase significantly. This year, we were able to see similar results with state-wide and Cornerstone math scores; while state math proficiency scores have been on a slight downward trend the last four years in Minnesota, Cornerstone's school-wide math proficiency scores have been on an upward trend the last three years, with a significant increase in 2016-2017.

We are encouraged by the results and remain humbled by the amount of work yet to be done. Our children must have strong basic skills to be successful and they must be able to demonstrate them fluently on standardized assessments. Simultaneously, we must continue to advocate for better definitions of success, more meaningful measures of academic proficiency and, most importantly, valid measures of the profound and holistic social and emotional growth happening for children who attend Cornerstone.



Learning Program Description

AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her work and her vision of education for children. Montessori as a name is not trademarked. In the Twin Cities alone, a Google search produced ten schools with Montessori in the title; however, that does not guarantee a rigorous commitment to Dr. Montessori's vision and principles in educating young people. By contrast, CMES hires only teachers who have been AMI certified, and CMES's Head of School, Liesl Taylor, is AMI certified, licensed by the state of Minnesota and taught in an AMI environment for over ten years prior to becoming Head of School. This level of rigor and consistency guarantees for families a high-quality authentic Montessori education.

Founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Montessori pedagogy educates children for life. Children have the freedom to explore and to develop their potential as they work with didactic materials, either independently or in groups, in a prepared environment. The Montessori Method is based in the concept of respect for self, others and the environment. Montessori classrooms are prepared to meet the developmental needs of the age span served within the environment.

The materials and furniture are designed for the child's physical needs (size and proportion) and psychological needs (areas of interest or skill development). Each prepared environment includes a full range of Montessori materials, a trained Montessori guide/teacher, and a trained assistant. The materials are designed to assist growth in practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language arts, music, art, science, history, and geography. The work the child performs with the materials is intended to develop mental and manual dexterity. While working with the materials the child develops concentration, self-confidence, respect, an understanding of order, and a joy of learning.

We believe that the child and his or her needs are the central and commanding focus of the learning process. It is the role of the teacher to observe, to know, and to defend the child as he or she proceeds through the stages of development.

We see in each child the future of our society, of our nation, and of our planet. The child in the process of fundamental development has unlimited possibilities, and the future rests on our ability to cultivate and nurture these potentials.

We believe that the learning process is governed by certain basic human tendencies or needs:

- The need to communicate, to use language
- The tendency for order: the need to organize, classify, and interpret reality
- The need for independence and activity, the drive to work constructively and purposefully
- The need for social relationships

In a Montessori school, the outdoor environment is considered an extension of the indoor environment. While there is a scheduled time for large motor activities that encourage collaborative group play and allow children to gain an understanding of the rules and movements associated with a variety of sports, the space is used not only during recess. The outdoor environment is also a "work space" that can be used during the Montessori work-cycle. Throughout the day and with the accompaniment of an adult, children may work on materials, garden, or simply explore the natural landscape of our outdoor space. We also offer the children a multi-purpose room to refine their large motor skills when weather keeps us from going outside.

The Montessori teacher facilitates activities within the environment while modeling respectful behavior. The teacher is not the center of the learning process, but rather helps guide each child while also respecting his/her choices. The teachers help the children reach their full potential by guiding them towards materials that meet

their developmental needs and current interests. Individual and group lessons are varied and designed to meet each child's learning style and pace. The teacher observes the children often and plans lessons based on his/her observations of the needs and interests of an individual or group.

Within the multi-age community, older children often serve as teachers and mentors for the younger children. These children share their experiences by helping others. This process not only helps create a sense of community and interdependence, but also reinforces previous learning for the older children. Self-direction encourages trust, acceptance, and non-competitiveness. The materials, teacher, and children's community come together to assist the child in developing a strong self-image and sense of self-esteem, which is critical when building an attitude of learning and exploration to last a lifetime.

Children's House (Kindergarten)

Kindergarten is part of our Children's House program, which in partnership with Cornerstone Montessori School – a private, preschool – serves children from the age of 33 months to 6 years. Cornerstone's two Children's House environments will have up to 30 children when at full capacity with 10 children enrolled in Kindergarten at CMES and the other children enrolled in the private preschool program. Each environment has an AMI-trained guide/teacher along with an AMI-trained assistant and an aide. Either the trained assistant or the aide is a native Spanish-speaker.

This program is an all-day program. We offer a nutritious, catered lunch, which the children enjoy as a community. For much of the children's day they may choose work within the environment. There is also group time for music, stories, movement, and games. Children have time to play outside at least once a day (weather permitting). There is also the opportunity to use an indoor large motor space.

Children are free to choose work from the beautiful and well-defined areas of the environment. The adults in the environment serve as Guides who show the children how to use the concrete materials. Working with the materials not only helps develop coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order; it also helps the child become more disciplined and accomplished. Children in a Montessori environment usually have healthy self-esteem because they are helped to do things themselves. The children have ownership of the environment and take good care of it, returning materials with care.

The Children's House environment unifies the social, physical, and intellectual functioning of the child. We provide children with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the environment, curiosity, concentration, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility for the self and for the group. Thus, through interacting with the Montessori environment, the child constructs him or herself in a positive manner. This benefits the child in school and in life.

Instruction occurs one-on-one and in small groups conducted at the child's pace. Montessori materials are organized in a logical, sequential nature, providing a structure that guides a child's discovery. A series of presentations, activities, and developmentally appropriate materials are designed to enable the child to master specific skills.

The Children's House environment is divided into four distinct areas:

Practical life: among other life skills, children learn how to wash, cook, sweep, plant, and sew.

Sensorial: children learn through sight, touch, sound, taste, and smell using binomial cubes, geometric shapes, constructive triangles, tasting bottles, and other materials that enable the child to classify, clarify, and comprehend the world.

Language: children are introduced to nomenclature and vocabulary through spoken-language games. They are also introduced to the 26 letters of the English alphabet and their associated sounds. With the help of a movable alphabet, children are able to write words, sentences, and stories. Reading quickly follows with materials that help explore grammar and the structure of language.

Math: children are taken from the concrete to the abstract through manipulation, experimentation, and invention by using math materials.

Elementary (Ages 6-12)

From age six through age 12 – the elementary school years – the child is driven by a natural curiosity and tendency to explore the expansive interconnectedness within and across disciplines such as the arts, math, and social studies. Dr. Montessori used the term “cosmic education” to refer to this stage of education best fitting this period of child development. The Great Lessons are at the center of Montessori elementary education. These lessons are stories that explore the beginnings of the universe, the formation of the stars and planets, the progress of plant and animal life, the arrival of humans and language, and the origins of mathematics, geometry, and the sciences. From these stories the child develops sensitivity to the way things live, to the interdependence of life, and to the fundamental needs of human beings. Timelines, charts, and research cards of human needs help the child in independent study and inspire more research in geology, sciences, biology, geography, and history. Montessori elementary children use their imagination and reasoning minds to explore all the parts of the universe. They may be engaged in a variety of learning activities at the same time.

At the center of the Montessori elementary classroom is the well-trained Montessori teacher. This professional is an “enlightened generalist” with knowledge deep enough to know details that add to the Great Lessons and connect the details into a big picture across the disciplines. The teacher’s role is to be the storyteller of our history and our world, as we understand it, to inspire the children, and then to guide them in acquiring the skills to pursue their interests and to explore the relationships among the different subject matters. This teacher is also trained in areas of child development. Because the Montessori child spends three years in the same classroom environment, the elementary teacher can be keenly tuned in to the unique personality of each child. This sensitivity permits the teacher to guide each child into areas of natural interest. The teacher or guide is in communication with the child and the family to help the child maximize his or her educational opportunities.

Much of the work of the elementary child is collaborative. The child learns in partnership with others through small group lessons and projects. At different times, each child is both a teacher and a learner. Because each child spends three years in the same classroom environment, the children have the freedom to explore subject areas as they become interested in them. The teachers, through the use of daily observation notes, lesson planning, and assessments, track each child’s use of materials and progress within a subject matter. The teacher uses the child’s interest to guide him or her to an exploration of all subject areas. The subjects that are covered in the Montessori classroom include mathematics, geometry, language, geography, science, art, and music.

Living in the world for the elementary child also involves working actively to make it a better place. Care of one’s environment is built into the Montessori curriculum. Children are responsible for keeping the environment clean, caring for the animals, and providing for the needs of guests. CMES children will take responsibility for recycling programs in their classroom environments, help maintain the grounds and the garden, and help the school be more energy efficient.

The Montessori curriculum is developed and reviewed by an international committee and not set according to US academic standards. As a consequence, there are elements in the Montessori curriculum, such as finding the cube root of a 9-digit number, that are not part of our state or national standards; also there are elements of our Minnesota state standards, such as the study of simple machines, that are not covered by the basic Montessori curriculum. There are however, specific provisions made in the training of Montessori teachers to ensure that

the state standards are met in the Montessori classroom. CMES staff will continually evaluate state standards and Montessori curriculum to ensure that children who graduate from a level (kindergarten, third, and sixth grades) have met the state required standards.

One of the guiding principles of Montessori education is the development of the whole person, with particular emphasis on the development of reason and the will, along with a lifelong love of learning. For this reason, children in a Montessori environment are expected to work at their own pace and have a major role in setting their own work schedule rather than just doing specific assignments given by the teacher. This vast amount of freedom given to the children is tempered by three very important limits: the public school curriculum, the daily work journal used by each child to track his/her progress, and frequent individual meetings between the child and the teacher. The trained Montessori teacher is expected to help each child progress through the state public school curriculum, which is available in the classroom for the children to refer to in planning their studies. As part of each child's assessment (including standardized assessments, Montessori records, the child's work journal, and Montessori teacher's observation notes), the Montessori teacher reviews with the child where the child is in terms of development within the Montessori curriculum and state standards and sets goals with the child for further development. There is also a consideration given to the developmental level of the child; that is, more of the responsibility for covering the state curriculum falls on the teacher's shoulders in the early grades with the child taking more direct responsibility as she/he matures.



Assessment Test Results

As a public charter school, we of course must remain committed to preparing our children to successfully demonstrate their skills as specified and measured in state mandated assessments, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments or MCAs. We embrace this goal as part of our work with children and know that we must strive for continued growth in all areas, especially math. We have planned carefully to support this growth and have every reason to believe our children will continue the strong and consistent upward trend we have seen in the last three years, linking increasing proficiency with longevity in a high-quality AMI Montessori Environment.

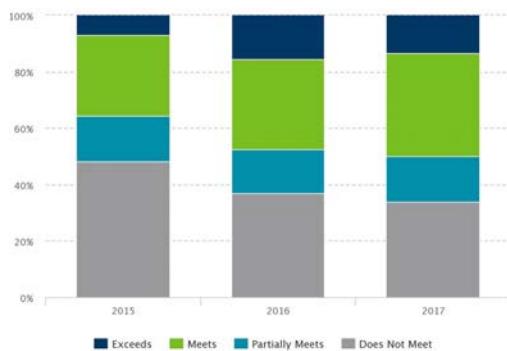
MCA-III Goal Series

MCA III Math - 2016-2017 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	21	33%	19%	5%
Grade 4	18	11%	33%	6%
Grade 5	19	16%	11%	0%
Grade 6	17	29%	24%	0%

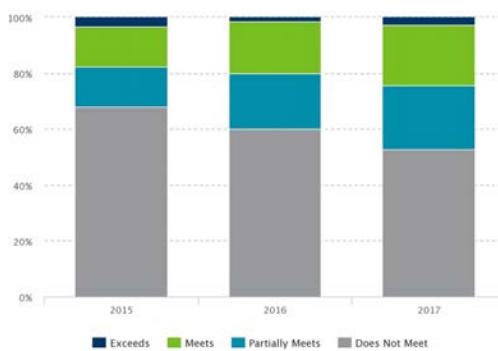
MCA III Reading - 2016-2017 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	21	14%	38%	5%
Grade 4	18	16.5%	39%	16.5%
Grade 5	19	21%	32%	5%
Grade 6	17	12%	35%	29%

MCA III Science - 2016-2017 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 5	19	16%	32%	5%

CMES conducted OLPA and used those scores internally to suggest areas of need for our children in terms of proficiency in math and language mid-year so we had the opportunity to address those needs with the children through the winter. In the spring, we gave the MCAs. We continue to see fairly large fluctuations in scores from year to year because with such small grade level groups one or two test scores can dramatically impact the mean of the test results. For example, one child's score can swing a grade level four to seven percentage points. We researched the scores in six neighboring schools who most closely serve our demographic. They are assessing a large number of children, on average just under 100 children per grade, meaning their children "count", for lack of a better word, as only nine tenths of a percentage point. At Cornerstone, we are assessing on average 17 children per grade, making each of our children "count" as six percentage points, explaining in large part the significant ups and downs in our scores from year to year. Though we use the information displayed above to analyze in detail how different groups of children are performing on this assessment, the most meaningful data for us to look at is whether we are showing, school-wide, continuous improvement over time. Indeed, this is the case as illustrated in the charts below ~ we celebrate this accomplishment.



Reading Proficiency over time



Math Proficiency over time

See Appendix G for the 2016-17 MCA Minnesota Report Card Details.

All Students Career and College Ready by Graduation

Another measure we find valuable and helpful is looking at the growth of our children relative to the growth of the children statewide and relative to the growth children attending schools they would otherwise attend in the area. These scores take a look at how much growth low performing and average-to-high performing children are making. It is expected that low performing children make high growth and average-to-high performing children make at least average (a year's worth) growth. These are called "student on track for success" scores. In reading, at the state level, the percent of children on track for success is 57%; the percent of children on track for success at Cornerstone is 56%, increasing 20.6% last year (!) and remaining static this year at state level. In math, at the state level, the percent of children on track has been slowly decreasing over the last five years to 55% on track. The percent of children on track for success at Cornerstone increased significantly in 2016-17 from 21.2% to 32%, a full 10.8%! This huge increase is meaningful because we are looking at scores school wide and not one of the smaller, largely fluctuating groups of scores. In addition, this is especially rewarding after intentionally allocating time and resources into addressing school-wide math proficiency.

Close the Achievement Gap(s) Among All Groups

In comparison to our closest similar-demographic, similar-methodology neighboring school, Cornerstone children are *outperforming the other children by 18.6% in math and 27.7% in reading*. Our Free and Reduced Lunch population is *outperforming children in that neighboring school by 17.8% in math and 23.8% in reading*. When comparing Cornerstone with several other schools in the area we see similar significant positive discrepancies and it is extremely important to note that children who are typically underserved are doing considerably well compared to how they might be doing in another area school.

Finally, in comparing our proficiency scores with three neighboring public magnet Montessori schools we are able to see that high-quality Montessori works for *all children* and especially for children who are struggling academically or otherwise. The public magnet schools in the area are continuously forced to compromise components of strong Montessori programs and have considerably lower proficiency scores school-wide and among Free and Reduced-Price Lunch populations than we do at Cornerstone. In all but one of those schools, a higher percentage of Cornerstone children receive Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (the children we often see struggle) and still Cornerstone scores are significantly stronger.

All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

We reported these percentages on our Reading Well by Third Grade and Record of Continuous Improvement reports.

Kinder DRA: 77.3% reading at grade level

1st Grade DRA: 57.9% reading at grade level

2nd Grade DRA: 50% reading at grade level

3rd Grade DRA: 81% reading at grade level

All Students Ready for School

All Kindergarten children at Cornerstone are assessed with the Minnesota Executive Function Scale and the NIH Toolbox Picture Vocabulary in the Fall and again in the Spring to assess for school readiness. (See scores for 16/17 WBWF Summary on pg. 48)

While we are committed to the work of preparing our children, among many other things, to demonstrate proficiency on their standardized tests, we are also unwaveringly grounded in our commitment to provide access to high quality Montessori to all children and especially those children with significant deficits in their skills. We are pleased this year to have enough years of assessment documented to show consistent strong trends in Cornerstone scores relative to neighboring schools'.

Mission Specific Academic Goals

Cornerstone continues to see exceptional growth in our mission-specific goals of fostering development of executive functions. We continue to embrace the results of last year's pilot study by Dr. Steven J. Hughes, PhD, ABPdN, Research Consultant, that investigated the growth of executive functions (EFs) in children from disadvantaged and relatively advantaged backgrounds attending Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. The results showed that children from both disadvantaged and relatively advantaged families demonstrate considerable growth in EFs across increasing years of attendance. While children from more advantaged backgrounds showed a slightly higher rate of growth, the differences between groups were not statistically significant.

At each successive level of Montessori education performance increased to the degree that by the time they had completed four or five years of Montessori education, about two thirds of the relatively advantaged and essentially the entire relatively advantaged group showed performance at or beyond above average range. This is a level of growth with real, observable, and potentially life-altering implications.

This year we will continue this study expecting an even more accurate reflection of what we see every day in the environments because we are including, to use in conjunction with the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), the Developmental Environmental Rating Scale which analyzes classroom environments and teaching styles for characteristics that foster strong development of Executive Function skills.

The most compelling measures of Mission Specific goals, however, are the confident, reflective, productive and happy young people graduating from Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. Keenly self-aware and simultaneously grounded in relationship with community, they are strong members of society and powerful agents for change, for peace and for social justice.

“When I first came here... I was surprised by how the teachers trusted me to make the right decision. Because I was able to make those decisions myself, it was hard at first to be responsible, choose work that was a challenge, and balance my day. I could choose the easy way and not be responsible, or I could get my work done and stay on track. Even if being responsible and making the right choice is harder, it will always help you in the long run.” ~ Sammi

“To my next school I will take all the lessons I learned. I will sketch algebra materials on my paper. I will remember all the rhymes to figure out problems. I will take my responsibilities that Cornerstone has taught me. I am proud that I have become the person I am today. The responsible, loyal, faithful, helpful and hopeful person that I am.” ~ Katte

“I like that our community takes care of each other.” ~ Vincent

“Maria Montessori’s ideas are really powerful. It makes me think about life more. I always wonder how she came up with these ideas... I am a more confident, more knowledgeable, and creative person in the world.” ~ November

“The first day of fifth grade was one of my favorite days in all of my six years here. I needed order; I got it. Fifth grade was eye opening. One thing I really liked about it was the tradition it brought with Camp St. Croix. Every year upper elementary students would take a trip to camp where we learned and practiced many things but one thing that really stood out to me was the lesson of teamwork. The lesson of teamwork reminded me of an African proverb I like, “If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together.” Teamwork is the idea that if we work together we will get it done more efficiently. To me that is part of Cornerstone.” ~ Sofi

Attendance Rate

CMES School will meet or exceed its attendance rate goal for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Indicator	4	3	2	1
Attendance rate for the school year ([ADA/ADM]* 100).	More than 90% AND improves by at least 1% over the previous year	More than 90% OR improves by at least 1% over the previous year	85-90%	Less than 85%

Our Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was 125.66, Average Daily Membership (ADM) 132.92, giving CMES a 95% attendance rate. The AMI Montessori method challenges and excites children, inspiring them to be present for what each new day brings. Cornerstone children truly enjoy their school experience and are inspired to be present as evidenced by the attendance rate.

Finances

Thanks to both Sandra Schmidt of SandMark Services LLC and to our Finance Committee, the school's finances remain strong. Due to the conscientious approach of our Finance Committee Chair Melissa Santrach, Board Chair Liz Coenen, Director of Business Operations Chris Bewell, and Head of School Liesl Taylor (all of them working in concert with Sandra Schmidt), CMES has achieved its fund balance goal of at least 20% of expenditures for three years in a row.

FY 15, the school's 5th year of operation, CMES had an audited fund balance of \$282,364, which represented 20.62% of expenditures, achieving its stated policy goal for the first time.

In FY 16, CMES achieved an audited ending fund balance of \$350,571, which represented 21.92% of expenditures incurred for the year.

Once again, in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, CMES met its fund balance threshold by adding \$18,868 to its fund balance, resulting in an unassigned fund balance of \$369,439, or 21% of expenditures (unaudited).

This consistent and conservative stewardship of Cornerstone's financial affairs has earned Cornerstone the Minnesota Department of Education 2017 School Finance Award for 2016 Financial Reporting, and the VOA Finance Award of Excellence 2017.

Internal Controls and Board Oversight

Cornerstone's Finance Committee, which consists of the Board Chair, Board Treasurer, the school's contracted finance manager, the Director of Business Operations, and the Head of School, meets monthly to oversee the school's finances. The Finance Committee reviews monthly financial statements prepared by the contracted finance manager. The financial statements are then submitted to the school board members and reviewed and accepted at the monthly school board meetings. Clifton Larson Allen, Certified Public Accountants, prepares the school's annual audit.

Overview of Financial Health

The unaudited end-of-year fund balance as of June 30, 2017, was \$369,439, or 21%. The fact that the school has consistently achieved an uncommitted fund balance of at least 20% of expenditures since its fifth year of operation is both consistent with the school's fund balance policy and wise operating procedure, as the fund balance will help the school weather unanticipated emergencies and unforeseen events, including increased state funding holdbacks.

A finance summary is presented at the end of this report. Sandra Schmidt of SandMark Services LLC performs the accounting services for Cornerstone Montessori Elementary, and Paychex performs the payroll services.

2015-2016 School Audit

CMES ended FY 2015-2016 with a fund balance of \$350,571, which reflected an increase of \$68,207. The ending fund balance represents 21.92% of expenditures incurred for the year. Sandra Schmidt, using Skyward School Finance Software, provided the accounting services. Clifton Larson Allen, Certified Public Accountants, audited the school's financial records.

Clifton Larson Allen issued a "clean" audit report with no findings. The audit report was presented to the Board of Directors by Nick Sigurdson of Clifton Larson Allen on November 15, 2016 and was accepted by the Board.

See Appendix H for the 2016-17 Financial Statements and Revised Budget.

Innovative Practices and Implementation

Curriculum - AMI-Certified Montessori Approach

Dr. Montessori implored us to give the elementary child ‘the Universe’! Cosmic Education is the name she gave to this approach in elementary. At Cornerstone, our innovative practice is to implement authentic, AMI Montessori education in the public sector. The broader educational community is recognizing many of Dr. Montessori’s methods today as innovative best practices. Acknowledging “developmentally appropriate” as an ideal learning environment, child-centered practices are being merged into many traditional systems. At Cornerstone, the innovative practices of Montessori are time tested yet remain innovative in that they are being applied in their purest form in the public sector, increasing access to high quality Montessori education for all children. Now more than ever, it is of particular importance for our children to experience education that fosters optimal outcomes both academically and developmentally ~ ensuring every child the chance to reach his or her fullest potential. Whereas more privileged children come to school having already had a wealth of positive experiences and viewing themselves as capable learners and important people, *many children represented in our student population have experienced the opposite.* Due in part to limited opportunities, they are often the children who start academically behind expected grade levels and then continue to fall further behind each year.

In an authentic Montessori classroom, the child is a central agent in the process of learning. The whole child is nurtured. The multi-aged classroom is set up as a community of people who are living and working together. Amongst this three-year span in age, the grades are not defined. Children don’t see themselves or each other as “behind” or “smarter” or “in the slow group” because those distinctions aren’t made. Children learn that they are at school to work extremely hard *doing their own best work each day.* In addition, all presentations in a Montessori classroom are designed to appeal to the specific developmental needs and attributes of the child receiving the lesson. All learning at all times is differentiated. Scaffolding is beautifully and inherently present in the materials children use for their work. Because each child’s learning experience is tailored, children see that they are competent learners. Children are invigorated by the work they have completed and are inspired to explore increasingly greater academic challenges – and experience success in doing so.

Socially, children learn that all have strengths and all have struggles. Every child comes to realize through repeated interactions and experiences with others in the community that he or she has something important to offer. Setbacks and disappointments are dealt with as a community in a supportive, respectful, and nurturing way. As the community develops, children spontaneously address social issues right along side of academic concepts, and all interactions and choices are seen as opportunities to assist in the development of executive function strategies and engagement; skills that are now seen as increasingly important for each child’s future success.

Children being mentored and educated in an authentic Montessori classroom in these ways believe in themselves as capable people and as important members of society. Children who believe in themselves in these ways have an enormous capacity to excel academically and to thrive in the inspiring and rigorous academics AMI classrooms are known for.

In addition, the long-term goal of children leaving the program and taking their exceptional citizenship skills, sound self-esteem, and positive attitude towards learning, has profound implications for their success in future educational settings and in society as a whole.

Special Education Services

Twenty-three children of 132 (17%) qualified for special education services, and 3 children have 504 plans, to provide appropriate accommodations to maximize learning during the 2016-17 school year.

We have thoroughly embraced a strong team approach to Special Education at Cornerstone; the teachers, support staff, administration, contracted specialists, and, most of all, the children are benefitting tremendously. Weekly, all Special Education Staff, all contracted service providers, our Special Education Director and the Head of School meet to ensure that there is collective wisdom and varied expertise around every important aspect of the Special Education program implementation. Following the Special Education Team Meeting each week, as needed, parents and guardians are able to attend Evaluation Planning meetings, Evaluation Report Meetings and IEP Meetings with all the specialists present to answer questions and give insight. Parents are important participants in putting together a plan that best serves their child. In addition, teachers, as needed, are able to bring concerns to the entire team of specialists and get valuable input regarding how to best support each child, either to meet the child's needs without Special Education services or to support the teacher and the child during assessment and later in meeting the goals of the IEP. While we know we have put together a program that is strong and unique, we have more to improve. We have quickly grown into and outgrown the need for two Special Education teachers! We have seen the need for a third teacher or a Due Process Coordinator and are looking forward to the positive affect of that position on our current program. In addition, we have scheduled trainings for our General Education staff and Paraprofessionals to enrich their understanding of their role in meeting the needs of the children with Special needs and to support increased clarity around the Child Find and Child Study processes. We continue to contract with Indigo Special Education Services for our Special Education Director and find the support we receive from them invaluable!

English Language Learners (ELL)

The English as a Second Language program at Cornerstone involved twelve children in first through sixth grade who attended from September 2016 to June 2017. Cornerstone's ELL population is very stable; most of these children have been at the school for nearly all of their elementary years. The small size and Montessori methods and materials make Cornerstone a unique setting. Language learners have the benefit of many opportunities to speak with peers and adults for a variety of reasons in different settings during the school day. Oral language develops very naturally for Cornerstone's ELL children.

The English Learners took the ACCESS language test in March of 2017. Two of the children took the Tier A test for beginners, and the others took the Tier B/C test. All components of the test were online, a change that occurred in 2016. Previously, the test was a paper booklet. In 2017 the proficiency standards were raised for the ACCESS test. It was expected that many scores would go down and fewer children would demonstrate complete mastery. Indeed, we found that the majority of our students' scores did go down on the ACCESS this year. The average drop for these nine children was .62 points on a 6-point scoring scale.

Two first graders' scores rose as compared to their kindergarten test, but the correlation of scores between the paper kindergarten test and the online first grade test is not close. One middle grade child's score stayed the same in 2017 as compared with what he achieved according to the 2016 standard, which we count as a "raised" score. So, this happens to be an unusual year for comparing the last two years' language achievement test scores and attaching numbers to the growth we've seen in our EL children.

However, we certainly did see growth this past school year in language use by these same children. In the case of a first-year girl, it was a verbal language explosion. In the cases of several middle and upper elementary

children we saw reading skills grow to the point that dependence on text comprehension supports such as pictures was reduced and these children showed a deep love for reading, often picking up books to enjoy in their free time.

The writing portion of the test has consistently had lower scores than we would like. It is the most difficult skill for language learners and depends on prior comprehension of English through listening and reading. We plan to focus more time and direct lessons on the skills needed for composing various types of written pieces in the coming school year, as well as on basics such as spelling and vocabulary development.



Student Highlights

As always, there are countless highlights regarding the children; highlights in each moment, hour, day, week!

This year our Upper Elementary Children forged a new relationship with Academia Cesar Chavez and St. Paul City School, two area ‘fellow’ Charter Schools. The children came together to learn more about the positive effects on their education ~ and life in general ~ when they are making healthy eating and lifestyle choices. The children journaled with each other, co-hosted a Community Health Fair at Cesar Chavez where they served their own smoothies made in part from ingredients they had grown. The children culminated the work together, for this year, at least, by spending the day together at Philadelphia Community Farm in Osceola, WI, where they planted organic vegetables that they hope to harvest together, next Autumn!



Several children volunteered to give presentations at the Annual Donor Event for the Montessori Center of Minnesota held in May. Children as young as 5 and up through 12 years of age, greeted and ‘wowed’ potential Donors and Special Guests and speakers, including Art Rolnick, with beautiful presentations covering everything from static addition to work with adjectives to complex sentence analysis to cubing a trinomial!



Two very special sisters and their mom took advantage of the opportunity to join hundreds of parents, teachers, early childhood care and education professionals, and other children of all ages at the Minnesota State Capitol to celebrate Advocacy for Children Day on March 2nd this year. Participants had the opportunity to engage in story time with legislators, singing, yoga, meeting with legislators, and rallying together to express the significance of investing in quality education for children and families in Minnesota. Thank you, Chuayi, Madeline and Halayna!





Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School - 6th Year Graduates - June 9, 2017

Staff Highlights

At Cornerstone we are often too eager to recognize only our areas for growth. It is equally as important to recognize the extraordinary work of our staff. Our trained Guides provide expert leadership and work passionately with every child. Every single supportive assistant and aide does just that: supports their guides, children and environments. The absolute champions that are our specialists and Special Education staff, tirelessly and lovingly advocate for each and every child while doing the tricky work of integrating all that they do into authentic Montessori environments not compromising the experience of the children. Our kitchen staff keep us nourished as well as in compliance with all our food safety regulations. Our administrative team joyfully provides support wherever there is a need.

In addition, on behalf of the entire school, we are deeply grateful for our Board members and our colleagues and partners in the Montessori Center of Minnesota. We truly appreciate their unwavering support of all that we do ~ from riding the bus our first year to being the most invested landlords an entity could hope for. They are Cornerstone's steadfast visionaries and friends, and have been a continuous thoughtful, insightful, presence during some of our most sensitive and challenging moments.

Jess and Mara have done an immense amount of work to firmly establish our Upper Elementary program. The program is already rich with high expectations, great work, leadership and going out opportunities and lovely culture and traditions, especially around completing the three-year cycle and graduation. They have successfully retained and graduated two strong groups of sixth year children who are off to their new schools and doing exceptionally well.

Amber and Adam and David, also, have transitioned beautifully to parenthood ~ and juggling parenthood with working. Before long they will be joined here at Cornerstone by their children, Nemo and Lila!

Chris has again led the way to receiving the Charter School Finance Award as well as supporting us in receiving a spotless audit!

Liesl spoke at NAMTA regarding Serving Children in Crisis in an AMI Montessori setting and published an article on the same topic. She served on the Advisory Committee for the Executive Director of AMI Search Committee and became a member of the work groups for the AMI International Bold Goal Initiative.

Sara, Hayley, Tom successfully completed their second summer of Montessori Training. Congratulations!

Lindsay, Maisah, and Catherine graduated from their AMI Primary Training and received their certificates. Congratulations!

Andi, Suzi, and Molly have successfully completed another year of graduate work.

It is easy to see that this is a passionate, hard-working group of people who model high expectations and a continued love for learning!

2016-17 Awards

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the 2017 VOA School Board Governance Award

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the 2017 VOA School Finance Award

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the Minnesota Department of Education FY 2017 School Finance Award

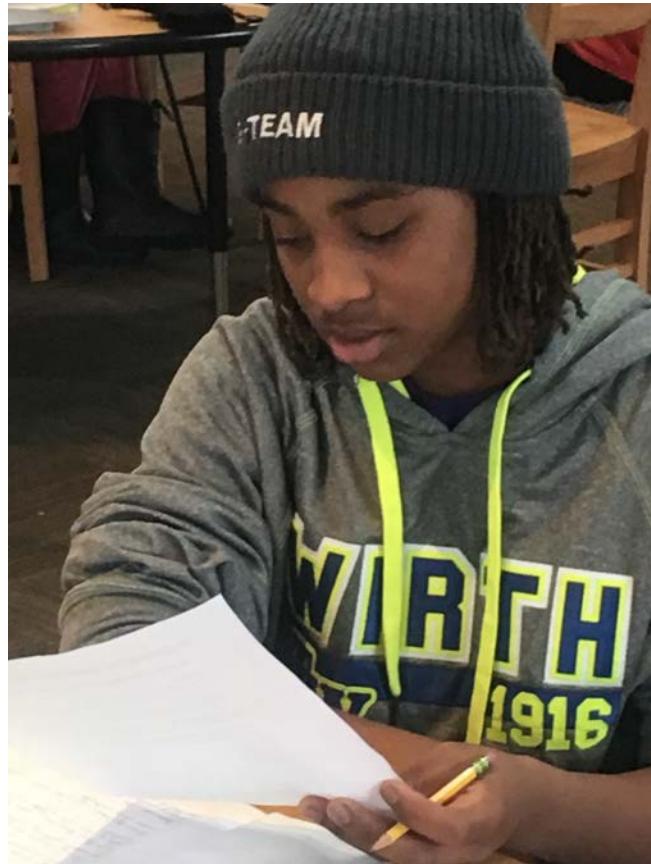
Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the 2015-16 VOA Academic Excellence Award



Service Learning

As the service learning program has strengthened and evolved, the children continue to be supported in following their natural desire to help when and where they find a need. Again, this year, as they did in 2015/16, the children in the upper elementary classrooms stenciled the drains all around the neighborhood letting everyone know that the water and litter that goes into the drains goes straight into the river as part of their work with The Friends of the Mississippi. In addition, the children worked bi-monthly at the local food shelf and researched and visited the Family Place, a partner program of the Montessori Partners Serving all Children, and initiated a relationship through their visit and interview with the founder. The children are eager to continue and deepen this relationship as they seek ways to provide service to the children and families in temporary housing.





"The idea of the Cosmic Task, first of all, is pretty awesome. Let's all be honest: Maria Montessori knew what she was doing. I think the concept has helped me, and is helping me now, to find out what my purpose in the world is." ~ Aten-Wa Theba, 12 years

Future Plans

Identify Needs Based on Data

Cornerstone has seen, most importantly and consistently, the development of strong children in body, spirit and mind; children who see themselves as learners, and know themselves as people each with a special contribution to society and who are able to independently and conscientiously advocate for themselves and the good of the community. We continue to celebrate the strong progress of our reading program and the affect it has on our children. This year, with a similar focus and allocation of resources towards supporting the strong development of math skills, we are now celebrating significant growth in that area as well. Two years ago, we recognized the profound impact of having our school psychologist spend a tiny fraction of time with children not receiving special education services and still struggling emotionally. Last year we were able to secure funds through the Support Our Students Legislative Grant and know now with absolute certainty the profound positive affect of a School-based Mental Health program. In addition, we recognized the positive impact of a good staff care program on attendance and moral and teamwork as well.

Our future plans stem directly from our commitment to continue what we see working and swiftly address and support areas of need.

- We have hired a new administrative position so that the Head of School is available a full six hours a week to observe and mentor consistency in math presentations school-wide, especially in terms of using and supporting strong connection between the vocabulary used in standards and on standardized tests and the Montessori materials the children use. We will continue the use of the IXL math practice used in conjunction with Montessori materials.
- Our school psychologist will be on site 5 half days this year to work with individuals and groups of children on self-care and healthy friendships and relationships. In addition, the school psychologist will support sessions for staff care on an as-needed basis with a kick-off breakfast the third week of school.
- We will use the GATs we piloted last year in one class, in all elementary environments to help keep the parents more informed about their children's academics measured by their progress on the Montessori materials.
- We are embracing the Parent Involvement Committee in its work as they re-establish and re-define their role in supporting a stronger connection between parents and teachers especially around the topics of academic progress and volunteer opportunities.
- We continue to seek deeper understanding of serving children in crisis and have allocated time and resources to spend more time training this year with Dr. Travis Wright.
- We are entering the dual process of Strategic Planning and defining an administrative structure that best serves the school in our next stage of development, and with new leadership, with positive energy and intention!

World's Best Workforce Report Summary

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, a school board, at a public meeting, shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning that is aligned with creating the world's best workforce. The school board must publish an annual report on the previous year's plan and hold an annual public meeting to review goals, outcomes and strategies. An electronic summary of the annual report must be sent to the Commissioner of Education each fall.

The 2016-17 report summary document was submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education by the December 15, 2017 deadline and posted to Cornerstone's website.

2016-17 World's Best Workforce Report Summary - Goals and Results

All Students Ready for School

Goal: Cornerstone used new assessments for Kindergarteners in 2016-2017. 80% of children enrolled in Kindergarten October 1 at Cornerstone will be ready for school as measured by the Minnesota Executive Function Scale and the NIH Toolbox each Fall.

Result: 82% of children enrolled in Kindergarten October 1 at Cornerstone were ready for school as measured by the Minnesota Executive Function Scale and the NIH Toolbox in the Fall of 2016.

Goal Status: Goal Met

All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in third grade at Cornerstone Montessori who test proficient on the Developmental Reading Assessment will be at least 80%.

Result: The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in third grade at Cornerstone Montessori who tested proficient on the Developmental Reading Assessment was 81%

Goal Status: Goal Met

Close the Achievement Gap(s) Among All Groups

Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who make up subgroups large enough to measure will increase 3% each year towards being on track for success and closing the gap between the subgroup and all students assessed at Cornerstone.

Result: Cornerstone had mixed results with this goal as our subgroups are too small to reliably measure. For the group large enough to measure, the Free and Reduced lunch population increased in being on track in math by 15% while the all students assessed increased 11%, significantly decreasing the gap in math for that group. The gap was not reduced in reading for this group this year. In addition, we are able to see with consistency, that the free and reduced student population is doing significantly better than the free and reduced populations in our neighboring schools serving similar demographics.

Goal Status: Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)

All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal: The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who are on track for success will increase 5% in math and 2% in reading from 2016 to 2017.

Result: The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who are on track for success increased 10.8% in math to 32% on track for success and decreased 1.5% in reading from 57.5% to 56%.

Goal Status: Goal partially Met; Cornerstone had mixed results with this goal. With the percent on track increasing so dramatically in reading from 2015 to 2016, we did not see the percent increase this year in reading. We made significant progress in math.

2015-16 World's Best Workforce Report Summary - Goals and Results

When the World's Best Work Force began Cornerstone sought to merge the required components of the World's Best Work Force Report with our established Annual Report. To meet the required deadline for submitting our Annual Report to our Authorizer, however, it has been necessary to report on WBWF data from an entire year prior creating confusion about which data was being discussed in the report.

Compliance deadlines shifted this year so that we are able to include 2016-2017 WBWF data in our 2016-2017 Annual Report. To make sure all WBWF data is available for review, the 2015-2016 WBWF data is included in this Annual Report as well. In essence, including both sets of data here allows us to 'catch up' and going forward we will be discussing data from the same academic year over all required components of our reporting.

The 2015-16 report summary document was submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education by December 15, 2016 and posted to Cornerstone's website.

Identified Needs Based on Data

- NEED: We observe many children performing at a higher level in the classroom than they demonstrate on MCA assessments. There are also a significant number of children struggling with reading skills regardless of the method of assessment. We also learned that children who worked directly with the Literacy Specialist made from .75 to 1.25 years growth between September and February 2014/2015.
- DECISION: Consider increasing the Literacy Specialist position from .5 to .75, implement an all school Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) period where the Literacy Specialist observes, models for, and mentor teachers and parents in best practice as they guide readers at all levels.
- NEED: MATH We observe that many children are performing at a higher level in the classroom than they are able to demonstrate on their MCA assessments.
- DECISION: MATH We implemented an IXL program to help children connect what they were doing in the classroom on the Montessori materials to the abstract presentation of that same work on computerized assessments.
- DATA: 2015-16 MCA Math - % Meets – 3rd/42.9%, 4th/6.3%, 5th/22.7%, 6th/0% - % Exceeds – 3rd/7.1; 2015-16 MCA Reading - % Meets – 3rd/42.9%, 4th/18.8%, 5th/45.5%, 6th/15.4% - % Exceeds – 3rd/14.3%, 4th/6.3%, 5th/27.3%, 6th/7.7%

School Focus Areas for 2015-16 School Year

Cornerstone is the first public school in Minnesota to be certified by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). This certification is acknowledged worldwide for advancing schools of exceptional quality and academic rigor. The entire system fosters a collaborative professional culture that allows our teachers to connect, plan and support each other on a bi-monthly basis, and connect to a national Elementary Association of Montessori teachers for on-going mentoring and collaboration in all aspects of their work.

Cornerstone's curriculum is integrated across all subject areas and is differentiated with respect to both the complexity of the concepts and every learning style. Montessori materials are used to guide children from the most concrete introduction of a concept to abstraction, providing a strong foundation and scaffolding necessary for a sound progression of skills. Each lesson is given with the developmental stage of children in mind and when individual children show readiness, creating passion and capability in children for sustained, concentrated, and experiential work. Though down-played in an experiential, hands-on program, technology is a natural part of their work in the classroom for research, classroom newspapers and for connecting their work to their surrounding community, supporting for example, planning and execution of community service work.

Conclusion

"If you ever need anyone to speak to parents about the importance of staying for the sixth year, I am your person!" ~ Kate Chaffee, parent of sixth year graduate, Sofi.

As we conclude the 2016-2017 Annual Report, our second beautiful graduation comes to mind; the 17 amazing young people we sent out into the wider world as graduates are the epitome of all we hope for a child to achieve and experience in our program. The children have strength and glow and self-knowledge and a drive to learn. They are rooted in an especially strong foundation after two full, three-year cycles in lower and upper elementary and it will be thrilling to see what they pursue from here! Just like our graduates, as a school we have six solid years under our belt and look forward to a new stage now that we are out of our start up years. We have built, with intention and care, an authentic high quality public charter Montessori program for the children on the East Side of St. Paul; we have seen the results of this in the attitudes, actions and work of our children, families, and staff for some time ~ long before now. We remain the first and only AMI Recognized Public Montessori School in the Midwest and look forward already to our review again next year when we know our consultant will see, in every environment, our continued growth as we delve deeper into implementing exceptional pedagogy. Again, during a year when proficiency scores remained relatively static statewide in Minnesota, Cornerstone's proficiency scores, especially in math, increased dramatically. There is a strong sense of community, a growing work ethic, and joy in the air at Cornerstone, spreading to our surrounding community as more of our children spend time seeking expertise and knowledge from all that St. Paul has to offer, and finding ways to contribute to their society as well.

While we have much to celebrate, we are old enough now to see with great clarity the difference between doing things 'pretty well' as we are now, and the program of unique and undeniable excellence we have set out to become. With feet firmly planted on our foundation, we have new and continued really hard work to do together. We must develop a strategic plan to guide us in our next important years clearly addressing sustainability in our mission, structure, systems and funding; we must pay attention to the climate in our society and understand and expertly address the effects of trauma, crisis, and violence on the well-being of our children and their ability to learn; we must continue to provide what staff members need to sustain their deeply passionate commitment to this work; we must listen to our parents and creatively and consistently embrace all aspects of our work with our families who have so very much to offer; we must address issues of equity in education; we must open our school spaces and our hearts and have hard conversations to deepen understandings of ourselves and our community; we must listen; we must, absolutely must, establish a strong donor base and raise money to fund programs so critical to our success. *The sustainability of Cornerstone depends on our ability to attend to these details.*

Again, this year, we are renewed and energized for the immensity of this work by the realization that our mission of providing high-quality, rigorous, authentic Montessori education in the public setting is a reality that parents, staff, and most importantly, the children experience in the exceptionality of the education at Cornerstone. We look forward to sharing our continued growth towards our mission with you in the 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Appendices

Appendix A – VOA Accountability and Oversight System



School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System

- I. School Accountability System & Authorizer Oversight
- II. Authorizer Intervention Tool
- III. Contract Renewal Rubric

Introduction

Volunteers of America of Minnesota (VOA-MN) is committed to fulfilling its role as a charter school authorizer by holding its schools accountable for a range of results. The accountability system presented in this document ensures that VOA-MN will uphold its legal obligation to make sure the schools it authorizes are reaching (or making adequate progress toward) the goals and benchmarks outlined in its charter contract and Minnesota statute.

VOA-MN uses a standard charter contract with unique school-specific terms that capture different approaches to achieving student success. The individuality of each school will be preserved in the “Academic Program Description” addendum to the charter contract.

One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school in action firsthand, hear directly from all key stakeholders, and corroborate school-reported information and data. VOA-MN conducts two different types of site visits: Formal and Informal - Monitoring. The Formal site visits will follow a more structured protocol, and will produce written and oral feedback to the school staff and board. VOA-MN will also make informal monitoring visits to schools for follow-up oversight, special events, and check-ins.

Volunteers of America of Minnesota has developed an assessment system that will be used to determine the extent to which the school is meeting expectations under the VOAMN School Performance and Accountability Framework, as well as guide charter contract renewal decisions. The assessment system uses the same standards scale as the Authorizer Accountability and Oversight System:

- Meets standard
- Partially Meets / Approaching standard
- Not meeting standard

★ A school may also earn an additional star if the school meets standard in an area of examination and demonstrates an exemplary practice (e.g., academic growth, model policy or procedure). In the Academic Performance section, the star is also synonymous with Exceeding Standards on the tables.

The primary purpose of a charter school is to improve pupil learning and student achievement. VOA-MN holds the schools it authorizes accountable in five major areas: academic performance, fiscal management, board governance, management and operations and legal compliance. Each area has multiple indicators of success and the charter school’s performance on each indicator will be rated as indicated in the aforementioned paragraph. Four essential questions drive VOA-MN’s accountability of charter schools.

BOARD GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE

Does the school have a compliant board engaged in proper oversight?

Effective board governance is essential to the successful start-up and operation of a public charter school. The diversity of charter school board memberships – teachers, parents, community leaders, and volunteers – heightens the importance of consistent expectations and development activities.

The authorizer regularly monitors the performance quality of the school board based on authorizer observations; interviews with the director, board and faculty; and the review of school policies, reports and board meeting minutes. A school must have a governance model that provides quality oversight by ensuring that there are checks and balances between the board and the school administrators.

A school board is responsible for developing, implementing, and assessing policy; defining sound employee relations; conducting open meetings; recognizing and conforming to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws; and governing within the limits of a delegation of state authority – as a nonprofit and public school board. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; inform the public of all deliberations and decisions; promote accountability; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

VOA-MN's governance expectations / performance indicators include the following: The Board of Directors complies with Minnesota law regarding board training requirements and board governance structure.

- The board regularly reviews, updates, and approves its bylaws. The bylaws are consistent with state law.
- The Board conducts a comprehensively evaluation (including all aspects of the position description) of the performance of the school leader through a defined annual evaluation process.
- The Board has a board-approved professional development plan for the school director (if applicable as required by Minnesota Statutes 2009, 124D.10, subd. 11(b)).
- The Board of Directors will maintain a quorum for all board meetings.
- A board packet, containing the agenda, related documents, and monthly financials is distributed to all members of the Board of Directors, the school leadership and the Authorizer at least three days prior to each board meeting. The Board of Directors complies with the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13).
- The Board of Directors institutes / follows an orientation process for bringing on new members.
- The Board of Directors completes a self-evaluation each year.
- The school board periodically engages in strategic planning, and the school exemplifies the strategic direction set by the board.
- The school board meets its governance model requirements laid out in its bylaws and as required by Minnesota Statute and will maintain a balance of skills and expertise among members at all times (i.e. business, marketing, legal, accounting, fundraising, human resources, education, etc.).
- The Board of Directors maintains a “Board Documents Binder” at all times which includes meetings minutes, board documents (bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc.), and financial statements.
- The Board maintains a “School Board Policy Binder.” The board reviews, updates, and approve its policies as needed or required by state law.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Is the organization effective and well run?

Effective day to day operations of a charter school support the Learning Program. A well-run school provides an environment in which staff and students can perform at the highest possible level and more effectively reach the school's goals. Management and operations of the school will be monitored by the authorizer on an ongoing basis.

VOAMN's school management and operations expectations / performance indicators include:

- The school will maintain a high level of parent, teacher and student satisfaction rates based on interviews, surveys and retention rates.
- Mission and Vision are central to the school's identity and inform all decision making processes.
- The school's learning program exemplifies the mission and vision of the school.
- The school exhibits strong academic and organizational leadership.
- The school employs highly qualified, appropriately licensed teachers.
- School has an employee retention rate exceeding 75 percent (excluding retirements).
- All school staff and volunteers have completed criminal background checks per state law and school policy.
- The school meets / maintains its enrollment goals and experiences stable to growing enrollment (waitlists).
- The school maintains a safe facility that is conducive to learning.
- The school institutes a fair and open student admission process that complies with Minnesota law.
- The school is fulfilling its purposes as defined in the Charter School Law (Minnesota Statutes (2009), 124D.10, subd. 1) and charter contract.
- The learning program exemplifies VOA Hallmarks.
- The school institutes a fair and open employment process that complies with state and federal law.
- The school has defined job descriptions and evaluation process for all faculty members.
- Teacher evaluations are designed and conducted consistent with state statutory requirements.
- The school maintains a complete and well-organized VOA-MN "Compliance Binder" on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN.
- The school shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed "Annual Submission Calendar."

SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Is the school's learning program a success as evidenced by high academic performance annually?

All public schools, including charters, must fully participate in the state assessments - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Additionally, the school shall annually complete a VOA-MN (authorizer)/School jointly approved interim assessment in reading and math. Data from state assessments will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are also required to set specific and measurable goals in academic and nonacademic areas for which they agree to be held accountable in their charter contract. These goals provide the central focus for the charter school leadership, staff, and families.

Each of the following expectations and performance indicators pertain to the individual school specific VOA-MN performance goals. The indicators provide the ability for the school to achieve their goal over the course of the entire term as well as providing benchmarks for each individual year of the contract term. Each VOA-MN authorized school will have a different term length. The SMART goals will accommodate those terms and

variables such as past performance & demographics of the school. School specific academic SMART Goals are negotiated in every new or renewal charter contract. VOA authorized schools will be judged on whether they meet their goals for the entire contract term, for half of the term or part of the term. If only half or part of the contract term goal is reached, the length of the renewal contract term will be reduced accordingly. The authorizer also reserves the right to terminate the charter based on poor academic performance.

VOAMN's academic performance expectations / performance indicators for all schools include:

- Students are performing as well or better than students at schools in their local district on state examinations in reading, math, and science based on VOA SMART goals unique to individual schools.
- Individual school individual SMART goals are achieved during contract term.
- Students are performing as well or better than the State on state examinations in reading, math, and science based on VOA SMART goals unique to individual schools.
- Students are showing positive growth based on the growth z-score average from year to year in math and reading according to VOA SMART goals unique to individual schools.
- School has adopted a formal teacher evaluation process and adheres to the requirements set forth in state statute (Minn. Stat. 122A.40).
- All teachers (but especially new teachers) are supported through a school-wide professional development plan.
- Professional development is job-embedded and directly linked to instructional practice in order to improve student achievement.

SCHOOL SPECIFIC ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE GOALS

Goal increase: Term 5 year contract

- **Reading Proficiency 24 percentage points**
- **Math Proficiency 28 percentage points**
- **Science Proficiency** (Science proficiency goal will be amended after a proficiency percentage is publicized, approximately June 15, 2016 as long as the cell size is large enough)
- **Reading growth z-score** (Growth will not be shown until October of 2014, being that only 3rd graders have tested at the current time. A growth goal will be written at that time.)
- **Math growth z-score** (Growth will not be shown until October of 2014, being that only 3rd graders have tested at the current time. A growth goal will be written at that time.)

2013-2014 (contract renewal year)

Proficiency

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 30.8% in 2013 to 36.8% in 2014. (*Increase of 6 percentage points*)

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 15.4% in 2013 to 22.4% in 2014. (*Increase of 7 percentage points*)

SCIENCE – There will not be a cell testing in Science in 2013-2014

Growth

READING – Goal will be amended by June 15, 2015 after growth has been shown during the 2014 testing cycle.

MATH - Goal will be amended by June 15, 2015 after growth has been shown during the 2014 testing cycle.

2014-2015 (year 1)**Proficiency**

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 36.8% in 2014 to 42.8% in 2015. (*Increase of 6 percentage points*)

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 22.4% in 2014 to 29.4% in 2015. (*Increase of 7 percentage points*)

SCIENCE – This will be the first year of science testing. The science proficiency goal will be amended after the testing cycle provides a percentage. If the cell size is too small, it is expected that Cornerstone Montessori will make every effort to move each student toward individual proficiency.

Growth

READING – Goal will be amended by June 15, 2015 after growth has been shown during the 2014 testing cycle.

MATH - Goal will be amended by June 15, 2015 after growth has been shown during the 2014 testing cycle.

Goal increase: Term 5 year contract revised JUNE 2015

- ***Reading Proficiency 15 percentage points***
- ***Math Proficiency 15 percentage points***
- ***Science Proficiency 3 percentage points***
- ***Reading growth z-score 0.15 point increase***
- ***Math growth z-score 0.15 point increase***

2015-2016 (year 2)**Proficiency**

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 34.5% in 2015 to 39.5% in 2016. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2016 school year, compared to the previous school year.

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 18.2% in 2015 to 23.2% in 2016. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2016 school year, compared to the previous school year.

SCIENCE – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 43.8% in 2015 to 44.8% in 2016. (*Increase of 1 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a one percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2016 school year, compared to the previous school year.

Growth

READING - The average growth score on the state reading accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.4209 in 2015 to -0.3709 in 2016. (*Increase of 0.05*)

MATH - The average growth score on the state math accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.7503 in 2015 to -0.7003 in 2016. (*Increase of 0.05*)

2016-2017 (year 3)

Proficiency

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 39.5% in 2016 to 44.5% in 2017. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2017 school year, compared to the previous school year.

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 23.2% in 2016 to 28.2% in 2017. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2017 school year, compared to the previous school year.

SCIENCE – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 44.8% in 2016 to 45.8% in 2017. (*Increase of 1 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a one percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2017 school year, compared to the previous school year.

Growth

READING - The average growth score on the state reading accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.3709 in 2016 to -0.3209 in 2017. (*Increase of 0.05*)

MATH - The average growth score on the state math accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.7003 in 2016 to -0.6503 in 2017. (*Increase of 0.05*)

2017-2018 (year 4)

Proficiency

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 44.5% in 2017 to 49.5% in 2018. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2018 school year, compared to the previous school year.

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 28.2% in 2017 to 33.2% in 2018. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2018 school year, compared to the previous school year.

SCIENCE – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 45.8% in 2017 to 46.8% in 2018. (*Increase of 1 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a one percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2018 school year, compared to the previous school year.

Growth

READING - The average growth score on the state reading accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.3209 in 2017 to in -0.2709 2018. (Increase of 0.05)

MATH - The average growth score on the state math accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.6503 in 2017 to -0.6003 in 2018. (Increase of 0.05)

2018-2019 (year 5 contract renewal year)

Proficiency

READING – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 49.5% in 2018 to 54.5% in 2019. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2019 school year, compared to the previous school year.

MATH - The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 33.2% in 2018 to 38.2% in 2019. (*Increase of 5 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all math state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2019 school year, compared to the previous school year.

SCIENCE – The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 46.8% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2019. (*Increase of 1 percentage points*)

The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all science state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a one percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2019 school year, compared to the previous school year.

Growth

READING - The average growth score on the state reading accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.2709 in 2018 to in -0.2209 2019. (Increase of 0.05)

MATH - The average growth score on the state math accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) for all students enrolled the full academic year and taking the same test in consecutive testing years in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori will increase from -0.6003 in 2018 to -0.5503 in 2019. (Increase of 0.05)

SCHOOL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Does the school exhibit strong fiscal health?

Charter schools receive public funds and must meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. It is VOA-MN's duty to ensure that the schools are responsible stewards of public funds. The charter school shall provide VOA with a copy of its draft and final annual budgets and monthly cash flow projections for each fiscal year by July 1 of each fiscal year. VOA-MN shall use submitted budget and cash flow statements, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school has a realistic balanced budget plan each year. VOA shall use the financial statements presented in the charter school's annual financial audit, along with any other relevant information, to determine if the charter school maintained a balanced budget during the prior-year. In general, schools are expected to have "clean" annual financial audits.

The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Financial Oversight Report on their network of authorized charter schools. The parties acknowledge that the Minnesota Charter Schools Law requires a charter school to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. This requirement has two underlying purposes: to ensure the successful operation of the school into the future and to ensure the proper use of public funds.

VOA-MN's school financial expectations / performance indicators for all schools include:

- The school maintains a balanced budget.
- The school is compliant with state and federal financial reporting compliance.
- The school's financial audit will be submitted to the state by December 31. The school will have a clean financial audit (i.e. no major findings).
- The school is current on all financial obligations, including, but not limited to: pension payments, payroll taxes, insurance coverage, loan payments and terms.
- The school provides VOA-MN and school board members with monthly financials at least three days prior to board meetings. Packets include at least the following: 1) detailed income/expense report, 2) cash flow sheet, and 3) check register.
- The school develops and maintains a targeted fund balance determined by the school board for a projected period of years.
- The school board has a finance committee that meets monthly to review financials.
- All board members exhibit working knowledge of financial oversight.

LEGAL AND CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE - Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. As such, VOA-MN expects rigorous compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a "Compliance Binder" on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed "Annual Submission Calendar." Management and operations of the school will be monitored by the authorizer on an ongoing basis and reported on annual in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. One of the most important ways VOA-MN gathers information about the schools it authorizes is through on-site visits. Site visits allow the authorizer to observe the school in action firsthand, hear directly from all key stakeholders, and corroborate school-reported information and data. VOA-MN conducts three different types of site visits: Formal and Informal/Monitoring.

SITE VISITS

- **Formal Site Visit-** Formal Site Visits are typically conducted once per year by a member of the VOA-MN Authorizing Program Leadership Team who interviews key stakeholders, and conducts classroom observations. Written feedback is provided to the Board of Directors and School leadership guided by the Site Visit Rubric. VOA-MN staff will provide formal written feedback summarizing our observations. The feedback will identify areas of strength and areas that require improvement. If a more serious issue arises from a site visit VOA-MN may implement an intervention from “Range of Interventions” table. This written feedback will be provided to both the board and school administration.
- **Informal or Monitoring Site Visit-** VOA-MN may conduct informal or monitoring site visits at any time to fulfill its duties as an authorizer. Reasons for monitoring visits may include: investigation of a complaint, determination of readiness to open, follow up on implementation of improvement plans, or documentation of best practices. These visits are typically less formal and may be impromptu or without notice. The frequency, duration, and intensity of these visits depend greatly on the school’s standing with VOA-MN.

BOARD MEETINGS

VOA-MN will observe a minimum of one school board meeting per year. The authorizer will use the Board Meeting Observation Rubric for internal use only (authorizer only documentation).

SCHOOL PUBLISHED ANNUAL REPORTS

The charter school law (MN Stat. 124D.10, subd. 14) includes requirements for a charter school annual report. Additionally, VOA requires that annual reports include specific elements defined by VOA-MN annually (generally in June). VOA-MN required elements include how the school is performing based on the three essential questions: Is the student learning program a success? Does the school exhibit strong financial health? Is the organization effective and well-run? VOA-MN requires that schools submit a draft to the authorizer for review and comment (by an annually defined date) and that the final draft be board approved and posted to the school’s official website by October 1st annually.

AUTHORIZER PUBLISHED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

In addition to the Formal Site Visit Report that each school is provided, VOA-MN will also annually publish three VOA-MN Charter School Network Reports: Academic Performance, Board Governance, and Financial Management. The cumulative purpose of these four reports is to assess the ongoing performance of VOA-MN authorized schools regarding academic success, fiscal viability, and organizational effectiveness. The combination of school performance based on the three VOA-MN Annual School Performance Reports, annual Formal Site Visit Reports, informal and monitoring site visit observations, authorizer observations of board meetings, and ongoing monitoring of school reporting and compliance provides an accountable oversight mechanism for the authorizer, schools, and other organizations. This collective body of evidence will also form the basis for contract renewal decisions. VOA-MN has aligned these materials to each other as closely as possible to reduce redundancy, allow for more efficient completion by both the schools and VOA-MN, and to better align to the NACSA authorizing standards.

AUTHORIZER LIAISON: Volunteers of America of Minnesota designates the following employee as the official authorizer liaison to the School:

Stephanie Olsen, Senior Manager

VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program

612-270-1998

solsen@voamn.org

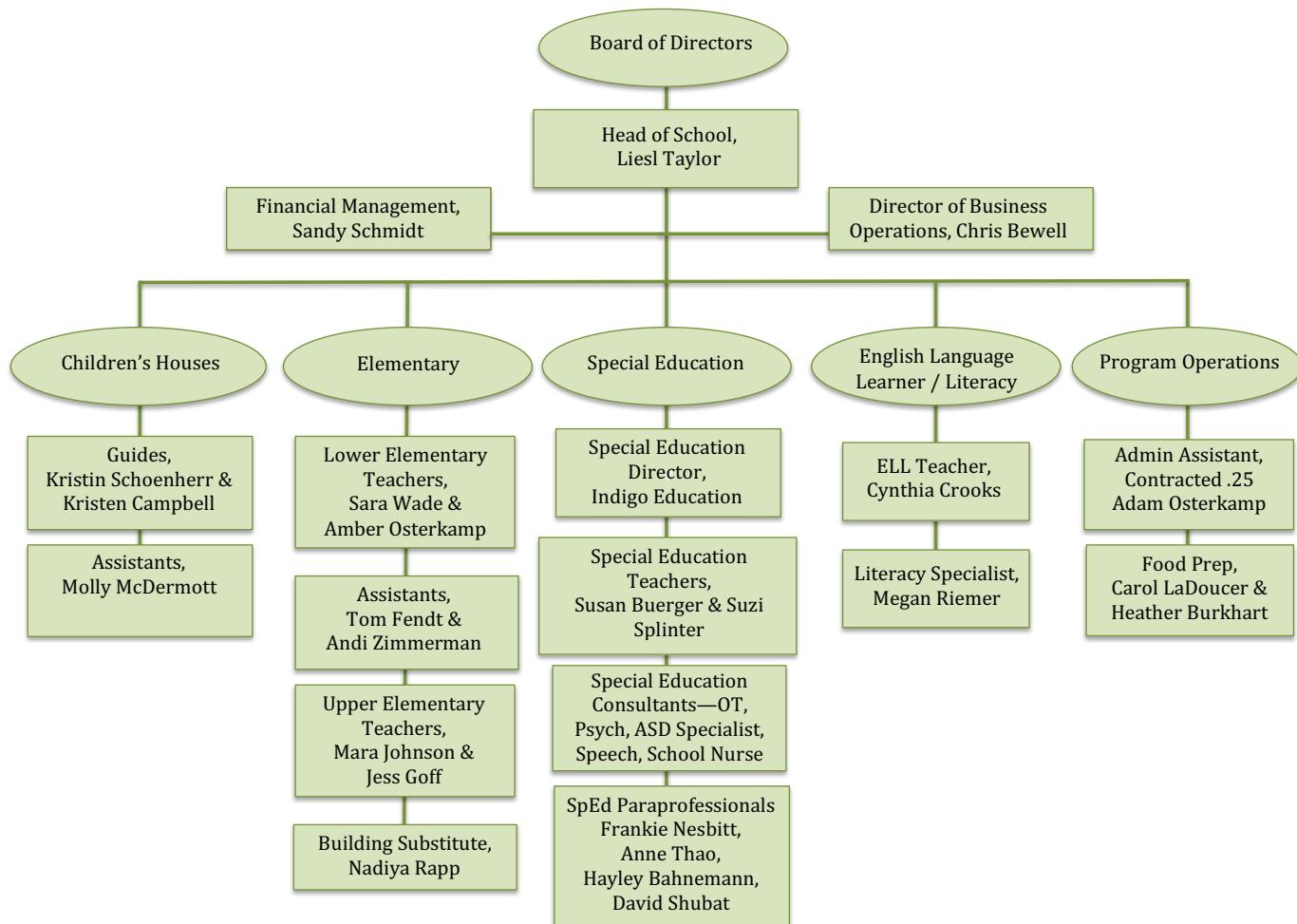
Appendix B – Non Profit Status

Organization Name	CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Organization Type	TRUST
Contact Person	LIESL TAYLOR
Address	1611 AMES AVE
City	SAINT PAUL
State	MN
Zip Code	55106-2903
IRS Code 501(c)	03
Purpose or Description	To support children from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds living in or near St. Paul's East Side through a rigorous and high-impact Montessori program that empowers them to make positive decisions.
Phone Number	(651) 774-5000
Status	ACTIVE
Extension	Granted

Taken from: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charity/SearchResults.asp?FederalID=271556815>

Appendix C – CMES 2016-17 Organizational Chart

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Org Chart—Positions as of 2016-2017 School Year



Appendix D – 2016-17 Application Form

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School
Application Form for the 2016-2017 School Year
Enrolling grades K-6 for the 2016-2017 School Year**

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will accept applications for enrollment for the following academic year, from **November 1 to December 1, 2015**. To be eligible for kindergarten your child must be 5 years old by September 1, 2016. If you wish to enroll your child at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, please fill out the information and return it to:

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School
1611 Ames Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55106**

For more information, please contact the school at 651.774.5000

Student Information (Please print clearly)

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

2016-2017 Grade (please circle one): K 1 2 3 4 5 6

Parent/Guardian Information (Please print clearly)

Mother/Guardian: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Father/Guardian: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

I hereby verify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

No child will be denied admission to Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity, immigrant (legal or non) status, or intellectual or physical ability. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is a charter public school and is tuition-free. Students from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

If more people apply than the number of spaces available for a given grade, program, or facility, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will conduct a public lottery to determine admittance to the school. The only preference we give in admitting students is for children who are siblings of current Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School students or children of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School staff. In order to get this preference, parents MUST submit an application before the end of the open enrollment period. The lottery will be held on Monday, December 7, 2015, at 5:00 p.m.

(CMES Office Use Only)

Date Received: _____ Notice of Enrollment Sent on Date: _____

Appendix E – 2016-17 Student Enrollment Form

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

1611 Ames Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55106

Phone: 651.774.5000 Fax: 651-209-0846

Student Enrollment Form 2016-17

Student Name (first middle & last) _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Last School Attended _____

City _____ State _____ Grade (Sept. 1, 2016) _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Country of Birth _____ Home Primary Language _____

Parent/Guardian/Mother Name (first & last) _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phones: Home _____ Cell _____ Work _____

e-mail _____

Parent/Guardian/Father Name (first & last) _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phones: Home _____ Cell _____ Work _____

e-mail _____

Siblings

Name _____ Age _____ School Attending _____

The U.S. Department of Education requires the following two-part question regarding race and ethnicity. Please complete both Part A and Part B.

Part A. Is this student Hispanic/Latino? (Choose only one)

No, not Hispanic/Latino

Yes, Hispanic/ Latino

(A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.)

The above part of the question is about ethnicity, not race. **No matter what you selected above, please continue to answer the following by marking one or more boxes to indicate what you consider your student's race to be.**

Part B. What is the student's race? (Choose one or more)

American Indian or Alaska Native

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)

Asian

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.)

Black or African American

(A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.)

White

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa)

Did your child receive special services or participate in special programs at a previous school? ____Yes ____No

Does your student have an IEP? ____Yes ____No

Does your student receive any other community services? ____Yes ____No

Provider _____ Phone _____

Are there any custody related issues? ____Yes ____No

Other Comments:

Signature of parent/guardian: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F – CMES By-Laws

BY-LAWS OF CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND OFFICE

- 1.1 **NAME.** As registered with the State of Minnesota through its Articles of Incorporation, the name of the School shall be Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School.
- 1.2 **OFFICE.** The registered office shall be as stated in the Articles of Incorporation. The Corporation may have such other offices within the State of Minnesota as the board of directors may determine or as the affairs of the corporation may require. The registered office may be, but need not be, identical with the principal office in the State of Minnesota.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND AFFILIATION

- 2.1 **PURPOSE.** The purposes for which the School is organized are stated in its Articles of Incorporation.
- 2.2 **AFFILIATION.** The School is founded on the principles and pedagogy of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the organization founded by Maria Montessori in 1929. As such, the school will strive to hire AMI-trained teachers whenever possible.

ARTICLE III – MINNESOTA LAW COMPLIANCE

- 3.1 **COMPLIANCE.** The governance of the Corporation will at all times be in accord with the provisions of MN Stat. §317A (Nonprofit Corporations), MN Stat. §124D.10 (Charter Schools) and §124D.11 (Revenue for a Charter School), MN Stat. §13D.01 et.seq (Minnesota Open Meeting Law), and such other provisions of Minnesota laws therein referenced.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 **MEMBERSHIP.** The school shall have no members.

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 5.1 GENERAL POWERS.** The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors. Except as limited by the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, MN Stat. §124D.10, and by law, the Board of Directors shall have the power and authority to do all acts and perform all functions that the Corporation may do or perform.
- 5.2 DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES.** Board members are expected to be good stewards of the Corporation, attend all board meetings, actively participate in Board activities, attend Department of Education-approved training as may be required from time to time, and comply with all state and federal laws that pertain to Minnesota Charter schools.
- 5.3 NUMBER AND COMPOSITION.** At all times, the Board of Directors shall consist of at least five (5) but no more than fifteen (15) nonrelated members and include: (i) at least one licensed teacher employed at the school or a licensed teacher providing instruction under a contract between the School and a cooperative; (ii) the parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the charter school; and (iii) an interested community member who is not employed by the charter school and does not have a child enrolled in the school. The Board will also consist of at least one (1) AMI-trained individual, to serve in any capacity. The chief financial officer and the chief administrator are ex-officio nonvoting board members. At the date of these by-laws, the Board of Directors is a “non-teacher majority,” and board membership shall be in accord with the provisions of MN Stat. 124D.10 Subd: 4(g).
- 5.4 TERMS**
- 5.4.1 FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS.** The Founding Board members shall consist of those individuals named in the Articles of Incorporation, and shall serve a two-year term. New terms will begin on July 1 and end June 30, coinciding with the corporation’s fiscal year. Any vacancies created during that time and any newly created directorships shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Founding Board members will serve until a timely election for members of the ongoing charter school board of directors is held, before the school completes its third year of operation.
- 5.4.2 ONGOING BOARD MEMBERS.** The ongoing board of directors will be elected before the School completes its third year of operation. At the Annual Meeting in the third year of the School’s operation, one third of the directors will be elected to a one (1) year term; one third of the directors will be elected to a two (2) year term; and one third of the directors will be elected to a three (3) year term. Thereafter, directors shall hold office for a three (3) year term or until a successor has been duly elected and qualified, or until the director dies, resigns, is removed or the term otherwise expires as provided by law or by the Bylaws of

this Corporation. Board members are eligible for re-election for up to three (3) consecutive terms.

- 5.5 **NOMINATION PROCESS.** Beginning 60 days in advance of the Corporation's annual meeting, the Board of Directors will solicit nominations for all of the Directorate positions that will be filled at the next annual meeting. The Board of Directors will compile the list of nominees and notify the eligible voters of the nominees for each position 30 days before the date of the annual meeting.
- 5.6 **ELECTIONS.** The election of the board of Directors shall be in compliance with Section 124D.10 subd. 4(c) of the Minnesota Statutes.
- 5.7 **QUORUM AND ADJOURNED MEETING.** A duly called meeting at which at least a majority of the members of the Board of Directors are present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors. If, however, such quorum shall not be present at any such meeting, the director or directors present thereat shall have the power to adjourn the meeting. If a quorum is present when a duly called meeting is convened, and later enough directors withdraw from the meeting so that less than a quorum remains, no further business can be transacted and the Board Chair may adjourn the meeting.
- 5.8 **PRESENCE AT MEETINGS.** Members of the Board of Directors or of any committee, as applicable, may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors or any committee by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting can simultaneously hear each other. Such participation at a meeting, however, shall not constitute presence at the meeting for purpose of achieving quorum, and such members may not vote on any board business.
- 5.9 **VOTING.** Each member of the Board of Directors shall have the power to exercise one (1) vote on all matters to be decided by resolution of the Board. The affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum of Board members shall constitute a duly authorized action of the Board.
- 5.10 **RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL.** Directors may resign at any time, effective immediately or at a specified later date, by giving written notice to the Board Chair or the Secretary of the Corporation. Unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. A director may be removed at any time, with cause, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a majority of all remaining directors of the Corporation. Board members missing more than two (2) regularly scheduled board meetings per year may be removed with cause.
- 5.11 **VACANCIES.** Unless otherwise provided by Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.227, vacancies of the Board of Directors caused by death, disqualification, resignation, disability, removal or such other cause shall be filled by appointment

of a new director by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum. A director filling a vacancy shall hold office until the end of the term for the seat which that Director holds or the next annual election of directors, whichever first occurs.

- 5.12 COMPENSATION.** Directors, as such, shall not receive stated salaries for their services. Directors may be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, as the Board of Directors from time to time determines to be directly in furtherance of the purposes and in the best interests of the School.
- 5.13 DIRECTOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.** Directors must comply with MN Stat. 124D.10 regarding conflict of interest. In addition, all directors are expected to fully disclose all conflicts or potential conflicts of interest and refrain from voting on any such matter.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

- 6.1 REGULAR MEETINGS.** Regular meetings of the Board shall be held once each month during the academic year at a time and place to be set by the Board, with notice of the time and date published in accordance with Minnesota Open Meeting Law, MN Stat. 13D.01 et. seq. Summer meetings may be held at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Notification of such meetings shall be in accordance with Minnesota Open Meeting Law.
- 6.2 SPECIAL MEETINGS.** A special meeting of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by a majority vote of the Board. Notification of such meeting shall be in accordance with Minnesota Open Meeting Law. Such notice shall contain the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
- 6.3 ANNUAL MEETING.** The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held in May for the purpose of presenting reports by the Board President, Treasurer, and Head of School on the activities and financial condition of the school. The Board-approved Annual Report, as required under Section 124D.10 subd. 14, will be distributed at this time. Elections for open seats on the Board of Directors will also take place in accordance with Section 124D.10 subd. 4(d) of the Minnesota Statutes.
- 6.4 MEETING NOTICE.** Regular meetings of the Board shall be held once each month during the academic year at a time and place to be set by the Board, with notice of the time and date provided to the directors and all constituents in accordance with Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

- 7.1 **COMMITTEE FORMATION.** The Board of Directors may, by resolution passed by a majority of the Board of Directors, designate, define the authority of, set the number and determine the identity of, members of one or more committees. The Board may, by similar vote, designate alternate or replacement members of any committee. Committee members need not be members of the Board of Directors. The Board Chair shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, unless the Board Chair serves as a member of such committee.
- 7.2 **AUTHORITY OF COMMITTEES.** Each committee shall be under the direction and control of the Board and shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings. All committee recommendations are subject to Board approval at a regular meeting of the Board.
- 7.3 **PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS.** Committee activities shall be conducted such that they will advance the best interest of the School. The meetings of all committees shall be open to attendance by all directors, but such directors may not vote unless they are members of that committee.

ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS

- 8.1 **OFFICERS.** The officers of the School shall be elected by the Board for one (1) year terms, and shall consist of a Board Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary who must be concomitantly serving on the Board of Directors. The Board may appoint such additional officers with such duties as it deems advisable. Any officer may be removed at any time prior to the expiration of his or her term by affirmative vote of a majority of the Board. Duties of the officers shall be as follows:
- 8.2 **BOARD CHAIR.** The Board Chair shall act as the chairman of the Board of Directors and exercise the functions of the office of the president of the Corporation. The Board Chair, when present, shall preside at all meetings of the board; see that orders and resolutions of the board are carried into effect; sign and deliver in the name of the School deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments pertaining to the business of the School, except in cases in which the authority to sign and deliver is required by law to be exercised by another person or is expressly delegated by the School's organizational documents or by the board to another officer or agent of the School; maintain records of and, when necessary, certify proceedings of the Board; and perform other duties prescribed by the board or by Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.305, subd. 2.
- 8.3 **VICE CHAIR.** The Vice Chair shall act in the capacity of the Chair whenever the Chair is absent or unable to attend to the School's business. The Vice Chair shall perform other such duties prescribed by the board from time to time or by Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.305, subd. 2.

- 8.4 SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all Board Meetings; in the absence of the Secretary, another Board member will act as secretary. In addition, the Secretary will see that all notices are duly given regarding Board meetings, be custodian of all documents and records belonging to the Corporation, and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the Board Chair from time to time.
- 8.5 TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall keep accurate financial records for the School. The Treasurer shall endorse and deposit money, drafts, and checks in the name of the School; disburse the funds of the School as ordered by the Board, making proper vouchers therefore; and perform any other such duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Board of Directors or by the Board Chair. The Treasurer may, with board approval, delegate the day-to-day financial operations of the School to another person. Monthly, or upon board request, the Treasurer shall provide the Board with an account of transactions and of the financial condition of the School. The Treasurer shall also serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE IX – DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS

- 9.1 RIGHT TO CEASE OPERATIONS AND DISTRIBUTE ASSETS.** By a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all directors, the Board of Directors may resolve that the Corporation cease operations and voluntarily dissolve. Such resolution shall set forth the proposed dissolution and direct designated officers of the Corporation to perform all acts necessary to affect dissolution. If such cessation and distribution is called for, the Board of Directors shall set a date for commencement of the distribution.
- 9.2 CESSATION AND DISTRIBUTION.** When cessation of operations and distribution of assets has been called for, the Board of Directors and the designated officers shall cause the Corporation to discontinue its regular business activities and operations as soon as practicable, and shall liquidate and distribute all the Corporation's assets to other entities in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.735 and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. Notice of intent to dissolve shall be filed with the Secretary of State, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.723.

ARTICLE X – INDEMNIFICATION

- 10.1 INDEMNIFICATION.** Each director, officer, and employee of the School, past or present, and each person who serves or may have served at the request of the School as an appointed representative, shall be indemnified by the School, for actions taken and decisions made by such persons on behalf of this School, in accordance with, and to the fullest extent permitted by MN Stat. 317A.521.

- 10.2 LIMITATION ON INDEMNIFICATION.** The School shall not be obligated to indemnify any other person or entity, except to the extent such obligation shall be specifically approved by resolution of the Board of Directors.
- 10.3 INSURANCE.** In accordance with MN 124D.10 subd. 25(c), the School shall obtain shall obtain at least the amount of and types of insurance up to the applicable tort liability limits under MN Stat. 466. A copy of the insurance policy must be submitted to the School's authorizer and the commissioner before starting operations. Changes in the School's insurance carrier or policy must be submitted to the authorizer and commissioner within 20 business days of the change.

ARTICLE XI – FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 11.1 FISCAL YEAR.** The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be from July 1 of one calendar year to June 30 of the following calendar year.
- 11.2 ACCOUNTING SYSTEM.** The Board of Directors shall cause to be established and maintained, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a consistent basis, an appropriate accounting and financial reporting system for the School.
- 11.3 ANNUAL AUDIT.** The Board of Directors shall engage an independent auditor to annually audit the records and books of the School. The Secretary and Treasurer shall submit all records and books of the School for examination by the auditor as requested. Pursuant to MN Stat. 124D.10 Subd. 6a, the School will submit an audit report to the commissioner and its authorizer by December 31 each year.
- 11.4 DOCUMENTS KEPT AT REGISTERED OFFICE.** The Board of Directors shall cause to be kept at the registered office of this Corporation all records required by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law and originals or copies of:
- 11.4.1 Records of all proceedings of the Board of Directors and all committees;
- 11.4.2 Records of all votes and actions of the members;
- 11.4.3 All financial statements of this Corporation; and
- 11.4.4 Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of this Corporation and all amendments and restatements thereof.

ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

Subject to the provisions of MN Stat. 317A.181, Subd. 2(b), these bylaws may be amended in whole or in part by an affirmative vote of a majority of the directors then seated.

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned Secretary of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, a Minnesota nonprofit corporation, does hereby certify that these bylaws were adopted and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors this 13th day of February, 2016.



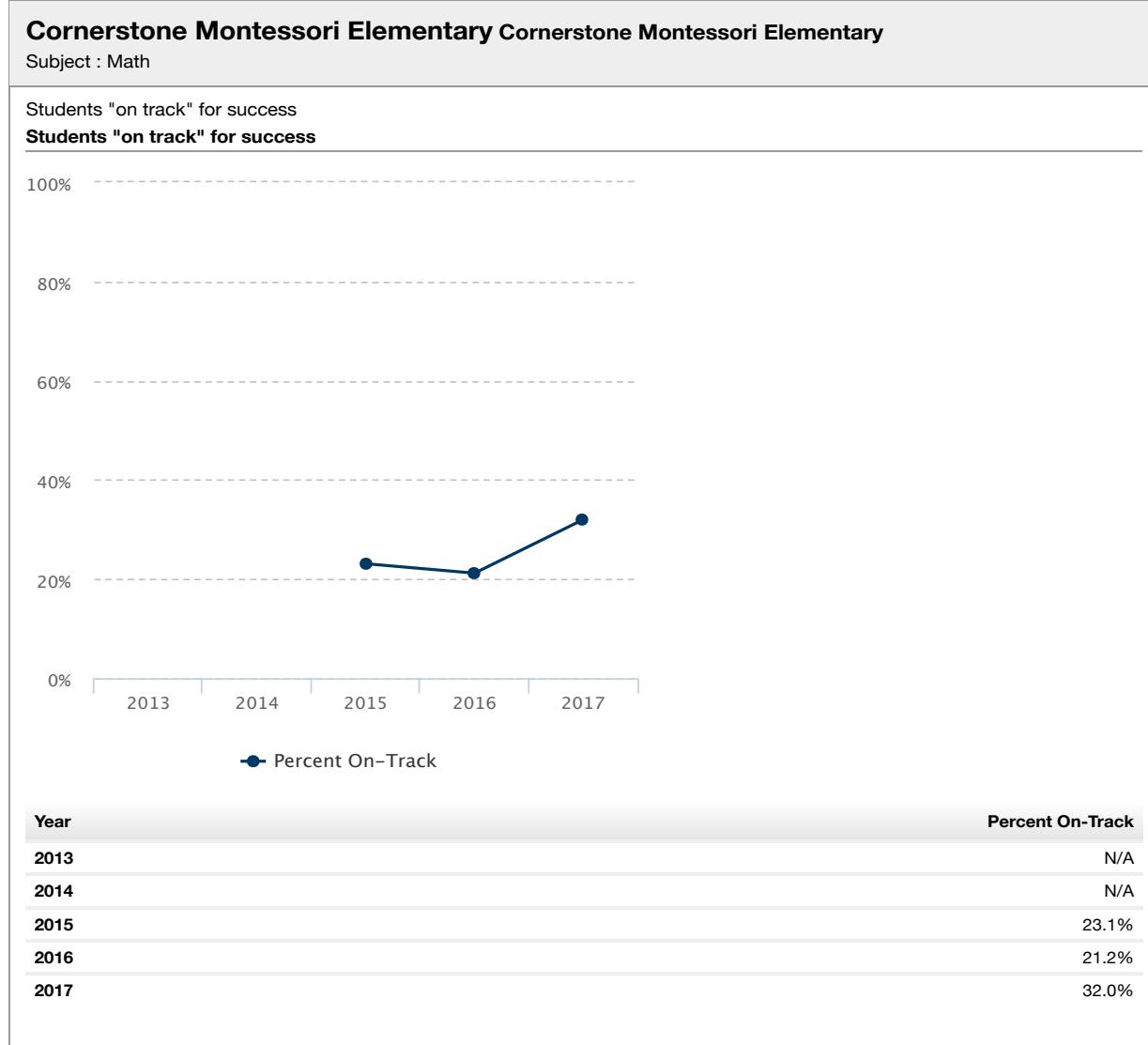
Secretary

Appendix G - 2016-17 MCA Minnesota Report Card Details

Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?

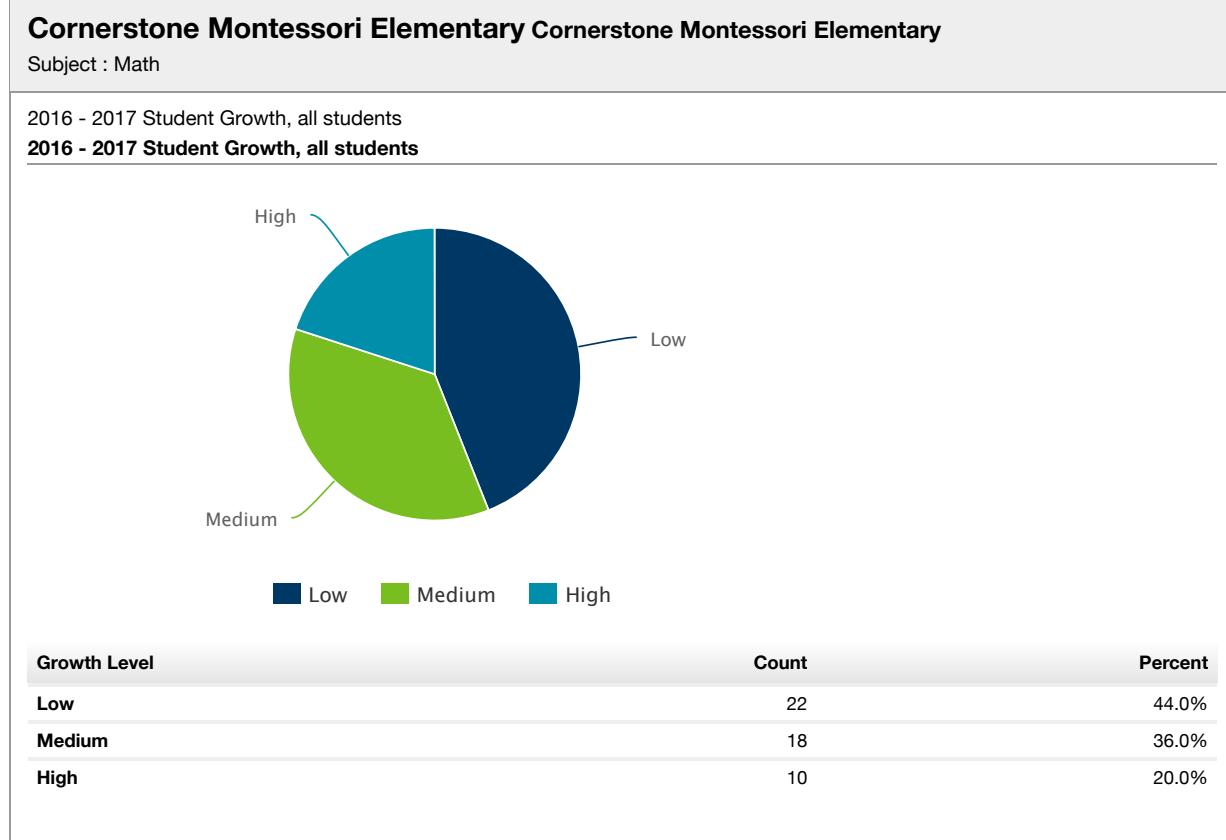
Share This Report

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Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?**Share This Report**

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Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?**Share This Report**

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Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Math

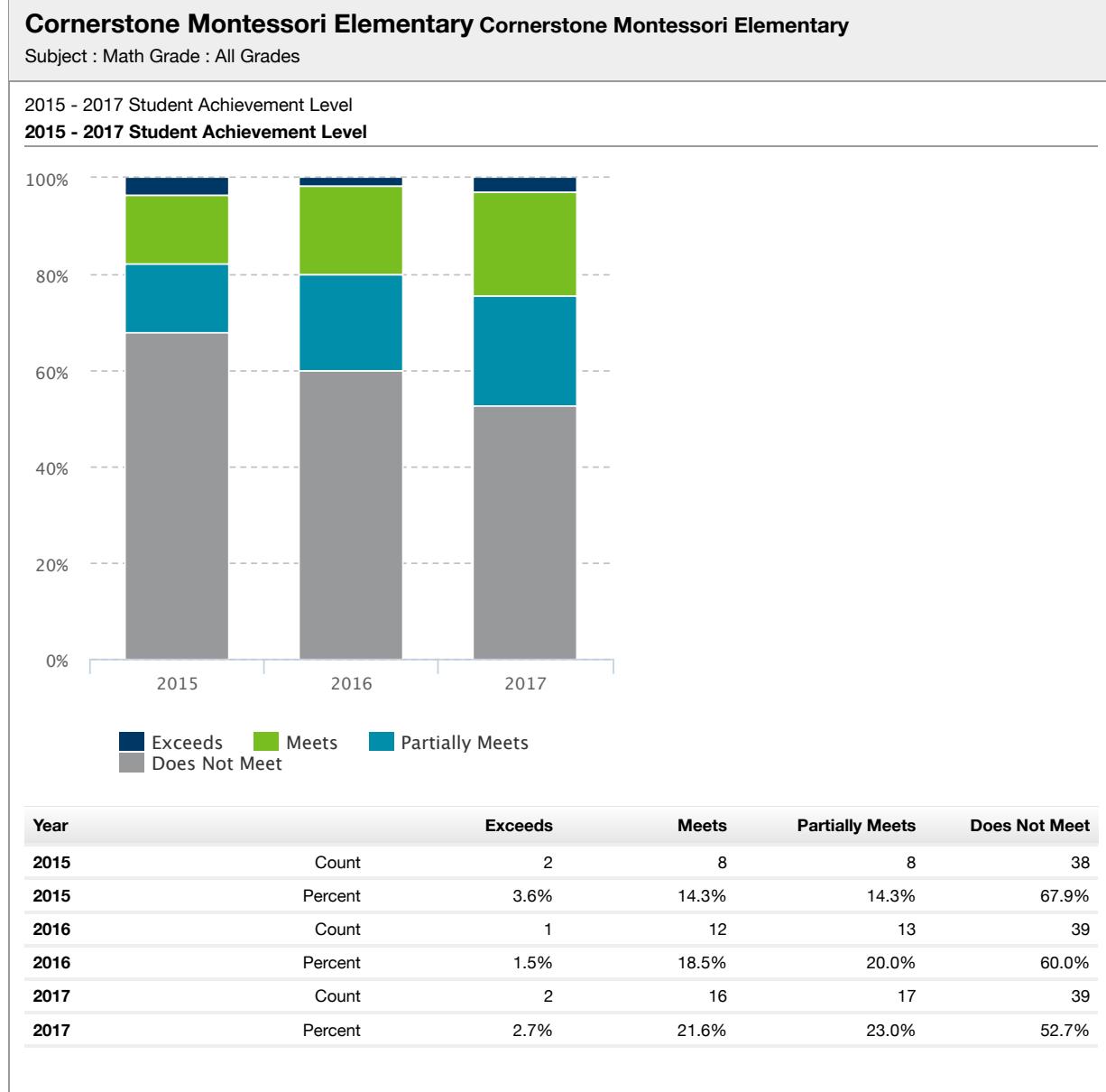
2016 - 2017 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2016 - 2017 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	5	10.0%	17	34.0%
Medium	6	12.0%	12	24.0%
High	2	4.0%	8	16.0%

MCA/MTAS: Are students meeting academic standards?**Share This Report**

-
-
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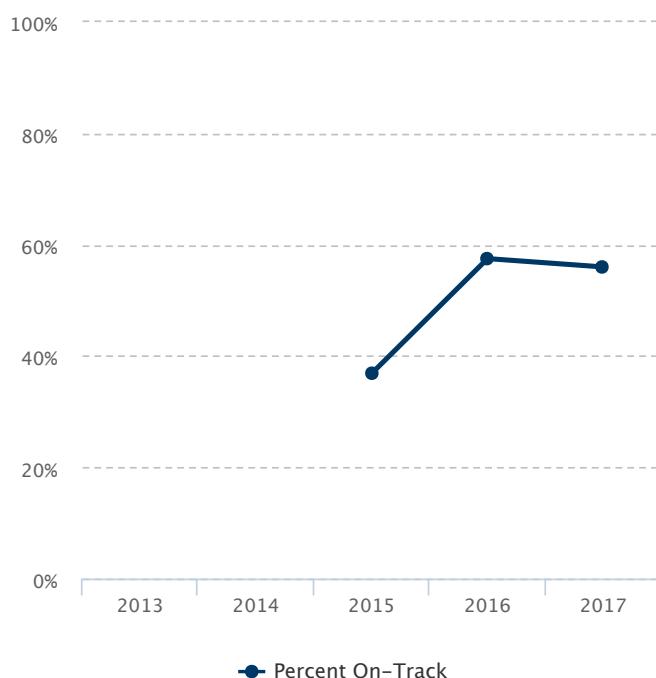
Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?**Share This Report**

-
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Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Reading

Students "on track" for success

Students "on track" for success

Year	Percent On-Track
2013	N/A
2014	N/A
2015	36.9%
2016	57.5%
2017	56.0%

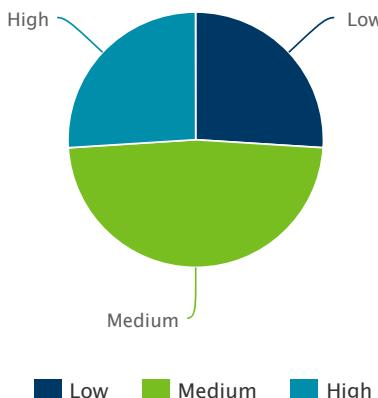
Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?**Share This Report**

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Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Reading

2016 - 2017 Student Growth, all students

2016 - 2017 Student Growth, all students

■ Low ■ Medium ■ High

Growth Level**Count****Percent****Low**

13

26.0%

Medium

24

48.0%

High

13

26.0%

Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?**Share This Report**

-
-
-
-

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Reading

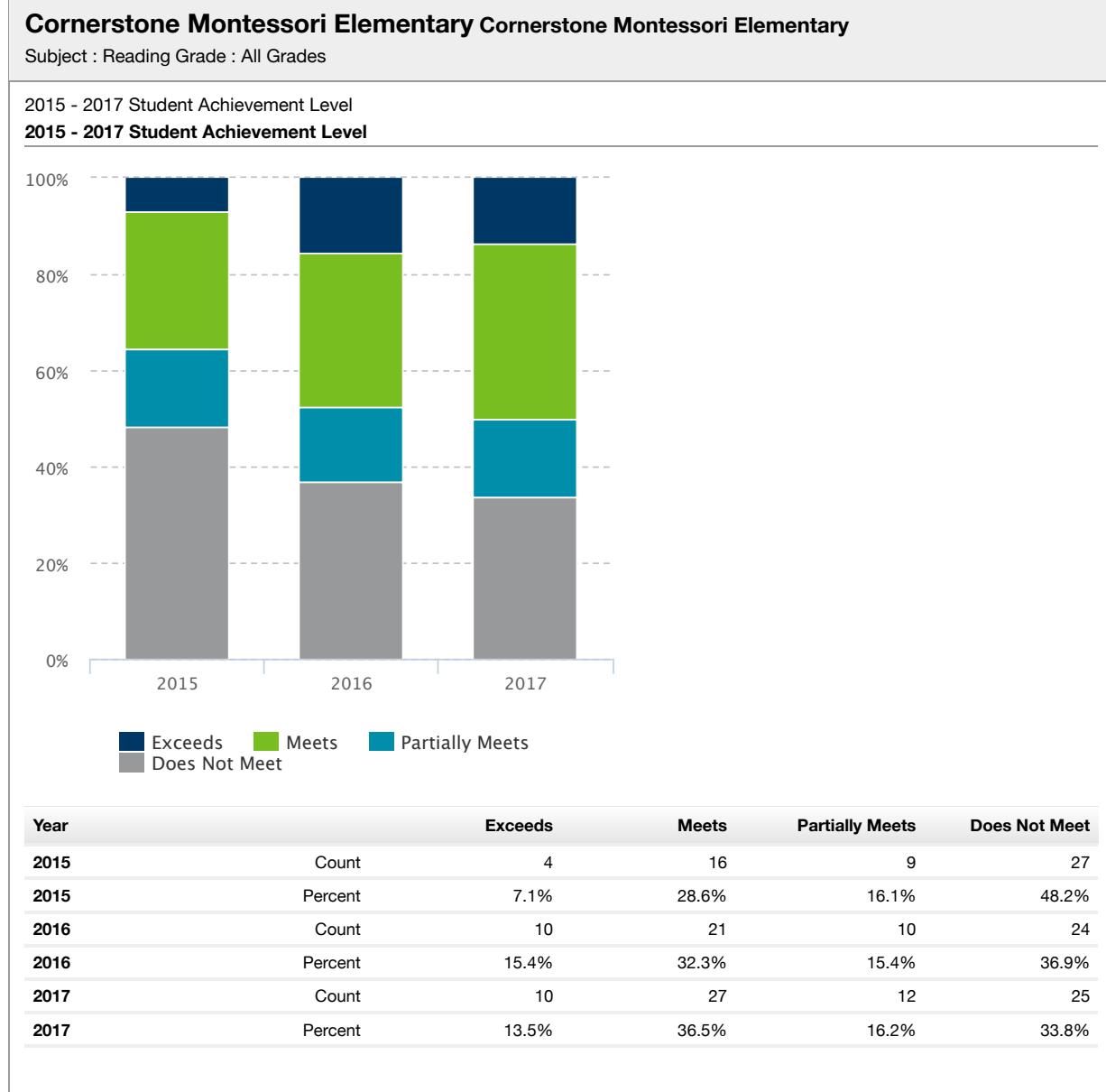
2016 - 2017 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2016 - 2017 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	3	6.0%	10	20.0%
Medium	15	30.0%	9	18.0%
High	4	8.0%	9	18.0%

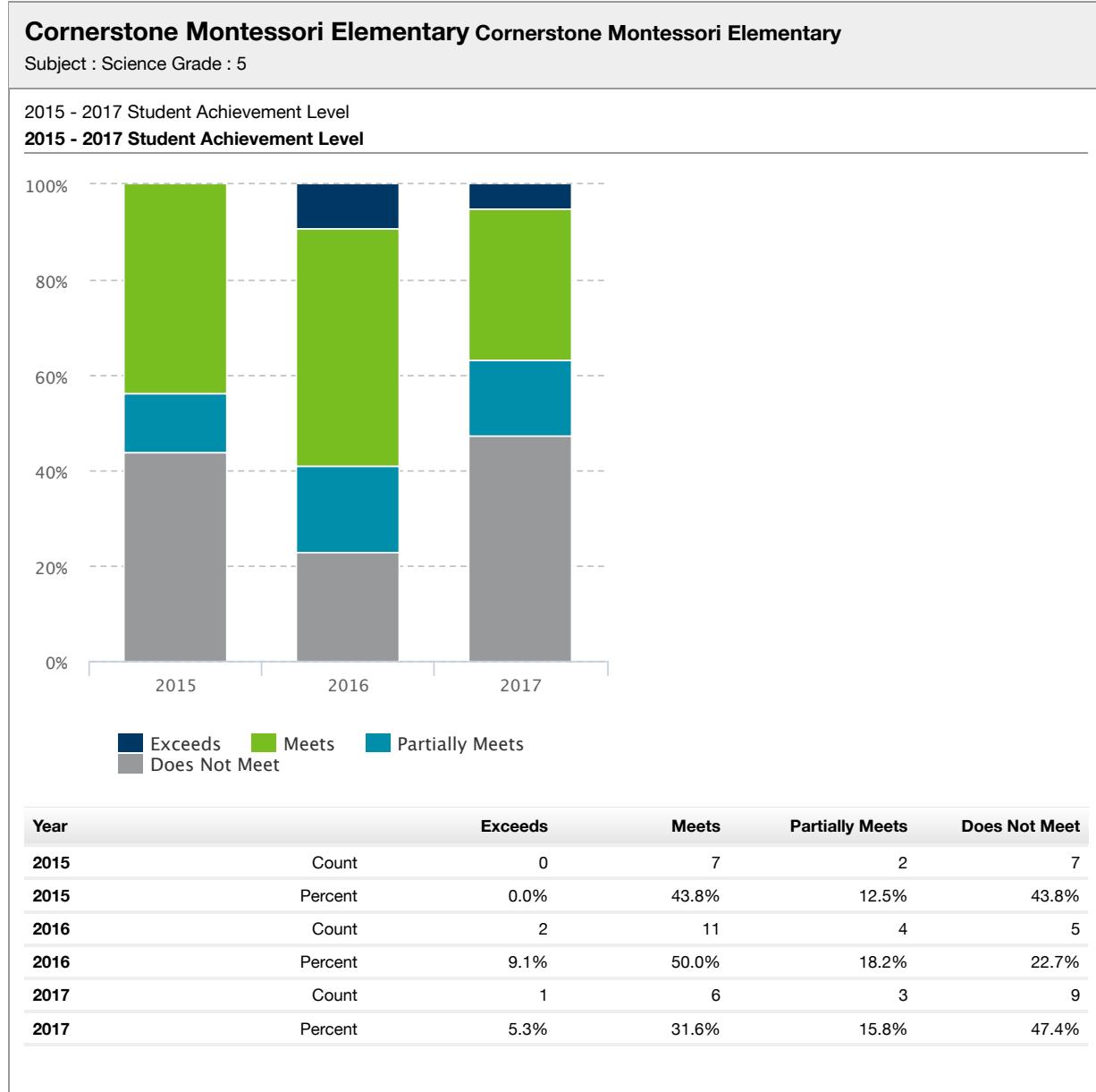
MCA/MTAS: Are students meeting academic standards?**Share This Report**

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MCA/MTAS: Are students meeting academic standards?**Share This Report**

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Appendix H - 2016-17 Financial Statements and Revised Budget

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School
Saint Paul, Minnesota
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2017**

	Beginning Balance	Ending Balance
	Audited	Pre-Audit
	June 30, 2016	June 30, 2017
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Investments	\$ 281,791	\$ 289,018
Accounts Receivable	1,319	7,868
State Aids Receivable	148,167	189,605
Federal Aids Receivable	8,487	14,513
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	28,335	30,142
Total Current Assets	\$ 468,099	\$ 531,146
Total All Assets	\$ 468,099	\$ 531,146
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Current Liabilities		
Salaries and Wages Payable	\$ 67,337	\$ 67,940
Accounts Payable	32,768	26,288
Line of Credit Payable	-	-
Payroll Deductions and Contributions	14,817	14,632
Deferred Revenues	2,607	4,000
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 117,529	\$ 112,860
Fund Balance		
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 282,363	\$ 350,570
Fiscal Year Net Income (Loss)	68,207	67,716
Total Fund Balance	\$ 350,570	\$ 418,286
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$ 468,099	\$ 531,146

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary
Revenue and Expenses
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017**

Annual Organization Revenue and Expense	Description	2016-2017 Revised Budget	2016-2017 Actual FYE
<i>Annual Revenues</i>			
Governmental Source Revenue	Federal Funds	106,127	110,140
Earned Income Revenue & Donations	Local Funds	54,053	67,420
State Aid Payments	State Funds	1,605,833	1,666,643
Total Organization Annual Revenues		\$ 1,766,013	\$ 1,844,203
<i>Annual Expenditures</i>			
Administration		\$ 53,723	\$ 62,080
District Support Services		174,166	176,653
Instructional Program Services		910,476	946,913
Instructional Support Services		33,765	35,092
Pupil Support Services		267,288	292,209
Buildings and Equipment		250,865	255,195
Fiscal and Other Fixed Cost Programs		7,523	8,345
Total Organization Annual Expenditures		\$ 1,697,806	\$ 1,776,486
Revenue Less Expenses Increases (Decreases) Fund Balance		\$ 68,207	\$ 67,716
<i>Beginning Fund Balance, All Funds, July 1, 2016</i>			
		\$ 282,363	\$ 350,570
<i>Ending Fund Balance, All Funds, June 30, 2017</i>			
		\$ 350,570	\$ 418,286
<i>Percent Fund Balance to Expenditures</i>		20.6%	23.5%

* This report is intended to display the revenue and expenditures during the fiscal year.
 Please note these are pre-audit numbers. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School has an annual audit of its financial statements. An audited version of the 2016-2017 financials will be made available by December 2017.