

Second
Charter School Renewal Application
for the
Laramie Montessori Charter School

Submitted by:

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Location: Albany County, Wyoming,

(Albany County School District #1)

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Executive Summary

SUBSECTION I: EVIDENCE OF DEMAND FOR OPERATION

On February 15, 2011, the Laramie Montessori Charter School (LMCS) was established as a public charter school by a vote of the Albany County School District #1 Board of Education to serve students grades K through 6. The LMCS Board of Trustees was established in April 2011 and operations began on July 1, 2011. Laramie Montessori Charter School opened its doors August 25, 2011 with 47 students. Before its first charter renewal in 2016, LMCS matriculated 62, 72, 61, and 78 students, and has since maintained a student population of ~80 students per year. This steady enrollment demonstrates continued interest in and support of the school as the community becomes more familiar with LMCS and the Montessori model of education. The move of LMCS from the Lincoln Community Center to the former St. Laurence School building, and the subsequent expansion of the school into all useable classroom space within this building, has ensured that the school will be able to expand in coming years to at least 100 students.

LMCS has served on average 80 children per year from Albany County since its inception in fall 2011. Over that time, the student population has averaged 15-20% special needs students and 41% free-and-reduced-lunch families, somewhat higher than district-wide averages. LMCS provides an authentic Montessori educational environment within a free public school setting. Those familiar with the educational methodology are surprised to discover that LMCS is not private, but free and open to all students. The school has been popular with international families from Europe and South America, where Montessori education is relatively more well-established, as well as with those familiar with Montessori both from throughout the State and from preschool settings locally.

Consistent with the goals of the 2011 charter, LMCS has helped to increase the variety of educational approaches available to families in Laramie and helped to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles. LMCS is one of more than 4000 Montessori schools in the U.S. and among the more than 400 *public* Montessori schools. It is currently the sole public Montessori school within the state of Wyoming.

SUBSECTION II: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, PUPIL PERFORMANCE, STANDARDS, AND CONTENT

The goals of LMCS continue to be guided by the tenants of classical Montessori pedagogy:

- Valuing and fostering each child's intrinsic motivation to learn;
- Promoting peer teaching/learning through multi-age classrooms using Montessori's time-tested Peace Curriculum to identify common ground as a process for conflict resolution;
- Nurturing the whole child by supporting each individual's unique physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth through inquiry-based learning in a carefully prepared environment, especially in areas of science, music, art, foreign language, and physical education; and
- Developing self-confident, self-motivated learners from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds who value care of self, others, and the natural world as lifelong habits of the mind.

Over the next five years, LMCS plans to grow to the full capacity of ~100-110 students that can be housed at the St. Laurence facility. LMCS will continue to develop a vibrant, growing community of pupils, families, teachers, and citizens that uses Montessori principles to create a high-quality school of choice. We expect most classrooms to be full capacity and to have a waiting list at the Kindergarten level. LMCS already has graduates at the UW Lab School, Laramie Middle School, and Laramie High School, where awareness of their unique academic training and outlook on learning, as well as success as students, has made an impression on the faculty serving those schools and larger community. LMCS already attracts and will continue to encourage student teachers from UW's early childhood and elementary education training programs who seek to broaden their background in a classroom setting not previously available in Wyoming.

Now in its ninth year, the School employs a stable staff of five Montessori-certified and Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB)-certified lead teachers, three of whom now have graduate degrees in Montessori education, along with ~five paraprofessionals and several P.E./music/art and special education teachers in varying stages of Montessori training. This corpus of experienced, trained teachers has created a stable, authentic Montessori learning environment, and has been instrumental in identifying gaps in student education and developing individualized interventions as needed, with the goal of producing students who are self-directed and persevering in the classroom, maintain natural curiosity, and meet and exceed standardized assessment benchmarks for Albany County schools.

LMCS seeks to become the locus of Montessori education Wyoming, inspiring offshoot efforts throughout the State. Already LMCS has increased interest in Montessori education generally; a private Montessori preschool recently formed in Laramie, which completed two successful years of operation before closing temporarily due to COVID19 restrictions. LMCS is just old enough to have former students who began kindergarten at the school now in their first year of high school, with some who began attending in later grades preparing to enter or studying at college.

LMCS draws pupils from families where parents desire:

- a setting that maximizes a child-driven, non-competitive approach to education;
- an inquiry-based/project-based approach to learning (which has traditionally been the hallmark of the UW Lab School where waiting lists are substantial);
- flexible, extended work periods during the school day in response to periods of great cognitive receptivity described in Montessori literature and in research on child development,
- an environment that conscientiously promotes internal motivations for learning and pro-social behavior, in contrast to external, reward-based systems;
- freedom of movement and choice of meaningful work at school;
- a commitment to the physical, social, and emotional component of child development, in addition to the intellectual, where P.E., art, music, culture, and science are essential components of an integrated curriculum; and
- multi-age classrooms where peer learning and peer teaching are explicit features, supporting an environment in which teachers respond to students' individual levels of readiness.

In 2015, LMCS completed a comprehensive curriculum alignment document (that links Montessori materials with Common Core and State standards. LMCS instruction addresses all State content areas, with the expectation of meeting ACSD#1's student performance standards.

LMCS recognizes that the path taken to achieve these standards will differ among individual students according to their learning style and unique intellectual developmental trajectory.

The full curriculum alignment document can be accessed at:

http://www.laramiemontessori.org/uploads/3/4/2/5/34254377/wyoming_and_montessori_alignm ent.pdf

SUBSECTION III: TERMS OF INITIAL CHARTER, CHARTER RENEWAL, AND OUTCOMES

LMCS has complied with terms and conditions of the original Charter Contract of March 1, 2011, as well as the 2016 charter renewal. Conditions are addressed point-by-point in Appendix B and are not repeated here. Most saliently, LMCS has obtained operations funding and completed nine years as a free public charter school in solid financial standing. LMCS has administered all assessments of pupil learning required by District and State policy. The specific pupil learning metrics detailed in the original charter have been mostly achieved. LMCS has established a school for up to 100 students in the St Laurence educational facility, and LMCS has enjoys an excellent relationship with St. Laurence leadership. LMCS has an experienced teacher and administrator as director and has hired and trained in Montessori a staff of five lead PTSB certified teachers, while providing ongoing Montessori-specific professional development for all staff. A stable, democratically elected Board of Trustees, including community members, has overseen school operation and conducted annual evaluations of the LMCS Director. LMCS complies with all reporting and oversight functions, as required by ACSD#1 and the State of Wyoming.

We elaborate on a few specific charter contract items below.

4.01 Pupil Performance

In particular, the original charter document in Section VI.A.ii says, regarding student performance standards which were approved in Item 4.01 of the 2011 charter contract: "...during the first two years of operation standards achievement scores at LMCS will meet those of the local district. Thus, the percentage of students at or above proficiency is set at the ACSD#1 incremental AYP levels as defined by WDE for both language arts and mathematics. This was largely accomplished (see section IV.C.) During the charter renewal period, LMCS completed a curriculum alignment, implemented afterschool tutoring for qualified students, lengthened the school day, targeted reading and math interventions for students as needed, and established stronger collaboration with ACSD#1 to ensure that resources for special-needs pupils are available. The AY2017-2018 showed strong growth and proficiency data in particular, as did interim testing over the AY2019-2020, although final tests were not administered last year (see Part III, Subsection I: B. Assessment). Interim tests for AY2020-2021 further support the efficacy of these measures in promoting growth and ultimately proficiency.

3.01 Educational program set forth in Section V.A of the original charter proposal.

The majority of the educational program has been implemented as proposed. LMCS has not implemented the Spanish language curriculum as envisioned in the original charter. The School has had difficulty finding a qualified teacher capable of providing instruction on a part-time basis. Some years, such have been available, and others not, but depending upon future funding and staffing, this remains a goal.

Montessori training for all LMCS lead teaching staff has been provided by the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR), MECR is a nationally recognized, high-quality Montessori teacher training program affiliated with the American Montessori Society. All five lead teachers are certified, and three have gone on to earn a graduate degree in Montessori education. With all lead teachers Montessori-trained and certified, LMCS is determining the feasibility of certifying paraprofessionals and other teaching staff working at LMCS through MECR programming. Lead and paraprofessionals receive ongoing professional development.

4.7 Academic goals.

LMCS has adopted the academic goals of the District and continues to work toward those goals, including renewed emphasis on alignment between the Montessori curriculum and Common Core and State standards.

Over the next five years, LMCS aims to implement more Montessori-specific assessment tools. These have already been developed and implemented on a project-based level; LMCS wishes to expand these assessments more broadly to complement other standardized testing.

4.8 Accountability plan as set forth in Section VI.A of the application.

The accountability plan is being implemented as proposed. The proposed matrix of Montessori works completed has mostly been implemented but continues to evolve in order to ensure that all learning objectives are mapped onto this instrument and documented completely as pupils progress through the sequence of benchmarks.

SUBSECTION IV: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

A five-year preliminary budget for the next charter period the School is presented with this application (Appendix E). The School intends to operate with revenues primarily derived from State funding. Expenses for the major functions of instruction, instructional support, and administrative support are projected to be approximately 49%, 3%, and 24%. Revenues are projected to exceed expenses for all five years of the preliminary budget. Appendix C has the most recent SBE Form 911, from FY 2019.

Part I: Rationale for the School and Evidence of Support

SUBSECTION I: EVIDENCE OF NEED

On February 15, 2011, the Laramie Montessori Charter School (LMCS) was established as a public charter school by a vote of the Albany County School District #1 Board of Education to serve students grades K through 6. The LMCS Board of Trustees was established in April 2011 and operations began on July 1, 2011. LMCS opened its doors August 25, 2011 with 47 students. In the ensuing four years of operation, LMCS matriculated 62, 72, 61, and 78 students from families seeking a student-centered model of education that values science, arts, and cultural education in a multi-age classroom setting that fosters internal motivation for lifelong learning. Since that time, enrollment has average ~80 students per academic year. The student population has averaged 15-20% special needs students and 41% free-and reduced-lunch families, somewhat higher than district-wide averages. LMCS's steady enrollment is the most compelling evidence of interest among Albany County families for the School. The School was fortunate to move to larger facility in summer 2016, which will support growth to upwards of 100 students or more. LMCS provides an authentic Montessori educational environment within a free public school setting that is open to all, a desirable feature for this community. The school has been popular with international families from Europe and South America, where Montessori education is relatively more well-established, as well as with those familiar with Montessori both from throughout the State and from preschool settings locally.

LMCS draws pupils from families where parents desire:

- a setting that maximizes a child-driven, non-competitive approach to education;
- an inquiry-based/project-based approach to learning (which has traditionally been the hallmark of the UW Lab School where waiting lists are substantial);
- flexible, extended work periods during the school day in response to periods of great cognitive receptivity described in Montessori literature and in research on child development,
- an environment that conscientiously promotes internal motivations for learning and pro-social behavior, in contrast to external, reward-based systems;
- freedom of movement and choice of meaningful work at school;
- a commitment to the physical, social, and emotional component of child development, in addition to the intellectual, where P.E., art, music, culture, and science are essential components of an integrated curriculum a 20-year study has concluded that strong social and emotional skills in early childhood are the best predictors of success in adult life (<http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/articles-and-news/2015/07/new-research--children-with-strong-social-skills-in-kindergarten.html>);and
- multi-age classrooms where peer learning and peer teaching are explicit features, supporting an environment in which teachers respond to students' individual levels of readiness.

Although some of these features may be found at the UW Lab School, the long waiting list at the Lab School was part of the motivation of LMCS founders to create a new Montessori charter school that is free and open to all.

Consistent with the goals of the 2011 charter, LMCS has helped to increase the variety of educational approaches available to families in Laramie and helped to meet the needs of students

with diverse learning styles. LMCS is one of more than 4000 Montessori schools in the U.S. and among the more than 400 *public* Montessori schools.

SUBSECTION II: EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

A. Community Involvement

LMCS partnered with the Lincoln Community Center (LCC) to renovate and operate the property which formerly served as the West Laramie Lincoln School as the site of LMCS from 2011-2016. This partnership helped to revitalize the LCC facility as well as the surrounding community. The LCC now serves as the home of Laramie's Head Start, made possible by the facility and ground improvements completed by LMCS, and serves as a community center hosting an archery club, a coffee shop, immunization clinics, Zumba classes, funeral gatherings, and more. The LCC was an excellent first home for LMCS. The School had the unexpected opportunity to move to a larger, dedicated educational facility in 2016 with the closure of St. Laurence O'Toole School, which has allowed for growth in enrollment, helped to improve physical and practical life education, and provided dedicated classroom space for specials like art and music, as well as more opportunities for outdoor education and recreation.

B. Partnerships

1. LMCS is affiliated with the American Montessori Society, which provides Montessori training and accreditation to teachers and schools nationwide. Montessori training and certification is provided by the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR) in Boulder, Colorado.
2. LMCS partnered with the Lincoln Community Center to serve served as the school premises from September 2011 through May 2016. Since summer 2016, LMCS has partnered with The Church of St. Laurence O'Toole to lease its former school facility. LMCS has an updated lease effective June 2020 (Appendix E) with St. Laurence to reflect current building usage. This lease terminates if LMCS ceases to operate as a charter school. LMCS renovated and revitalized the original LCC property and has also reinstated the St. Laurence facility as a school, which is highly desirable for its parishioners, and provided improvements to that property (using donor funds). LMCS has also worked with the Downtown Business Association and Laramie Rivers Conservation District to improve the grounds and create a community garden for both LCC and the current facility.
3. A Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) was founded at LMCS in 2014 to facilitate interaction between LMCS teachers and LMCS families. The PTO also is active in conducting an annual book fair, autumn harvest festival, t-shirt sales, marketing events, and teacher appreciation events. [Appendix N]
4. LMCS works closely with 4-H on projects of mutual benefit and that augment Montessori outdoor and practical life education.
5. LMCS upper elementary classes spend one week at the Teton Science School each May. The student experience at LMCS is unique in that a pupil may attend three

consecutive years as a consequence of the multi-grade upper elementary classrooms.

6. LMCS partners with the University of Wyoming to place school counseling interns and serves as a training site for such. [Appendix N]
7. LMCS has partnered with Basecamp, a locally owned and operated outdoor equipment store, to obtain equipment at free and reduced costs for outdoor education field trips and activities. [Appendix N]

C. Evidence of LMCS School Board Meetings

Minutes of the LMCS Board meetings are posted at:

<http://www.laramiemontessori.org/laramie-montessori-school-board.html>

D. Count of Students Enrolled

Table 1. Enrollment by grade for each year of operation.*

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total enrollment	54	62	72	61	78	83	76	84	80	69
Kindergarten	19	15	15	11	22	17	<u>16</u>	19	19	14
1st-3rd grade	31	37	41	33	40	36	31	34	31	30
4th-6th grade	4	10	16	17	16	31	29	30	30	25
Special Ed	26%	21%	40%	17%	10%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Free/reduced lunch	NA	45%	45%	38%	36%	35%	50%	31%	37.5%	49%

*Pupils, by reported ethnicity, have averaged 84% white, 3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 10% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% other or unspecified, consistent with the demographics of Albany County.

Part II: Description of Long-Range Vision and Philosophy of Education

SUBSECTION I: LONG-RANGE VISION

The goals of LMCS continue to be guided by the tenants of classical Montessori pedagogy:

- Valuing and fostering each child’s intrinsic motivation to learn;
- Promoting peer teaching/learning through multi-age classrooms using Montessori’s time-tested Peace Curriculum to identify common ground as a process for conflict resolution;
- Nurturing the whole child by supporting each individual’s unique physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth through inquiry-based learning in a carefully prepared environment, especially in areas of science, music, art, foreign language, and physical education; and
- Developing self-confident, self-motivated learners from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds who value care of self, others, and the natural world as lifelong habits of the mind.

Over the next five years, LMCS plans to grow to the full capacity of ~100-110 students that can be housed at the St. Laurence facility. LMCS will continue to develop a vibrant, growing community of pupils, families, teachers, and citizens that uses Montessori principles to create a high-quality school of choice. We expect most classrooms to be full capacity and to have a waiting list at the Kindergarten level. LMCS already has graduates at the UW Lab School and Laramie Middle School, where awareness of their unique academic training and outlook on learning, as well as success as students, has made an impression on the faculty serving those schools and larger community. LMCS already attracts and will continue to encourage student teachers from UW's early childhood and elementary education training programs who seek to broaden their background in a classroom setting not previously available in Wyoming.

Now in its ninth year, the School employs a stable staff of five Montessori-certified, PTSB certified lead teachers, three of whom now have graduate degrees in Montessori education, along with ~five paraprofessionals and several P.E./music/art and special education teachers in varying stages of Montessori training (lead teacher credentials are available in Appendix M). This corpus of experienced, trained teachers has created a stable, authentic Montessori learning environment, and has been instrumental in identifying gaps in student education and developing individualized interventions as needed, with the goal of producing students who are self-directed and persevering in the classroom, maintain natural curiosity, and meet and exceed standardized assessment benchmarks for Albany County schools.

LMCS seeks to become the locus of Montessori education Wyoming, inspiring offshoot efforts throughout the State. Already LMCS has increased interest in Montessori education generally; a private Montessori preschool recently formed in Laramie, which completed two successful years of operation before closing temporarily due to COVID19 restrictions. LMCS is just old enough to have former students who began kindergarten at the school now in their first year of high school, with some who began attending in later grades preparing to enter or studying at college.

Areas of strategic focus from 2017-2021, drawn from the 2017 LMCS Strategic Plan, have been:

- A fully trained Montessori staff at LMCS. This work has been completed for all lead teachers and exceeded by three, and other staff have some Montessori training.
- A comprehensive program to teach LMCS families how to support their children's development using authentic Montessori principles. This effort is ongoing. Several public sessions have been offered since 2017 for Montessori community members to engage with the Peace Curriculum and Montessori disciplinary and parenting techniques, to use and understand Montessori materials, and to read and discuss the Montessori educational philosophy.
- Development of authentic Montessori assessments that document the extent of a child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth. These have been instituted on a micro level in LMCS classrooms.
- Ambitious public education events to highlight the strengths of Montessori education among the general public in Albany County, in an effort to increase interest in Montessori education and to build partnerships with businesses and nonprofits. LMCS has held Montessori Day, provided annual outreach to preschools and daycares, taken part in farmer's markets, Freedom Has A Birthday, and other public events, and hosted Montessori Night, including guest artists, Halloween activities, carnivals, and fundraisers to raise

awareness of the School in the community. LMCS activities and achievements have been featured several times in the local newspaper.

- Expanded partnerships with the University of Wyoming teacher education programs.
- A reputation as a high-quality school of choice in Albany County. Elements such as mixed-age classrooms, project-based learning, and peer instruction are seeing a resurgence in emerging educational strategies nationwide.
- An identified new site for the School allowing larger elementary enrollments and potential expansion to pre-K or junior high classrooms to be contemplated in the 2021-2026 timeframe. This strategic priority has been put on hold, as LMCS has gained full use of its current facility, increasing room for growth, and as the State evaluates budget constraints and future school funding and construction priorities.

SUBSECTION II: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY EMPLOYED

A. Supporting the Long-Range Vision

In a Montessori classroom, at any age level, children choose their work freely from various integrated curriculum areas and work at their own pace. The role of the instructor is to give an initial lesson on each of the materials to an individual or a small group. Materials present in a Montessori classroom are self-correcting by nature; students are able to work with the materials and check the results of their work without adult intervention. Montessori materials are tactile and are designed to teach from the concrete to the abstract. As the student becomes familiar with the materials, they become comfortable with them and are able to move from grade to grade with confidence. Providing opportunities to use materials independent of an adult intrinsically motivates the student to solve the problems that the materials present. Teachers monitor each child's individual development and ensure that every child works in all of the many different subject areas, guiding them toward a well-rounded education.

Class days allow for long blocks of uninterrupted work time. This allows students to explore and more fully experience all aspects of their work. This time is kept free of interruptions as much as possible to ensure that each student can remain focused on his or her learning. Uninterrupted work time provides teachers with the benefit of being able to provide quality lessons to small groups or individuals. Additionally, teachers are better able to observe the flow of learning within the classroom and assess the needs of the students. The Montessori Method has a century-old history as an effective learning strategy not only for children with disabilities (the original target pupils of Maria Montessori's approach) but for all types of learners.

The Montessori Method supports the LMCS long-range vision through:

Individualized, Differentiated learning. Montessori education is built upon the foundation that all learners are individuals in their style, pace, and interests. LMCS's individualized curriculum allows children to strive to achieve optimal outcomes in a noncompetitive setting while utilizing authentic Montessori methods and curriculum. Teachers and students work together to create individualized learning plans to facilitate students taking responsibility for their own learning. Documents to guide the process of individualized learning may include: 1) annual goals that provide measurable yearly objectives, 2) quarterly individualized learning agreements that map plans for learning goals, 3) weekly work plans that list specific tasks to be accomplished each week. These agreements and plans also support personal development, allowing students to make

active choices and providing them an opportunity to reflect upon and assess their own growth as they develop subsequent plans.

Mixed-Age Groupings: Students are grouped into mixed-age classrooms that span three years, pre-K through K (children younger than K are of course not allowed in public school settings), ages six to nine in lower elementary, and ages nine to twelve in upper elementary. Beneficial outcomes occur in age-stratified settings, including the opportunity for older children to model learning and to lead younger children in the learning process. Peer tutoring also promotes cooperation and a sense of community. Older, experienced students stabilize the classroom and facilitate teachers spending time with individual students and small groups.

Prepared Environment: Self-directed learning takes place when the learning environment, materials, and social climate are carefully prepared. Montessori instruction progresses from concrete explorations and concept development to abstract understanding. Both indoor and outdoor environments provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing space for learning. Opportunities for outdoor study of the natural environment may take place on school property or in the local area. A student may also bring materials outside of the classroom space. Careful preparation and modeling of the social environment introduces students to the rules and limits that, when followed, allow freedom to direct one's own learning, which occurs in a successful Montessori classroom.

Montessori Materials: Materials for specific learning concepts are neatly arranged on shelving and create a visual presence in the learning environment. Each LMCS classroom contains a full complement of age-appropriate Montessori materials that are multi-sensorial, sequential, and self-correcting, and that are a consistent part of the curriculum. Elementary curriculum supports appreciation of world cultures, the natural environment, care for animals and plants in the classroom, along with individual and group service projects for the Laramie community.

Peace Curriculum and Conflict Resolution: An integral part of learning for all age levels includes respectful communication to and tolerance for all individuals within the community. Adults interacting with students model appropriate methods for conflict resolution, guide individuals or groups of students to learn non-violent communication methods for conflict resolution and facilitate the understanding of peace as it relates to our world today. Elementary students deepen their appreciation and knowledge of peace through Montessori's unique Peace Curriculum, learning how to develop healthy life habits that enhance overall well-being.

LMCS has implemented the Montessori Method of education since its inception in 2011. Teachers at LMCS have trained in the Montessori Method (in addition to their normal certifications) since 2012, first by Seacoast Training Center centered in Warren, Maine, but more recently by the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR) in Boulder, Colorado. Trainers have also come to LMCS and provided instruction and training in the Montessori Method. All five LMCS lead teachers are certified through MECR and the American Montessori Society. Other teaching staff have varying levels of Montessori training. Thus, LMCS staff are well-prepared to implement the above components of Montessori Education. In 2019, teaching staff from MECR came to LMCS to observe and provide feedback to lead teachers in their classrooms and working with students. MECR staff recognized the well-prepared and authentic Montessori environments within classrooms, in addition to growth and confidence of teachers in providing lessons to students. In many cases, MECR staff highlighted the lead teacher's mastery of the lessons for most of the materials, which is central to cultivating an authentic K-6 educational experience for students.

B. How LMCS facilitates student learning

The Montessori Method enables students to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop an intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning. Students are taught to actively engage for extended periods of time and to synthesize information and apply it independently. Students learn to work collaboratively to access, evaluate, and integrate information from a variety of resources to understand complex issues. Students become capable of self-correcting work upon observation, reflection, and discussion. Students manage an array of learning opportunities with a sense of purpose. Because of the prepared environment, Montessori Materials, and dedicated work time, student's self-perceived successes become more numerous than their self-perceived failures. Montessori builds autonomy as students learn—in a controlled environment—how to accept or reject inclusion of another child's work or participation with equanimity. Students learn to accept and social responsibility as they accept the “ground rules” of group work and social interaction so that, in the absence of an adult, they are able to function as if a teacher were nearby.

Montessori engenders in students the types of 21st century skills that are recognized to be keys to lifelong success: emotional and social competence, teamwork, perseverance, and self-control. A 20-year study published in 2015 in the American Journal of Public Health concludes that these kinds of socioemotional skills, established during kindergarten and elementary years, are excellent predictors (more so than any cognitive skills) of long-term success in adulthood, including being twice as likely to attain a college degree.

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630>

http://www.npr.org/2015/07/16/423605191/nice-kids-finish-first-study-finds-social-skills-can-predict-future-success?utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=science

<http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/articles-and-news/2015/07/new-research--children-with-strong-social-skills-in-kindergarten.html>

Researchers from the University of Wyoming and Texas A&M have recently demonstrated (2020) the effectiveness of establishing clear routines and morning work periods to boost productivity. The Montessori Method practices this as a matter of course:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/uw/news/2020/11/morning-routine-disruptions-hurt-worker-productivity,-uw-researcher-finds.html>

C. Use of different and innovative teaching techniques

The Montessori elementary curriculum uses a variety of specifically designed, sequential learning materials that proceed through concrete, hands-on materials to internalized, abstract meaning. Students work individually, with peers, and with the teacher in lessons, research projects, and individualized field trips organized according to students' interests. The Montessori educational approach's success is well-supported by current research, such as the longitudinal study of Montessori education in Milwaukee public schools ([Dohrmann 2003](#); [Lillard & Else-Quest 2006](#)).

Curriculum content in a Montessori Elementary Classroom is integrated using “The Five Great Lessons” as a framework (see the LMCS curriculum alignment document at

http://www.laramiemontessori.org/uploads/3/4/2/5/34254377/wyoming_and_montessori_alignm ent.pdf). The Five Great Lessons span the history of the universe, from the origin of the solar system, earth, and life forms to the emergence of human cultures and the rise of civilization. A child's study of smaller concepts linked to the overarching concepts of each of The Five Great Lessons leads to awe and respect for the totality of knowledge. Put in chronology and context through reference to these inspiring sagas, as well as the use of timelines and impressionistic charts, images used in the telling of The Five Great Lessons give an impression of phenomena that cannot be seen with the eyes but can only be grasped by the power of imagination. This integrated approach to curriculum has been demonstrated to strengthen the understanding of new information through scaffolding. "Prior knowledge has clear effects on learning, which might result in part from interest. For example, activating prior knowledge structures can assist in storage and retrieval of new knowledge." (Anderson, 1983)

After receiving lessons carefully prepared by the teacher, students will learn to plan and schedule their own work. Students will decide, with adult support, how to plan their day of work in the classroom, and will learn how to carry out the work through the guidance of the Montessori teacher. A study by [Roberts, Fulton and Semb \(1988\)](#) as cited in [Science Behind the Genius](#) (Lillard, 2005) investigated the difference between self-imposed and instructor-imposed deadlines and found that students setting their own deadlines complied with these deadlines better and completed work faster than students on an instructor imposed deadline.

Studies are integrated, not only in terms of subject matter, but in terms of moral learning as well. The Peace Curriculum is an important component of a Montessori classroom. Through interaction with classmates, and the guidance of the teacher, the Montessori elementary student develops appreciation and respect for life, social responsibility, respect for oneself and others, empathy, appreciation of the contribution of the individual, and a strong sense of justice. Lillard and Else-Quest (2006) found that:

Montessori children were significantly more likely (43% versus 18% of responses) to use a higher level of reasoning by referring to justice or fairness to convince the other child to relinquish the object. Observations at the playground during recess indicated Montessori children were significantly more likely to be involved in positive shared peer play and significantly less likely to be involved in rough play that was ambiguous in intent.

Language Arts. The Montessori Language Arts curriculum is designed to enhance the students' skills in reading, comprehension, writing and speaking; and to provide connections with history, literature, science, math, and geography. Lillard (2005) demonstrates how the integrated curriculum supports the development of literacy skills:

[I]n learning the part of speech "adjective," the child conducts many science experiments, labeling membranes as permeable and impermeable (for example). Grammar and science are deliberately connected, and the child can see the use of a normally abstract set of concepts (grammar) in the hands-on context of understanding the world through science.

The six-to-nine-year-old classroom is a language-rich environment in which literacy is developed through phonemic awareness, cultural studies, reading groups, and the research process. Reading instruction takes place in small groups or on an independent basis.

- **Reading:** Students are first assessed for letter knowledge and phonics to verify readiness for advanced work or for assistance with basic reading skills. Students increase comprehension skills through various reading activities: reading silently and aloud to peers and teachers, reading cards, reading booklets related to academic studies, and home reading.
- **Writing:** Creative writing allows the student to express thoughts before spelling and grammar are mastered. As the student's skills progress, sentence structure becomes more complex, spelling improves, and story-writing skills develop. Students write book reports, poetry, and journals, and then learn to analyze sentences, build complex sentences, and refine research skills.
- As the students explore cultural areas such as the social sciences, history, art, music, and so on, they discover a need for research skills. The teacher serves as a guide to a variety of resources, including encyclopedias, atlases, almanacs, dictionaries, thesauruses, and the internet. The public library is also available for students doing projects requiring additional sources of information.
- **Grammar:** Students study the parts of speech and their functions using classic Montessori materials such as Grammar Boxes, in which hands-on materials, definitions, and symbols are correlated with each part of speech, and The Farm, in which cards with simple words are used to describe figures within a farm diorama leading to the understanding of articles, adjectives and nouns. Grammar studies are integrated across subject matter to reinforce work the student has already mastered in other subject areas. For example, to play the Detective Adjective game, the student must be able to identify the scalene, isosceles, and equilateral triangles as well as obtuse, acute, and right angles. The student must correctly identify each triangle requested by the teacher to solve the answer to this grammar game.
- **Spelling:** Students study word families, create spelling lists, study word origins and meanings, and test their spelling skills. Precise vocabulary across all subject areas is valued and sight words are practiced.
- **Handwriting:** Print and cursive skills are reinforced through practice, journaling, and classwork.

Foreign language. In *Description of Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition*, Schütz (2007) provides an overview of the theories of Stephan Krashen, which serve as the foundation for LMCS's foreign language curriculum. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses (Schütz 2007): (1) Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, (2) Monitor hypothesis, (3) Natural Order hypothesis, (4) Input hypothesis, (5) Affective Filter hypothesis.

- **Acquisition-Learning** holds that there are two independent systems of second language performance: the acquired system and the learned system. **Acquisition** is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances,

but in the communicative act. **Learning** is the product of formal instruction and comprises a conscious process that results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, but which is less important than acquisition.

- The **Monitor** hypothesis investigates the influence of learning on acquisition, and is a practical result of learned grammar. Krashen holds that the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the monitor or editor under certain conditions, but its role is subordinate, serving only to correct deviations from normal speech.
- The **Natural Order** hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980 cited in Krashen, 1987) which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows an order that is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, while others late, and independent of the learners' age, L1 background, conditions of exposure. However, Krashen rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.
- The **Input** hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how second language acquisition takes place and, thus, is only concerned with acquisition. This hypothesis holds that the learner improves and progresses along the natural order when he/she receives second language input that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. Since not all learners are at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.
- Finally, the **Affective Filter** hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of affective variables play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition, including motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can raise an affective filter that impedes language acquisition.

LMCS aims to provide immersive language instruction in Spanish to LMCS students five days a week based on Krashen's hypotheses. This remains a goal, as securing a qualified, part-time language instructor has been problematic to date.

Mathematics. Mathematics in the Lower Elementary (ages six to nine) is presented in a scope and sequence prepared to match the developing abilities of the six-to-nine-year old. Initially, the elementary student builds upon the vocabulary of math and the understanding of numeration, counting, size, and shape introduced in the primary classroom. Familiarity with the four basic operations -- addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division -- is also methodically expanded through the use of a progression of hands-on math materials. Manipulation of concrete and symbolic materials with built-in error control develops sound arithmetic skills and leads the student to make his or her own abstractions, leading to the ability to perform arithmetic abstractions independent of the materials.

Dr. Montessori's work and observations provided her with evidence that the ability to self-correct created greater motivation in the student to continue to work toward mastery of the skill. A study by [Schunk \(1996\)](#), in which fourth graders were randomly assigned to work toward mastery goals or performance goals for a unit on fractions, also supports Montessori's work. The students in the

mastery group were found to have higher motivation, task orientation, and achievement outcomes when compared to students in the group that emphasized performance goals.

The student continues to work with specific materials until such a time as they have internalized a concept. Then, students work with memorization and speed of recall of facts and processes. Experience with materials designed for the exploration of such concepts as long division, fractions, and area and volume allow the child to work with these ideas at a younger age than is typical.

The following description is included for the purpose of further illustrating the development of concrete to abstract understanding of the four mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division):

- *Numeration*: Montessori materials pertaining to numeration, linear counting, and skip counting include the teens boards, tens boards, hundreds board, and bead chains. Teacher-made materials and exercises help the child with greater than/less than, estimating, and rounding.
- *Operations*: Children develop understanding of the four basic mathematical operations — addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication—through work with the golden bead material and other Montessori materials. With each material, the child builds numbers and performs mathematical operations concretely. (This process normally begins by age four and extends over the next two to three years.) Work with the math materials over a long period tends to develop a much deeper understanding of mathematics in the child. Children use the following materials in their work with operations: golden beads, colored beads, stamp game, bead frame, golden bead frame, multiplication board, checkerboard, bank game, decanomial, division board, and test tube division.
- *Memorization of Facts*: After extensive work with concrete materials, memorization of the basic math facts is required. This includes adding and subtracting numbers under 10 and basic multiplication and division facts without the aid of the materials. This typically begins at age five and is normally completed by age nine.
- *Application*: Practical application problems, which are used to some extent from the beginning, become far more important around age seven or eight and afterward. Solving word problems, including determining arithmetic procedures in real situations, becomes a major focus.

At every juncture, math is related to the cultural areas being explored, illustrating the practical use of mathematical concepts and their relevance to the child's world. An interesting example of how mathematics and social studies are integrated stems from the story "How Geometry Got Its Name." This story, which is typically introduced after the introduction of the Fifth Great Lesson—The Story of Numbers—describes how the Nile River often flooded each year. Rope Stretchers, people whose job it was to create property lines, would have to work to recreate the lost property lines. Children are told within the story that the word "geometry" came from Gaia, or earth, and metric, or measure, because these people were measuring the earth (Lillard2005).

Elementary Montessori materials allow students to develop an in-depth understanding of math concepts, followed by memorization of math facts. Students receive individual and small group lessons and work at their own pace. Math curriculum is organized so that students can independently follow the math sequence under the teacher's guidance. Comprehensive geometry studies begin with experiences with the line and continue through studies of angles, polygons,

triangles, quadrilaterals, circles, area, and volume. The concepts of similarity, congruency, and equivalency are also studied.

Social Sciences. Dr. Maria Montessori felt that cultural studies and science should be integrated in the classroom as they are in life, with the ultimate goal being an ecological view of life and a feeling of connection to and responsibility for the environment. The student learns that each individual life on earth holds its own place and serves the good of the whole.

The study of history begins with the development of the solar system and life on Earth. Creation stories from various cultures are presented, linking literacy with the social science curriculum. A timeline of evolution is used as a beginning point for the botanical and zoological studies. The use of the timeline gives the child a scientific representation of the length of time life was developing on Earth prior to the arrival of the human species. Following the study of the evolution of non-human life on earth, the child begins to study the evolution of humans and the development of early civilizations (e.g., Egyptian, Roman, Native American) and vertical studies of how a specific need has been met through time (e.g., housing, writing, transportation, mathematics).

The first science experiments are designed to give the child basic observational skills and empirical knowledge, making possible the understanding of the development of the solar system, the earth and its configurations, life on earth and the needs of plants and animals. The goal of these studies is to allow child to observe the struggle of life to develop itself and to demonstrate that this struggle has benefited the child and that they have a place in the further development of life. Maria Montessori calls this the child's cosmic task.

Biological Science. In the elementary classroom, students are given the opportunity to learn about the behavior and physiology of animals and plants. Animal and plant kingdoms are presented and extensive studies performed in each area. Children are incredibly curious to name, classify, define, and compare the objects they study. One unique aspect of the Montessori educational model is its ability to blend subject matter. Real experiences are provided in this area as much as possible. Montessori biology is structured to give the children a means of classification so that they can synthesize and relate the facts of biology. The study of biology reveals to the children that classification seems to follow evolution.

Botany. Botany studies begin with an investigation of the life cycle of plants and presentations that explore the importance of plants to human and animal life. Students are encouraged to consider the many ways that plants provide for our fundamental needs. Students do this with a variety of independent research projects. Botany studies continue with presentations of nomenclature and morphological charts which detail the basic needs of plants, their parts, and the functions of these parts, including roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. They learn about plant reproduction, pollination, phyllotaxis, photosynthesis, monocotyledons and dicotyledons, succulent and dehiscent fruits, seeds and the means by which they travel, and alternate means of regenerating. They learn about the system of scientific classification with materials such as the Five Kingdoms Chart, one of the specialized Montessori charts utilized for lessons with elementary students.

All botany studies are supported by experiments that illustrate how the plant meets its needs, how plant systems function, and the importance of plants to the ecosystem. Students are actively involved in growing, caring for and observing plants in the classroom. Botany work also parallels studies in geography, history, and zoology that explore the role of plants on Earth. It is the goal of

this work to enable the students understand, from these studies, the interdependence of all life forms and the custodial role humans must assume to protect and preserve life on Earth.

Zoology. Elementary-aged students have a natural curiosity about the Earth’s creatures. Zoology studies allow children to understand the system of organizing the Animal Kingdom, research the five classes of vertebrates, and study each in depth. Students begin their studies by observing real creatures, then use cards, booklets, control charts, and literature surveys to advance.

The elementary zoology curriculum begins with investigations into the differences between vertebrates and invertebrates and progresses to an introduction to the five classes of vertebrates and their skeletal structures. The external parts of vertebrates are presented with nomenclature. The Animal Kingdom Charts and “first knowledge” questions support intensive research. With this foundation, children explore how and where animals live, what they eat, their life cycles, and their physical characteristics. The system of scientific classification is formally introduced, and students learn that both vertebrates and invertebrates can be classified using this system. The nomenclature for the six major phyla of invertebrates is then presented, and students do independent research on these animals. The study of invertebrates parallels their introduction to the Time Line of Life in history, since our earliest fossil record of life on Earth is that of invertebrate forms. The Animal Kingdom Charts and “first knowledge” questions also supplement invertebrate work. Students then return to the vertebrates by investigating the internal parts of the five classes. Their research projects expose them to scientific classification as well as information on the circulation, respiration, skin type, skeletal structure, reproduction, and method of movement, nutritional needs and habitat of the animal they are researching. This study of the five classes of vertebrates also parallels The Time Line of Life studies, as these classes are presented in the order in which fossil evidence shows that they appeared on Earth.

Geography. The study of geography is designed to show how the physical configurations of the Earth contribute to the history of life on Earth. The study of geography and physical geography is the basis for the study of economic geography, which shows the interdependence of all people. Geography studies are integrated with history and science. Students learn about many different cultures as they learn about other countries. For example, students at the Primary Level (Kindergarten and lower elementary) would be introduced to geographic formations, such as capes and bays. At the upper elementary level, students would use maps to locate actual capes and bays, investigate people living in these various locations, and compare how these people live in relation to people that live near other sorts of geographic formations, such as valleys or mountains. Students also study the evolution of geography since the formation of the Earth. The curriculum includes drawing maps and identifying countries, oceans, and the flora and fauna native to each continent.

Art. The goals of the elementary art program are to foster visual awareness, aesthetic appreciation, creative expression, and imaginative thinking. Students learn technical skills while they create unique and personal works of art. They learn the language of visual design (e.g., line, shape, color) to help them develop fluency of expression. Art is also an integral part of the academic program, with projects designed to enhance classroom studies. The art program also includes exposure to and discussion of reproductions of works of art. These activities help students connect their own art making to the wider social and historical context. Finally, art classes implicitly and explicitly promote awareness of the natural world as a source of imagery and inspiration, establishing a bridge to issues of environmental protection.

Art lessons are taught using various techniques and media. Art concepts, creative expression, various media, artists, and schools of art are explored. Formal art instruction gives elementary children a variety of techniques and media for multicultural projects. Art is also integrated into the curriculum in such activities as geometric drawings, map skills, botany and zoology nomenclature, and historical illustrations for period clothing and architecture.

Music/Drama. The goal of the music curriculum is to give children an opportunity to participate in the joy and expression of making music as a community. They learn to identify basic tones and to read music. Through singing experiences students develop knowledge of pitch, timing, and melody. Exposure to a variety of music and instruments allows students the opportunity to listen, sing, and learn to read and play music. Students also have the option to play an instrument starting in fourth grade. Elementary students thrive on drama, and the Montessori educational environment offers them the opportunity to express themselves freely “onstage”. Sometimes plays are produced from professional scripts. More frequently, the skits are written by the children. In any case, the children gain valuable experience in props creation, costuming, stage direction, and performing. The children’s drama experiences usually develop as expressions of something they learned in class that excited them so much they wanted to share it with others.

Health. Dr. Montessori believed that a healthy body, spirit, and mind were the keys to creating peaceful, productive citizens. With these, a human being has a better chance of making a positive contribution to the world than one who does not have the ability or will to take care of his/her physical, mental, and emotional development. The Montessori teacher can play a key role by helping children discover that good health is a pleasure they can enjoy from childhood into old age.

(D) How the School Has Created New Professional Opportunities for Teachers

The Montessori teacher functions as a designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, recordkeeper, and meticulous observer of each child’s behavior and growth. The teacher is trained to act as a facilitator of learning who integrates the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as part of a whole intellectual tradition. Teachers at LMCS participate in peer coaching to observe and reflect on their teaching. With a growing local and region cohort of Montessori educators, teachers receive professional development from peer coaches and national Montessori trainers during regular professional development. Montessori preparation for LMCS teachers is conducted during school-year workshops and summertime intensive seminars through the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR), one of several American Montessori Society accrediting agencies.

Since the inception of LMCS, all teachers and classroom paraprofessionals have received Montessori training, originally from an accrediting body associated with our first director. Since that time, the School has had several staffing changes, and all five lead teachers are now certified by MECR in Boulder, Colorado. Our kindergarten and lower elementary teachers have all three gone on to obtain graduate degrees in Montessori education, attesting to their commitment to and expertise in the educational model (see lead teacher educational credentials in Appendix M). In order to foster an authentic Montessori environment, LMCS is committed to ensuring its staff receive continued opportunities in Montessori education.

(E) How the School Has Provided Parents and Students with Expanded Choices

LMCS has provided Albany County families with a third educational model of choice for K-6 pupils. The Montessori educational philosophy provides families with a prepared, focused, and peaceful environment that matches the learning styles of children and the values of families who have chosen LMCS. Parents value the multi-age classrooms, priority on fostering internal motivation and student-directed learning, individualized learning, the Peace Curriculum, and Montessori emphasis on an integrated curriculum that explicitly includes sciences, arts, music, multicultural topics, and physical education. LMCS is the only public Montessori charter school in Wyoming.

SUBSECTION III: HOW THE RATIONALE HAS BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

LMCS has incorporated core Montessori values into its vision and operational philosophy. By providing a school where child-centered classrooms are the norm, where pupils have freedom and choices (within boundaries), and where internal rather than external rewards are emphasized, LMCS has provided an alternative model for K-6 education for families in Albany County.

The mission statement of LMCS explicitly says that “LMCS promotes the development of the whole child through an authentic Montessori environment that honors the child’s intrinsic motivation to learn and supports each individual’s unique intellectual, physical social and emotional development.”

Parents are given a survey regularly to address their satisfaction with the Montessori school. This assists the school in assessing how they are doing and what improvements can be made.

The 2020-21 Parent Survey (Figure III.1) was collected during the December 2020/January 2021 time period. The average score is tabulated on a 5-point Likert scale (1-5, with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree).

LMCS strives to encourage engagement from parents and families in reviewing and developing policies and procedures at school. In August 2019, LMCS hosted a facilitated meeting and discussion entitled “Building a Bridge from Home to School: Peace Curriculum and Cultivating School Order.” The meeting was professionally facilitated by the consulting firm, Align, and included the School Director, many lead and support teachers, and parents. The focus was on creating a common understanding of Montessori philosophy on discipline and generating a list of potential strategies for bridging the gap between school and home. The LMCS Board plans to continue holding stakeholder meetings as needed in the future.

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Figure 1. 2020-2021 Parent Survey Results

Questions	<u>2020-21 Scores</u> Average out of 5.0 37 total responses	
I feel welcome at LMCS.	4.7	
I feel LMCS is meeting my child's safety needs during these pandemic times.	4.3	
My child's teacher listens & responds to my concerns.	4.8	
I am happy with the Specials courses at LMCS.	4.4	
I am satisfied with the LMCS Special Education program	4.6	
I am satisfied with the LMCS Title 1 Program.	4.3	
The administrative staff is helpful and helps me when I am in need of assistance.	4.7	
The school director/principal listens and responds to my concerns.	4.3	
LMCS meets the social needs of their students.	4.5	
My overall experience at LMCS is a positive one.	4.7	

Part III: Description of the Educational Program Offered

SUBSECTION I: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OFFERED

LMCS has incorporated core Montessori values into its vision and operational philosophy. By providing a school where child-centered classrooms are the norm, pupils have freedom and choices (within boundaries), and internal rather than external rewards are emphasized, LMCS has provided an alternative and time-tested model for K-6 education for families in Albany County.

The LMCS Director shall, in consultation with the LMCS Board, set the school calendar and school hours. LMCS will normally follow the ACSD#1 school year calendar. The LMCS school day will run 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or an equivalent number of contact hours.

LMCS offers a child-centered education with instruction in reading, math, writing, zoology, biology, social studies/history, physical science, and chemistry. Teachers deliver instruction using the Montessori Method (including directed small group instruction and whole group instruction). Once students receive instruction in various areas, they are given opportunities to work with the materials presented to them. This work is done until the teacher has the opportunity to observe the student and assess each student in the lessons given and determine their level of mastery. The student works from concrete concepts to more abstract concepts in each subject area.

Students at Laramie Montessori work to be intrinsically motivated to complete tasks. They are given the opportunity to learn to pursue and complete work on their own schedule. Teachers in this framework function more as facilitators of learning than instructors. They teach, observe, and assess students' work and mastery of the Montessori curriculum, Wyoming State Standards, and common core standards.

During the first few years of the school, Montessori training was undertaken by the Seacoast Center based out of Warren, Maine, as it was affiliated with the original director as well as the American Montessori Society. Subsequently, and after staffing changes, all lead teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and others have received training and certification through the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR) in Boulder, CO. MECR's programming is accelerated, focused, and challenging. LMCS now enjoys a full staff of Montessori-trained educators who have considerable expertise in and experience with the Montessori educational model.

LMCS has established an authentic Montessori environment and is focused on effective implementation of the Montessori Method as described in this section. Materials designed by Dr. Montessori for specific learning concepts are neatly arranged on shelves to create a visual presence in the learning environment. These materials are multi-sensory, sequential, and self-correcting, which facilitates learning of skills and concepts. Each classroom is stocked with a full complement of age-appropriate Montessori materials that are a consistent part of LMCS's authentic Montessori curriculum, which has been aligned with current Wyoming State standards and Common Core standards.

Alignment of LMCS curriculum with State and Common Core standards is found at: http://www.laramiemontessori.org/uploads/3/4/2/5/34254377/wyoming_and_montessori_alignm ent.pdf.

A. Target population, including grades served

LMCS will continue to provide free public education for K-6 student in Albany County. For the next five years LMCS plans enrollments of 15-25 children in the expanded Kindergarten classroom, 18-22 pupils in each of two lower-elementary classrooms, and up to 30 pupils in the combined upper elementary classrooms, amounting to a projected maximum enrollment of ~100 pupils. Details of the target population are further described above under Part I, Subsection I.

B. Description of how learning has occurred, including assessment/alignment with standards

LMCS teaching staff conduct regular, informal assessments of student learning to assess student needs and gaps in learning, and to articulate Montessori goals with other standards.

Students at LMCS are taught using Montessori materials and curriculum as documented in the LMCS curriculum alignment with the State standards. LMCS personnel have recently created several correlation documents for internal use that align Montessori curriculum with the with Common Core State Standards (CCSS. Through vertical and horizontal Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), the teaching staff continue to discuss student data and create needed materials and implement them in a Montessori manner.

C. Supplemental Materials

Occasionally, supplemental programming has been added to the core Montessori curriculum for students in reading and math in order to ensure that the curriculum aligns with CCSS and Wyoming State standards and to allow for better articulation of Montessori nomenclature with CCSS nomenclature. These programs have also assisted in providing more intensive instruction to students that are unfamiliar and struggling with the Montessori curriculum. As our lead teachers have become highly trained in Montessori methodology, these supplemental programs have shifted in importance, type, and frequency of use.

Both Upper Elementary (grades 4-6) and Lower Elementary (grades 1-3) classes at LMCS use the following supplemental resources:

- **EasyCBM**, used in ELA and Math to take the CCSS benchmark assessments and progress monitor students throughout the year.
- **Scholastic Storyworks**, a literacy resource that features multi-genre stories; fun skill-building activities; videos, audio, and differentiation tools to help teach all story elements. This resource offers a digital-subscription supplement for LMCS virtual students.
- **Step up to writing**, a program of effective, multisensory writing strategies that improve skills in writing, reading, listening, and speaking.
- **Mystery Science**, a hands-on, experimental approach to science and engineering that is NGSS aligned with CCSS to help students transition to next generation science standards.

Supplemental resources used only in Upper Elementary include:

- **MobyMax**, used as a tool to help fill educational gaps for students and to get real-time data on where they currently stand academically in all content areas.

- **Scholastic DynaMath**, used to support State and national math standards, comprising short, nonfiction texts and language arts skills sheets that help incorporate literacy skills into lessons and targeted differentiation tools to make math accessible to all learners.
- **McGraw-Hill SRA Reading Laboratory**, a program for practice and review to help students reinforce specific skills in which they show weakness, such as comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, word analysis, and study skills.

Supplemental resources used only in Lower Elementary supplemental resources include:

- **SRA's Specific Skill Series**, which instills key comprehension skills through extensive practice in one skill area at a time. Combined with the assessment tools, the program can reinforce those areas where a student requires additional practice.
- **Scholastic Non-Fiction Readers**: We use this resource to guide instruction for non-fiction reading. These expose our children to current events and non-fiction reading elements.

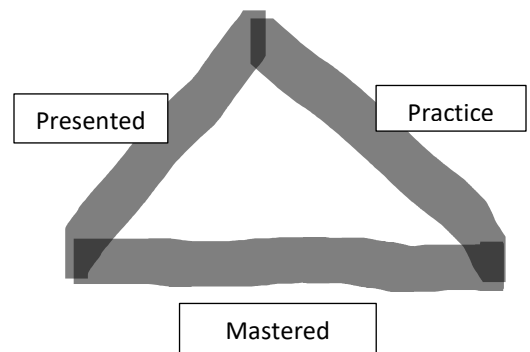
Supplemental resources for Kindergarten include three listed above, including **Step up to writing**, **Scholastic Non-Fiction Readers**, and **EasyCBM**.

D. Assessment

Our Montessori philosophy holds in high regard formative, ongoing assessments. From a whole child perspective, non-cognitive skills, executive function, and other student success measures are just as important as one high stakes, annual test. Nevertheless, LMCS staff is committed to helping students succeed on annual assessments.

Assessments are made daily as the teacher and the teacher assistants oversee the work of each child. Records of individual progress through the curriculum are updated through daily monitor sheets. These monitor sheets are used because they align with the Montessori curriculum and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and provide a progress report directly tied to the CCSS.

Montessori Assessments. In the classroom, teachers use the Montessori observation triangle for assessment, which has three parts: presented, practice, and mastered. A child will receive a lesson (practice), and if they practice this lesson, they receive another side of the triangle. Lastly, if students master a lesson, which requires complete understanding and mastery, they can teach other students as well.



- Easy CBM K-6: Occurs Fall, Winter, Spring: K-6 Tests grade level CCSS.
- K-3 Additional Assessments: Math Facts, Alphabet Charts, Writing Letters and Numbers
- K-1: Hundred Charts
- Grades 1-3: SSS-Specific Skill Series- Reading Comprehension Assessments
- Grades 1-3: POD-Math Problem of the Day: Incorporating standards for mathematical practices
- Grades 1-6: SRA (Series Reading Assessments)- Reading Comprehension Assessments
- Grades 1-6: Moby Max- Common Core Math + Reading Assessments

- Grades 2-6: Story works: Reading Comprehension Quizzes
- Grades K-6 Writing Rubrics: 6 traits of Writing- Beginning/Middle/End, Five Paragraph Essay. Topic Sentence/ Supporting Paragraphs, Conclusions
- Art and Music Standards: Rubrics based on State/National Standards and Benchmarks for skills, performance, projects, cultural/historical/cross curricular connections, analysis, critique, self-reflection.
- PE Standards: State/National Standards and Fitness gram (formerly, the Presidential Fitness Test)
- Keyboarding Standards: Typing.com, assigned according to ability

Standardized Testing. Originally, LMCS students took part in PAWS and MAPS testing, from the charter inception through AY 2017-2018. With the implementation of the WY-TOPP testing module, all LMCS students in grades 3-6 subsequently participated in the WY-TOPP tests (Table D-1). Available achievement data from PAWS for students in grades 3-6 and growth data from MAPS for students in grades 1 - 4 for the academic years 2015-2016 through 2017-2018 are available in Figures 2 -4.

Our scores on the spring 2018 summative WY-TOPP increased significantly. In fact, LMCS had the third highest WAEA performance rating (2.4) of all the ACSD #1 schools. In spring 2019, scores were not as high, especially in math, and so staff focused on identifying and remedying learning gaps and improving test-taking skills. LMCS used formative data in AY2019-2020 to influence direct instruction, producing a significant Montessori works' alignment document, by grade level, for math and ELA, which continues to serve as a guide. These spreadsheets link Montessori lessons to clusters of priority standards aligned to the CCSS.

During AY2019-2020, LMCS students took WY-TOPP interim (Table 2) and modular tests, and scores showed considerable growth and increasing proficiency, but the testing program was canceled just before the summative spring test because of COVID19. Interim data from 2020-2021 provide additional support for the efficacy of targeted approaches to facilitate and manifest learning gains and proficiency, which are consistently with daily and weekly Montessori assessments made by teachers.

LMCS remains committed to a student assessment approach that contains diverse metrics, including standardized tests. It is important to note that LMCS maintains its focus on the whole and individual child. As a growing school, aggregated testing data for grade level cohorts in many years reflect a relatively small number of students (5-8), some of whom transfer to LMCS and must become integrated into the Montessori educational approach after the kindergarten year. With LMCS maturing and growing as a school, grade cohorts of larger numbers of students are progressing from kindergarten through upper elementary (5th and 6th grade), which allows for more meaningful interpretation and application of assessment data at both the individual student and grade level to guide growth and achievement of educational milestones and benchmarks.

Figure 2. PAWS Achievement Summary Data, Grades 3-6, AY2015-2016 through AY 2017-2018



Figure 3. MAPs Growth Summary Data, Grades 3-6, AY2015-2016 through AY 2017-2018

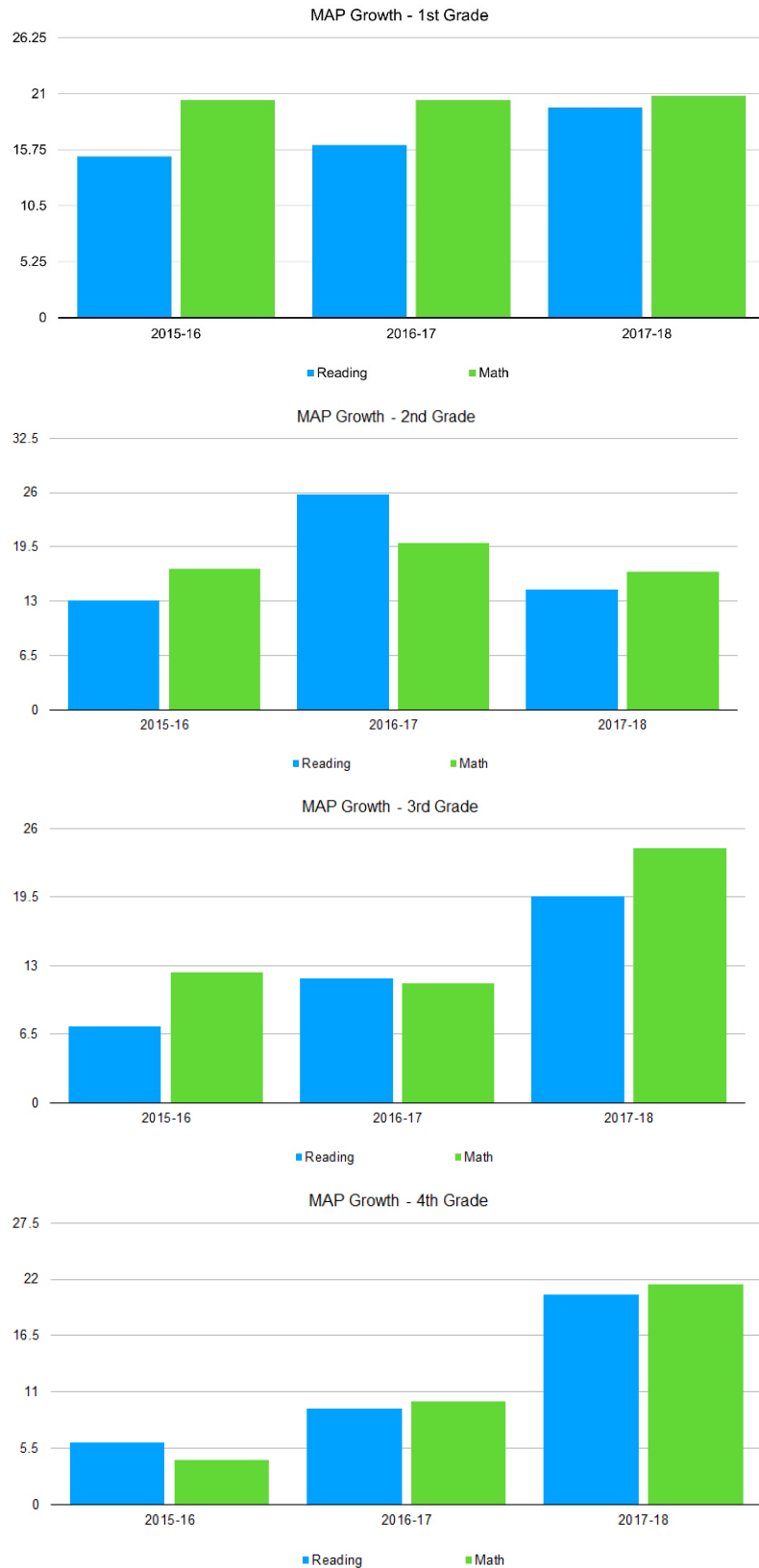


Figure 4. WYTOPP Achievement Summary Data, Grades 3-6, AY2017-18 and AY 2018-2019

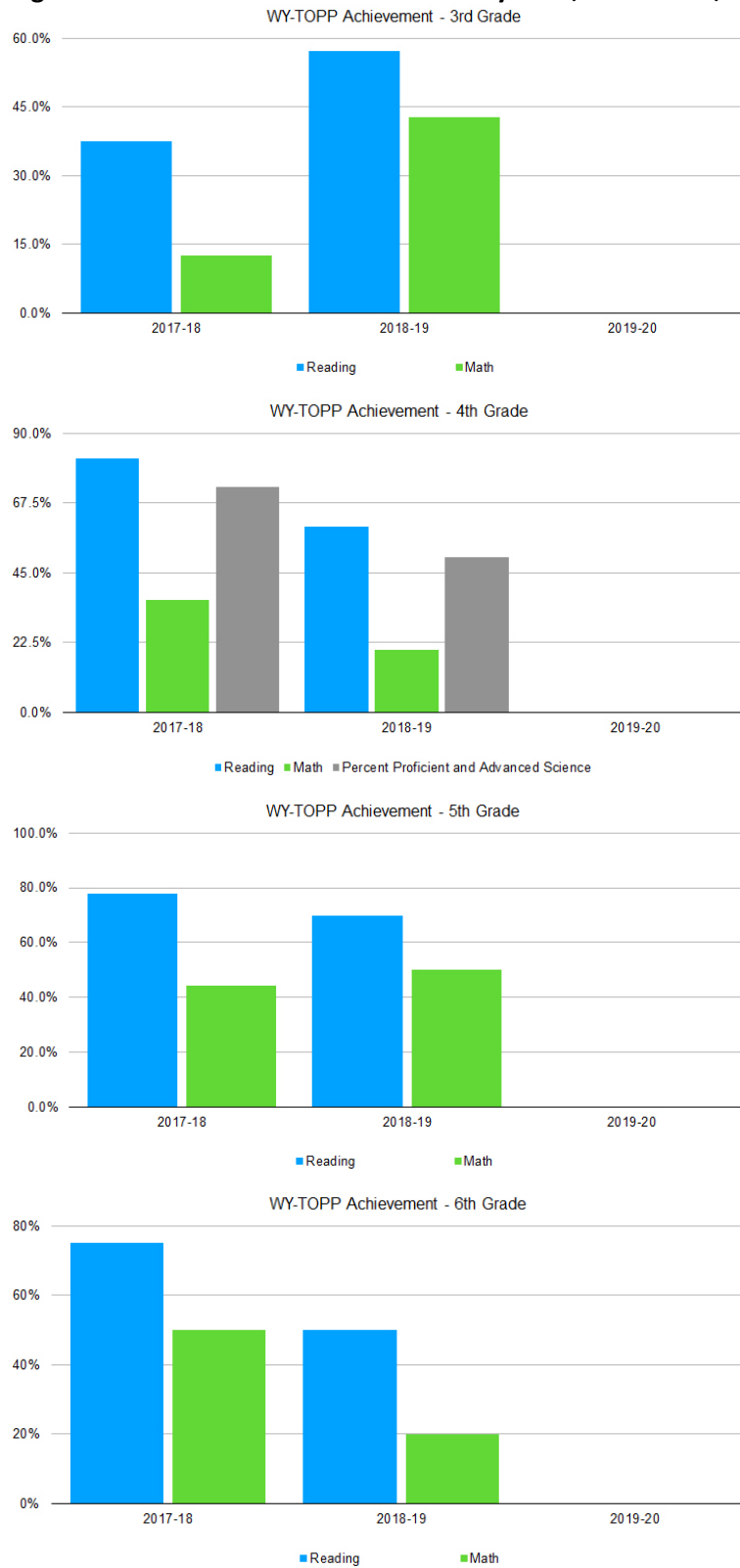


Table 2. WYTOPP Interim Test Data, Grades 1-6, 2019-2021

WY-TOPP Interims: Grade 1 Cohort	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 1st Grade Reading			
Fall 2020 1st Grade Reading	126	130	134
Winter 2021 1st Grade Math			
Fall 2020 1st Grade Math	135	131	138
WY-TOPP Interims: Grade 2 Cohort	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 2nd Grade Reading			
Fall 2020 2nd Grade Reading	137	134	140
Winter 2021 2nd Grade Math			
Fall 2020 2nd Grade Math	137	135	139
WY-TOPP Interims: Grade 3 Cohort	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 3rd Grade Reading	582	572	
Fall 2020 3rd Grade Reading	548	549	556
Winter 2021 3rd Grade Math	412	409	
Fall 2020 3rd Grade Math	411	403	387
WY-TOPP Interims: Grade 4 Cohort	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 4th Grade Reading	626	605	604
Fall 2020 4th Grade Reading	597	584	584
Winter 2020 3rd Grade Reading	613		
Fall 2019 3rd Grade Reading	584		
Winter 2021 4th Grade Math	441	443	444
Fall 2020 4th Grade Math	436	423	436
Winter 2020 3rd Grade Math	427		
Fall 2019 3rd Grade Math	387		
WY-TOPP Interims: Grade 4 Cohort	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 5th Grade Reading			
Fall 2020 5th Grade Reading	625	602	623
Winter 2020 4th Grade Reading	645		
Fall 2019 4th Grade Reading	616		
Winter 2019 3rd Grade Reading	604		
Fall 2018 3rd Grade Reading	616		
Winter 2021 5th Grade Math	467	470	460
Fall 2020 5th Grade Math	447	445	456
Winter 2020 4th Grade Math	454		
Fall 2019 4th Grade Math	432		
Winter 2019 3rd Grade Math	411		
Fall 2018 3rd Grade Math	396		
WY-TOPP : Grade 6	LMCS Average	State Average	District Average
Winter 2021 6th Grade Reading	686	642	686
Fall 2020 6th Grade Reading	661	633	671
Winter 2020 5th Grade Reading	647	626	
Fall 2019 5th Grade Reading	633	610	
Winter 2019 4th Grade Reading	612	608	
Fall 2018 4th Grade Reading	584	587	
Winter 2021 6th Grade Math	493	497	501
Fall 2020 6th Grade Math	470	473	508
Winter 2020 5th Grade Math	466	478	
Fall 2019 5th Grade Math	438	448	
Winter 2019 4th Grade Math	444	449	
Fall 2018 4th Grade Math	389	426	

E. Goals and improvement plans

The School Improvement Plan (Appendix H) is an important guiding document for all LMCS classrooms. The fact that the ESSA-aligned, WY-TOPP test factors in equity and growth is positive, but it is still a narrow measure of student achievement.

The overarching goal for each child is the development of his or her ability to solve problems using an organized approach, to use freedom wisely, to respect him/herself, to respect others, and to take joy in learning.

- To encourage self-directed learning, self-esteem, academic achievement, artistic expression, group collaboration, and respect by upholding Montessori principles in a thoughtfully prepared and non-competitive environment.
- To conduct assessments that authentically demonstrate each student's intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development.
- To develop healthy life habits that foster care of the self and care of the environment through meals, physical movement, and a quality school facility and surrounding natural environment (with the understanding that direct experience with the natural world helps foster a lifelong connection to our environment).
- To build a community centered on the partnership of teachers, children, and their families through parent education, parent involvement, school events, and service to the larger Laramie community.
- To build peace, foster personal growth, and develop lifelong ability to live peaceably with others through a curriculum where students experience and learn to respect ethnic, cultural, economic, and other differences, and learn to seek and identify common ground.

In its first year, LMCS was able to meet the benchmark goal of 65% proficient for most grades except 3rd, and for both math and language, as set forth in the original charter during the 2011-2012 school year. For the duration of the first five-year charter, MAP scores and PAWS scores reflected inconsistent data and trends, likely due to relatively high student turnover associated with the novelty of a new school, the high special education population, and the high free and reduced population. With such a small school, some grades may not have a large enough testing sample to measure progress and growth.

The 8-year mean of available data from the inception of LMCS in 2011 through 2019, or 8 school years, is 68%. LMCS has moved out of the phase of initial implementation and acquisition of a facility and district services (e.g., busing and lunches) and into a more stable phase as an established school. Turnover among staff has been low over the last five years, lead teachers are highly-qualified and Montessori-trained, and certified specials teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and support staff are also Montessori trained. Many students have matriculated through all grades of the school. The movement of sixth graders to the middle school district-wide has had an effect on student retention in that grade, especially for students highly involved in sports programs.

During this second charter period, LMCS students showed meaningful growth in standardized tests, with many grade levels achieving proficiency. Again, small testing sample sizes makes establishing trends difficult. Academic performance for the last standardized test in spring 2019 can be summed up as follows:

- 4th grade science scores are higher than both the district and the State;

- 4th, 5th, and 6th grade ELA scores are higher than both the district and the State;
- 3rd grade ELA scores are lower than both the district and the state; and
- 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade math scores are all lower than both the district and the State.

Additional assessment data are contained in the observation notes of teachers, updated daily, weekly, monthly and at the end of each semester, and align with the lessons and assessments with the Common Core Standards. LMCS is working to meet all student performance and growth goals as described in the 2020- 2021 school improvement plan (SIP) developed in consultation with ACSD#1 (Appendix H).

As part of its desire to offer an authentic Montessori environment, LMCS is considering an expansion of its program to include pre-kindergarten students. Traditional Montessori schools typically include pre-kindergarten students to encourage multi-age classrooms and introduce Montessori materials to four and five year old children. This approach has many educational benefits and is also expected to allow children to grow and learn with Montessori materials and pedagogy instead of abruptly being introduced during their kindergarten year.

F. Description of extracurricular, co-curricular, and after-school activities

LMCS began after school tutoring twice a week during the 2013 -2014 school year in the area of math and expanded the program to include reading and math four days a week in AY 2014-2015. Tutoring has taken various forms since that time depending upon student needs.

Enrichment and corrective extracurricular activities occurring during the last calendar year include:

1. Math Camp This afterschool program for lower elementary students aims to enhance math foundational skills. The curriculum focused on:
 - Math Facts
 - Story Problems
 - Literacy Connection to Math including vocabulary
 - Participation –
 - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade – 90% of students participated 100%
 - Outcome –
 - Many students increased fluency of math facts
 - Understanding of literature to math was increased
 - Increased fluency with standard math vocabulary
2. Robotics. In spring 2020, LMCS began incorporating new aspects of STEM teaching, in particular, robotics, into the LMCS curriculum.
 - Students meet once a week to learn about coding on the computer and coding a robot.
 - Students use three different kinds of robots and code.org on a regular basis.
 - LMCS has also included some robotics in its Music and Art programs.
3. Magic Summer School. For 5 weeks in June and July on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00 to 12:00 students attended a combination enrichment/corrective summer program. On Thursdays, the work cycle was shortened to engage students in a

group STEAM project. The Summer program was directed by the Title 1 teacher. Pre-K was directed by the Kindergarten teacher. The two Title tutors, Cassidy and Katie assisted in the process.

- Purpose –
 - To advance students in Reading, Writing and Math
 - To increase social skills
 - To fill gaps in students learning; some caused by the school shutdown in March
 - Participation –
 - Any student at LMS or going to attend LMS
 - In-coming kindergarten
 - 22 students – 15 attended 100%
 - Rotation Schedule –
 - 8 – 8:20 – Breakfast and Recess
 - 8:30 – 11:30 – Work Cycle Rotation – with mask out-door breaks
 - 11:30 – 12:00 – Lunch and Recess, Dismiss
 - Rotation –
 - Reading – At student’s current level work on Reading Skills as well as phonics
 - Math fact – All Students practice math facts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and number recognition depending on grade (this station was ran by a 6th grade volunteer)
 - Writing – Connection of reading to writing and some creative and expressive writing as well.
4. Culture and Living World –
- As this is an integral part of the curriculum at Laramie Montessori, staff and students have been working very hard to get a garden going at the school.
 - In summer 2020, we built the garden foundation by implementing a greenhouse (geodome), planters, a garden shed, and compost bins. This work precluded growing from seed, but the school did plant some plants.
 - Kaylie Vendala’s Lower Elementary class has been harvesting seeds from plants grown in the LMCS garden last summer and harvesting seeds from fruits and vegetables at the store. Students are providing input of their preferences for what types of plants they would like to grow and take care of during the growing season. This is one means of involving students and providing them a sense of ownership in their school garden.
 - As LMCS continues to accomplish this big work, the goal is to grow enough food to send home with families and allow classrooms to use the harvest for healthy snacks and multiple hands-on projects. There is much work to do and Kaylie and her students are excited to keep learning about gardening.

G. Description of student discipline plans (suspension/expulsion)

An integral part of learning for all age levels includes respectful communication and tolerance for all individuals in the community. All adults interacting with students model appropriate methods for conflict resolution, guide individuals and groups of students to learn non-violent communication methods and facilitate the understanding of peace as it relates to our world today.

Elementary students deepen their appreciation and knowledge of peace through Montessori's specially designed Peace Curriculum. Students also learn how to develop healthy life habits that will enhance overall well-being. LMCS follows ACSD#1 policies for suspension and expulsion.

SUBSECTION II: BEHAVIOR PLAN

Laramie Montessori Charter School believes in meeting children's psychological as well as academic needs. We believe that the administration, staff and parents work together to support the healthy, natural development of children.

In order to facilitate this, we have a Behavior Plan which outlines our method to help students take responsibility for their behavior while redirecting undesirable behavior and reinforcing desired behavior. We have included an example of this plan below. At times, based on the child's personality, behavior, and the circumstances surrounding the behavior we may modify the steps in this plan. At LMCS we always emphasize conflict resolution over punitive action and we believe that prevention and resolution are the most important goals in any situation.

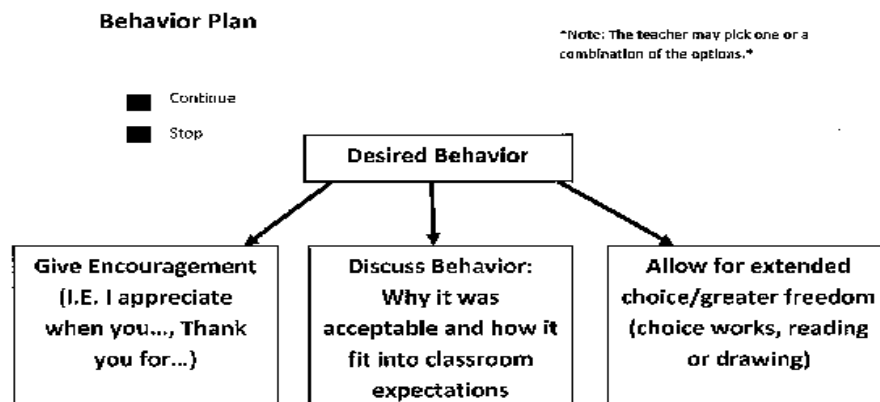
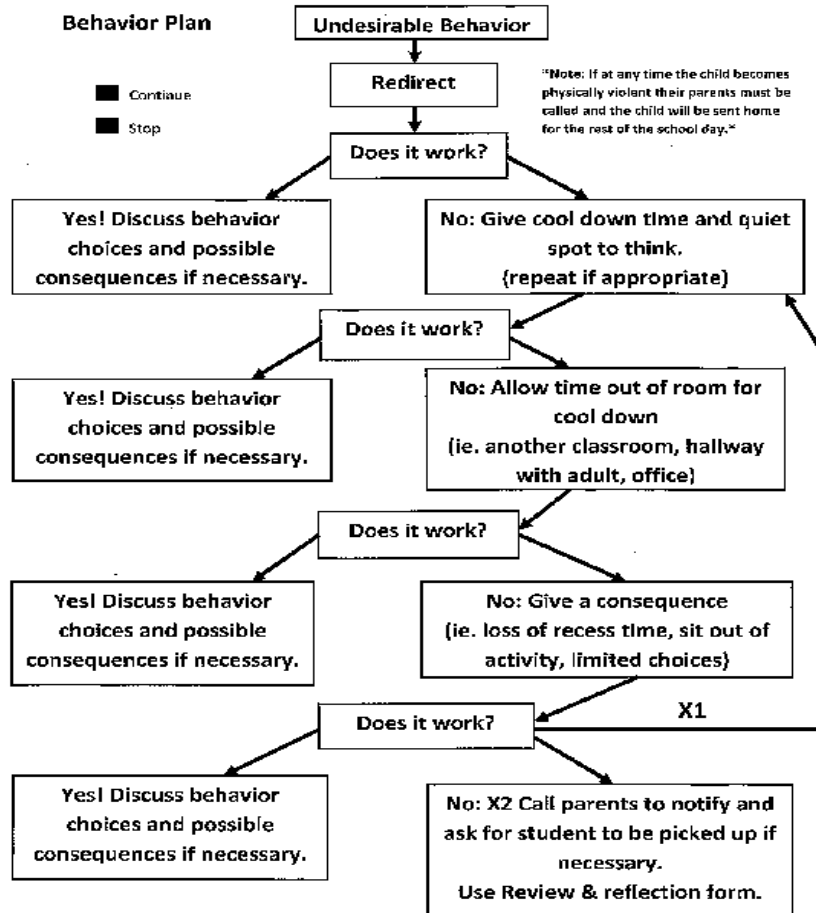
A. Discipline Procedures. When a child becomes disruptive, we will stop the child, speak to him/her and follow the Behavior Plan noted above. As part of the prevention goal we will, if necessary, temporarily limit a child's freedom by asking him/her to stay close to an adult or provide a table at which to work.

In our Behavior Plan, we noted that there were possible consequences, if necessary, based on the behavior and circumstances. Below we outline some of the possible consequences of undesirable behavior as well as possible disciplinary procedures that are required by ACSD#1 for certain violent and/or unlawful behaviors.

Consequences and discipline procedures may consist of, but not be limited to, one or more in combination of the following:

- Loss of classroom or other privileges
- Loss of recess time, partial
- Limited choices
- Loss of school-wide privileges
- Student/teacher conference
- Student/teacher/principal conference
- In-office time before, during and/or after school (ISS)
- Letter or phone call to parents from student, teacher or principal
- Student/teacher/principal/parent conference
- Review & Reflection Form
- Out-Of-School Suspension
- Contact School Resource Officer and notify parent

Figure 5. LMCS behavior plan.



- **Review and Reflection:** Students may be asked to complete a review of what happened and why, and a reflection on what they should have done differently and/or could do differently next time. When an adult is available, the student(s) will report back to them how the situation will be resolved or could have been resolved differently. The student(s) can rejoin the activity or class when the staff member is satisfied that the problem has been recognized by the student(s) involved and that there is a plan to resolve the conflict(s). **The Review and Reflection form will be shared with parents and a copy placed in the student’s classroom file.**
- If the student(s) cannot complete the review and reflection process in the paragraph above within a reasonable amount of time, a parent will be called. It will be determined between the parent and the staff member whether the student should complete the process at home prior to returning to the classroom the next day or immediately go home to complete it. An example of the Review and Reflection form is below.

Review & Reflection

Name: _____ Date: _____

Review of Incident:

Who was involved?

When and where did incident occur?

What happened?

- **In-School Suspension:** Student is removed from the classroom but stays at school, lasting a short period of time (1/2 day, up to 2days).
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** Student is sent home or to the ACES Program because of a major offence. The suspension can be for 1-10 days and determined by the Director.
- **Expulsion from School:** Part of the ACSD disciplinary procedures. Student is entitled to a hearing before the Laramie Montessori Charter School Board of Trustees to determine if the expulsion is approved and, if so, the length of the expulsion. ACES is a possibility for expelled students.
- **Behavior:** Staff will assign consequences or a discipline procedure for the following behaviors suitable to the behavior, circumstances and child(ren) involved after the steps in the Behavior Plan have been followed.

If the behavior escalates or becomes violent at any time, staff will call parents.

Endangering Property, health, safety, or comfort of others:

- Hitting or kicking
- Writing on objects
- Physical Harassment (poking, touching, etc.)

- Verbal Harassment (teasing, name-calling, etc.)
- Throwing item: rocks, sticks, materials
- Fighting:
 - Defensive participant
 - Threatening to fight

Impeding the Learning of Self and Others

- Loud talking / yelling
- Unacceptable language
- Class disruption

Disobedience:

- Willfully disregarding a reasonable request of an adult
- Disrespectful behavior (verbal and non-verbal)

Violating School Rules:

- Running in the hall or classroom

Behavior resulting in Immediate OSS: This is an option of last resort or because of violent and/or unlawful nature of the behavior. This option can only be initiated by the Principle and is required in some circumstances by the Albany County School District. Student may return to class once a conference with student and parent has been held, in person or by phone.

Endangering Property, Health, Safety or Comfort of Others

- Possession of weapons, fireworks, etc.
- Fighting: active participant
- Verbal Harassment (swearing, screaming, obscene gestures or threat, directed either orally or in writing, that are addressed to an individual)

Harassment

- Bullying, resulting in the use of physical or verbal coercion to obtain control over others or to be habitually cruel to others who are weaker.
- Intimidation, resulting as an act intended to frighten or coerce someone into submission or obedience.

Unlawful

- Possession, use and/or sale of drugs, alcohol, etc.
- Arson
- Theft
- Extortion
- Smoking
- Terrorism, resulting as a threat to commit violence communicated with the intent to terrorize or with reckless disregard for the risk of creating such terror or to cause serious public inconvenience, such as the evacuation of a building.

Violating School Rules

- Throwing food

A Laramie City Ordinance prohibits the throwing of snowballs or rocks inside the city limits. The ordinance is enforced on the school grounds.

Corporal Punishment_(spanking) shall not be administered to a student. School employees may defend themselves if attacked by a student and may remove a student against his/her will where his/her continued presence endangers, or is extremely disruptive to others.

For further, more detailed information, please ask the principal for a copy of the District's policy on discipline, suspension, and expulsion from Albany County School District One contained in the By-Laws and Policies of the Board of Education (also found on the District's website at www.acsd1.org).

Harassment / Hazing / Bullying of Students: Our students should expect to be in a school environment that promotes positive interactions between and among students and adults throughout our schools. In addition to being a reasonable expectation, an environment free of harassment, hazing and bullying is the law. We expect our students to follow the law and to be sensitive to the feelings of both children and adults.

SUBSECTION III. METHOD OF ACCREDITATION/ACCREDITATION PROCESS

LMCS is affiliated with and has been a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) since 2011 (see below). Membership is updated through an annual renewal process in which a school submits a new application and submits it to the AMS for individual teachers, teaching assistants, the director/principal, and the school as a whole. Applications are reviewed and schools are notified through a formal letter that they have been renewed through AMS.

LMCS is accredited through AdvancED and the State Department of Education in Wyoming. Schools are responsible for making annual yearly progress (AYP). AYP indicates whether a school does or does not meet expectations based upon scores received on standardized assessments given to students in grades 3 through 6.

When a school does not meet expected proficiency on its AYP, it must generate an improvement plan which is monitored by the school, the district, and the Wyoming State Department of Education. LMCS did not meet its AYP through the Wyoming State Department of Education for the last year testing data are available, in 2019. The 2020-2021 LMCS School Improvement Plan (SIP) was written to address not meeting AYP and is included in Appendix H. While dated, this accreditation for LMCS is considered current. Accreditation was provided to all schools in ACSD #1 for AY2019-2020 as the state was undergoing a change in its accreditation provider. Accreditation was further extended for AY2020-2021 due to COVID19, with updated accreditation certificates expected to be issued for AY2021-2022.

Figure 6. American Montessori Society membership confirmation.



Laramie Montessori School

Member School
2020 – 2021 School Year

Thank you for joining the American Montessori Society—the leading member advocacy organization, research forum, and resource collaborative for the global community of Montessori educators.

Through membership, you are declaring that your school supports:

- The American Montessori Society Code of Ethics
- The AMS Mission: “Empowering humanity to build a better world through Montessori.”
- The AMS Vision: “Montessori for all, embraced around the globe.”
- The AMS Values: “All of the work that we do is founded on values of respect, integrity, diversity, inclusiveness, responsibility, and enthusiasm.”

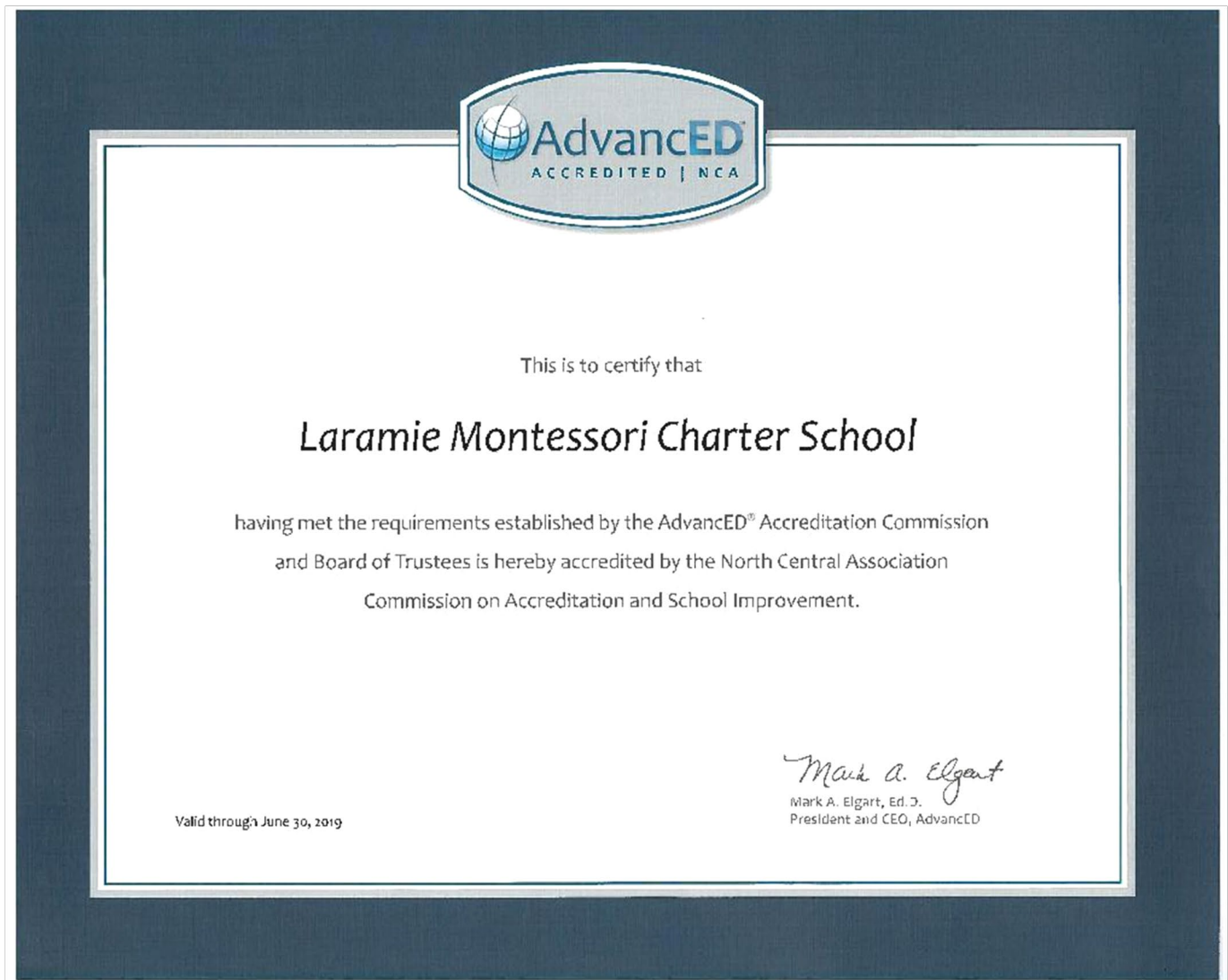
We appreciate your commitment and your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Munir Shivji". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Munir Shivji
Executive Director

Figure 7. AdvancED accreditation.



I. Evidence of meeting accreditation standards

LMCS is monitored based upon Wyoming State standardized tests (formerly PAWs and MAPS, and now WY-TOPP). Students in grades 3 through 6 are given tests in the areas of reading, math, and science. If students meet the proficiency standards in these areas, then these scores are used to calculate the schools' total proficiency rating. The students are assessed by teaching faculty daily and weekly through informal and formal means to establish whether they are meeting growth targets in math, reading, writing, and science. LMCS records student progress each trimester on the report cards used by ACSD#1. LMCS students also take the WY-TOPP interim tests throughout the academic year to chart growth and proficiency, in order to identify which students need more individualized and intensive instruction, as well as which students need enrichment.

In adherence to the Wyoming State Statute on early literacy, LMCS students are exposed to authentic literacy experiences, participating in a 30-minute guided reading session four days a week. This and other balanced literacy approaches serve to supplement and provide authentic reading practice to students in their journey to attain grade-level literacy skills. The LMCS reading program provides intermittent assessment and allows students to practice reading skills in a multi-sensory approach. The skills and concepts learned from this program are then utilized in our guided reading instruction facilitated by the head teacher. Student reading ability for K-3 monitoring is assisted through NLM/CUBED. Student reading ability in grades 4-6 is monitored using Easy CBM, Junior Great Books, and the SRA Reading Laboratory.

Students work on math fact acquisition using Montessori materials and a systematized math fact process. Eureka Math/Engage NY, Montessori materials, and teacher-made materials focus on money, time, measurement and basic geometrical lessons. Our Upper Elementary has utilized small group, rotations three times a week. In these sessions, direct math instruction is the focus. Results on WY-TOPP modulars influence the instructional content as we test, teach, and re-test. Lessons in advanced math topics, such as algebra, graphing, functions, and expressions, are supplemented by Hands on Equation lessons and assignments as well as the workbooks from Key to Algebra published by McGraw-Hill. The Camelot math program vocabulary cards are utilized in classrooms K – 6.

Students are expected to work in the following cultural areas: geometry, botany, zoology, geography (political and cultural). Geometry, botany and zoology are areas that are supported by nomenclature work that defines and sequences the lessons and practice. The geography area lessons are based on continent studies covering political research, biome research, and cultural research. Students access map puzzles for each continent, using puzzle pieces for each country, increasing in difficulty as they get older. Cultural geography focuses on how different people meet their needs (shelter food, etc.) based on their biomes within a given continent. Students develop research around countries, continents, and US states. The history curriculum begins with telling time, months, years and progresses into a study of the universe, the evolution of life on earth and ancient civilizations. Progress through the curriculum is documented for each child using a variety of forms.

In December 2013, Laramie Montessori Charter School became a Title One school. The Title One program utilizes a pull-out, direct instruction methodology for students needing strategic and intensive intervention in the areas of math and reading. Title One instruction utilizes the Read Well program for reading, Moby Max computer system (reading and math), and the Camelot math

program with implementation occurring throughout this school year. Students receive direct instruction in writing using Handwriting without Tears and materials. Tier 2 and 3 students in some cases receive instruction using Wilson’s Reading program. Grammar and punctuation are also taught using hands-on materials and sequenced lessons based on the Montessori curriculum.

J. Delivery of services to special populations

Students receive services for special education through ASCD#1. The District provides a full-time, licensed special education teacher to LMCS and special education paraprofessional(s), as needed. Related service providers are also used at LMCS. These services include a speech and language pathologist, a counselor, school psychologist, a case manager, and an occupational therapist. All support and funding for this program comes from ACSD#1. LMCS ensures that there is a dedicated space and furnishings to employ these services full time at the school. The special education teacher and related service providers offer a wide range of services through inclusion and resource room instruction. The need for specific services is determined and delivered on a case-by-case basis based on a student’s individual education plan (IEP).

LMCS currently receives Title 1 funds on a per pupil basis for students who qualify. During AY2020-2021, LMCS is working to become a Title 1 school and anticipates qualifying for this status for AY2021-2022.

Part IV: Identification of Measurable Pupil Outcomes

Subsection I: Benchmarks and goals after two years; benchmarks and goals for the next five years

LMCS established first year benchmarks by using the 65% proficiency established in the original charter (February 2011). This was determined by reviewing PAWS scores for the 2011 -2012 school year and the 2012-2013 school year. MAP scores and DIBEL scores were also utilized to assist in determining if students were meeting proficiency. LMCS utilized these scores and assessment because this was a requirement of ACSD#1 and was a condition under the original charter of 2011.

The State of Wyoming has since moved to WY-TOPP testing, which was in its second year in 2019-2020, but tests were not administered due to the COVID-19 restrictions. LMCS test data are presented in Part III, Section

The benchmarks for the next five years will be determined utilizing WY-TOPP scores, MAPs scores, and the student measures of skills/concepts attainment as described in Subsection III of Part IV. Students will be growing and showing progress if they are able to maintain an 80 to 85% proficiency on these assessments and measurements. All of these assessments and measurements will be utilized to determine students’ mastery of Wyoming standards and common core standards.

SUBSECTION II: DEMONSTRATION OF ATTAINMENT OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AS SPECIFIED IN GOALS AND STATE STANDARDS

LMCS has used a Montessori curriculum since the inception of the school in 2011. This curriculum utilizes the Montessori Method, and instruction is given utilizing albums in the areas of Language, Math, Geometry, Cultural, and Geography. As LMCS must also meet Wyoming State Standards, the Montessori curriculum has been aligned with these standards as well as the Common Core Standards adopted by the State of Wyoming in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math. Curriculum guides have been developed to document when skills and standards are being met. LMCS test data are presented in the preceding subsection.

Students are given instruction in small groups where teachers are able to provide more intensive instruction for students that are struggling. Teachers are constantly monitoring what students are doing and monitoring their mastery toward the curriculum/standards. This is done through daily checklists, informal assessments, and common assessments performed throughout the academic year. Teachers keep records of each child on a daily and weekly basis. The school also conducts monthly data team meetings and Student Intervention team meetings. These meetings give the staff an opportunity to discuss students' progress and determine students that are not meeting standards and showing growth. The team can meet to discuss interventions that can be developed to assist these students. If students are not meeting their intervention goals, then the Student Assistant Team makes the recommendation for possible special education evaluation.

SUBSECTION III: METHODS BY WHICH PUPIL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MEASURED

Description of standardized assessments are given in preceding sections. LMCS reports students' progress through various methods. The school records students' growth and progress every trimester, aligning with ACSD#1 reporting periods. LMCS utilizes the same report cards and conducts parent teacher conferences at the same time as the District.

Teachers record student progress through specimen records, duration recordings, portfolios, daily work plans, and classroom checklists. Informal assessments are also utilized in the areas of reading, math, and writing. This happens weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly for all students K - 6. LMCS also has monthly data teams to report on all students' progress and the assessments utilized within the classroom. Interventions are discussed during this time to assist students that may be struggling and students that may need more enrichment.

A. Description of Measurements

Specimen Records: These records are the fullest accounts of a child's behavior and are obtained when the Teacher follows a single child for a period of time, recording everything that happens to the child and everything that the child does. This form of observational assessments provides a complete picture of the child and the manner in which s/he interacts within the academic setting. Specimen records are performed daily.

Duration Recordings: These recordings help the teacher determine how much time a child spends on a particular activity or behavior. This amount of time a child spends doing work and the length

of time a student engages in isolated or cooperative activities is assessed. Duration records are performed daily.

Portfolios: Samples of a child's work may be used to assess the progress that s/he is making. Each piece of a child's work should be labeled with the date, title of the work, and collected in files. The teacher and child are then able to look over select samples of student's work to determine the progress made over time. Portfolios are reviewed daily, weekly, monthly, and annually.

Daily work Plans: These plans are recorded by the students to keep track of different lessons completed by each child each day. These records are then compiled in the child's portfolio/files. The teacher and child are then able to look over select samples of student's work to determine the progress made over time. These plans are reviewed daily, weekly, and monthly.

Informal Assessments: These assessments vary from pencil activities, project-based outcomes, and teacher observation of completion of concepts/skills. These assessments are developed by teachers as students complete tasks to check for mastery of skills/concepts. These are collected and keep in a child's portfolio/file. These are done daily, weekly, and monthly.

Common Assessments: These assessments were developed for each grade level to track the concepts/skills that are to be mastered on CCSS and Wyoming State standards. These assessments are collected weekly, monthly, and yearly and keep in a child's portfolio/file.

Mastery Checklists: These checklists are adapted for each grade level and are a tool to track concepts/skills as they are presented and finally mastered for each child. Mastery checklists are reviewed daily, weekly, and monthly. Mastery of a skills/concept consists of being able to pass a three-period lesson.

LMCS is required to participate in ACSD#1 district-wide and State-wide assessments, previously MAPs (Measures of Academic Progress) and PAWS (Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students) and now WY-TOPP. These assessments have been utilized to assist in designing more effective interventions and enrichments for students, and also to assist in determining which students need Title 1 programming and after-school tutoring. Teachers also use these scores to direct their instruction within the classroom and design their lessons for their students.

LMCS continues to work on developing and implementing Montessori-specific assessments to complement State assessments and to provide more in-depth measures of student growth and proficiency in all areas of the Montessori curriculum.

Part V: Governance Structure of School

SUBSECTION I: ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS

LMCS is governed by a set of bylaws, adopted in 2011 and most recently amended in 2020 (Appendix K), contains these bylaws and policies in their entirety, detailing the composition of the LMCS Board, the rules for regular Board meetings, the process by which decisions are made, the process for democratic elections, LMCS policies regarding conflicts of interest, the annual conflict of interest statement signed by Board members, a code of conduct and ethics for the Board, and more. These documents have served to guide school governance during the initial five years of the charter. No substantial modifications are expected in the next five years. Appendix K also contains

the process and forms for adjudicating grievances from families, employees, or the general public. It is adopted with only minor modifications from the ACSD#1 grievance policies and procedures and has served to guide any grievance instances.

Successful school governance during the five years of the initial charter is further reflected in the monthly minutes of LMCS Board meetings on file at ACSD#1 offices.

A. Current LMCS Board

The LMCS Board of Trustees presently consists of:

Chair – Dr. Jana Heisler-White is a consulting ecologist for SWCA Environmental Consultants and an adjunct lecturer in the Environmental and Natural Resources Program at the University of Wyoming. Jana holds a PhD in Ecology from Colorado State University, a MS in Plant Biology from Arizona State University, and a BS in Biology and Geology from Washington and Lee University. She has served on the board for nearly three years as a parent member.

Vice-chair - Josh Kaffer holds a BFA in photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology. He is a homemaker and parent member of the Board. He works as a community organizer and grant writer for Friends of Community Recreation 501(c)(3).

Treasurer – Megan Hawken is the Payroll/Benefits Assistant for ACSD#1. She is a previous Operations Manager of Laramie Montessori School. Megan holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Education from the University of Wyoming and Associate of Science Degree in Accounting from Laramie County Community College. This is her first year on the Board of Trustees as a community member.

Secretary – Ashlee Kupilik is a Laramie native with an educational background in paralegal studies and criminal justice. She has worked in education for seven years and has been a part of the Montessori community for six years.

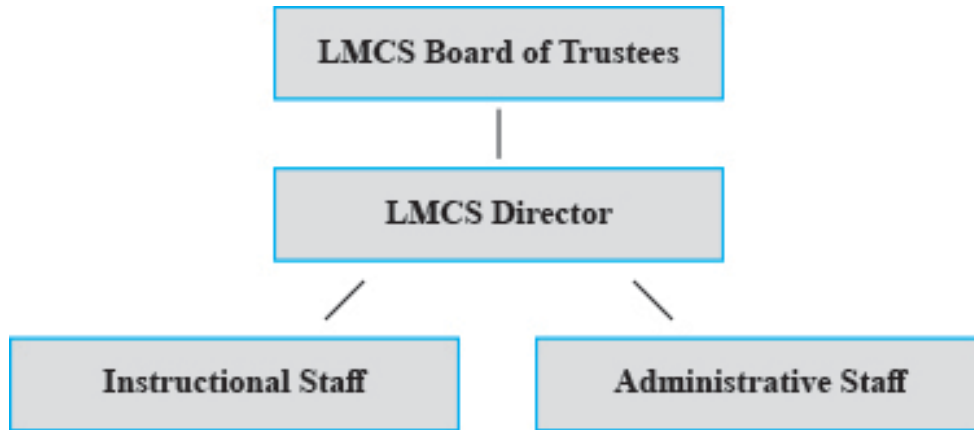
Director – Jeff Verosky began serving as Director of LMCS in summer 2020. He comes to Laramie Montessori with a 25-year career in education, first having served as a science and math teacher for nine years, along with coaching wrestling, football, and track and serving as an athletic director. Before working in education, Jeff was meteorologist for four years in Houston, TX, after graduating from Texas A&M University. After meeting his wife Andrea, then a schoolteacher who encouraged him to give weather talks to students and substitute teach, Jeff became interested in working with kids and made the career change to education. He moved into management and administration after receiving his Master's degree from Prairie View A&M University in Texas. As a school administrator, Jeff has worked as an Assistant Principal, District Athletic and Activity Coordinator, and a school principal for over 16 years. He most recently served as the Head of School of the Wyoming Virtual Academy.

B. Role of the LMCS Director

The Director is the chief administrator for the day-to-day operations of LMCS and also serves as philosophical and instructional leader, promoting the mission of LMCS, as well as

providing such other services as shall be assigned by the LMCS Board of Trustees. The Director is accountable to the LMCS Board of Trustees. The Director is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is required to attend all Board of Trustees meetings as an ex-officio member of the Trustees. The Director is expected to maintain a commitment to the Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.

C. School Organizational Chart



D. Consent to perform background check form for LMCS Director.

LMCS utilizes the form provided by ACSD #1 to obtain consent to perform a background check on the school director (Appendix J)

SUBSECTION II: HUMAN RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

A. Employment Policies

Employment policies of LMCS follow those of the ACSD#1 unless otherwise specified in the charter agreement. LMCS plans to draft and approve a Personnel Policies document for implementation July 1, 2016. LMCS policies may include provisions which deviate from the Wyoming Teacher Employment Act in ways which are lawful under the Wyoming Attorney General’s June 13, 2011 opinion that the Wyoming Teacher Employment Act does not apply to teachers in charter schools.

Pages 4 and 5 of the AG’s opinion, in particular, make clear that charter schools are given wide latitude regarding teacher employment practices, up to and including the option to not grant continuing contract status.

B. Relationship between the School and its employees, including evidence of the terms and conditions of the employment.

Teachers that are hired at LMCS have a Professional Teaching License that indicates that they are licensed to teach Elementary Education as issued from the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standard Board. LMCS also requires their teachers to obtain their highly qualified status in Elementary Education through the Professional Teaching Standards Board of Wyoming; lead teachers must further obtain certification in the Montessori Method. Teachers and administrators are required to continue professional development as required by LMCS, ACSD#1, and the State of Wyoming. LMCS hires its own teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrative staff from among qualified persons in each area, as required by ACSD#1 and the State of Wyoming.

Appendix K contains the LMCS Staff Guidelines document which describes some conditions of employment for LMCS teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff employees. This appendix also contains a sample teacher contract. The LMCS Staff & Employee Handbook was revised in 2020.

C. Qualifications for staff employees.

Qualifications for employees closely follow those of ACSD#1. Teaching staff are required to hold a certificate from the Professional Teaching Standards Board and hold the appropriate endorsement. Teachers are expected to work toward obtaining a Montessori certification and are expected to attend regular professional development as required by their Wyoming teaching license. Classroom paraprofessionals are expected to participate in regular professional development to acquire experience with Montessori pedagogy.

SUBSECTION III: INSURANCE COVERAGE & LIABILITY

LMCS maintains appropriate insurance coverage and will maintain coverage equivalent to the coverage purchased by the District itself. As stipulated by ACSD#1 policy, coverage will include, but may not be limited to:

- Commercial General Liability (\$1,000,000)
- Rented Premises (\$100,000)
- Educator's Legal Liability (LMCS, \$1,000,000; ACSD#1, \$2,000,000)
- Personal and Advertising Injury Liability (\$1,000,000)
- Automobile Liability (\$1,000,000)
- Hired and non-owned Auto (\$1,000,000)
- Property Coverage (sufficient to cover school contents)
- Crime Coverage (\$50,000)

LMCS will be named as an additional insured on the ACSD#1 policy, and ACSD#1 will be named as an additional insured on the LMCS policy. All leases, debts, and other financial obligations of LMCS shall not constitute a debt, liability of financial obligation of ACSD#1.

SUBSECTION IV: STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE RECORDS AND PRIVACY

The contents of student records and access to student records shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). LMCS notifies parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA via the Parent Handbook. A comprehensive system of records is maintained for each child, which includes the pupil's permanent record card, withdrawal and transfer records, standard test results, cumulative health record, anecdotal records and other useful information. Details of how student and employee records are maintained are documented in the LMCS Fiscal Policies and Procedures Guide attached as Appendix F.

LMCS is responsible for maintenance of school and employee records. Students' records are maintained at the school and include immunizations, birth certificates, incident reports/accident, report cards, PAWs scores, and any legal documents that are necessary for individual students. Also kept in these files are authorizations to give students any medication. These records are kept in a file cabinet in the front office. Employee records are also maintained at LMCS, including transcripts, teaching certificates, endorsements, tax information, references, and professional development documentation. These records are maintained in the school director's office.

SUBSECTION V: HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

LMCS will work with St. Laurence Church on all facilities issues, as the church will be responsible for all costs related to ensuring that the facilities comply with all health and safety standards, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by LMCS, ACSD#1, and the State of Wyoming. If ACSD#1 receives additional State funding for health and safety matters, based on student enrollment numbers, that include students enrolled in LMCS, LMCS shall be entitled to its pro-rata amount of any such funding. Health and safety procedures are detailed in the LMCS Safety and Security Handbook (Appendix G).

The following employees or contracted service providers are trained in job appropriate procedures as detailed in both the LMCS Safety and Security Handbook and ACSD#1 procedures to ensure the health and safety of the school students, staff, and guests: 1) Director of School, 2) teachers, 3) administrative assistants, and 4) custodial services provided by St. Laurence Church.

LMCS is responsible for hearing and vision screenings of each student (unless parents opt out in written notification). The vision screenings are done annually through the UW Nursing services; they do this as a service for LMCS. ACSD#1 provides hearing screenings annually. No other health services are contracted at this time.

Health Requirement. LMCS will comply with the State of Wyoming and with the Department of Public Health requirements to ensure the health and safety of both the staff and students. All regulations regarding student physical exams, immunizations, and health screening will be followed. Health services will be provided according to ACSD#1 policies, State, and Federal law. Additionally, staff will be trained in CPR, first aid, and the handling of hazardous materials. LMCS will follow adapted ACSD#1 procedures for student or staff abuse reporting, as well as requirements regarding school safety related (but not limited) to fire, earthquake, tornado, and other natural disasters.

Evacuation Procedures. LMCS will work with the local fire department and/or a professional architect in order to ensure that the building for the school adheres to building code. LMCS will follow recommendations from the fire department for optimizing fire escape routes, making sure the building adheres to fire code and ensuring the highest level of fire safety for the physical building. LMCS will also elicit the support of the fire department to evaluate the facilities and properties to ensure the physical safety of the students and staff. Emergency evacuation procedures will be reviewed regularly and fire drills will occur monthly.

Crisis Plan. LMCS will work with the local police and fire departments to create plans to deal with any natural disaster or physical threat to the people on school premises. If students and/or staff members are faced with a physical health crisis, LMCS will contact the Emergency Room at Iverson Memorial Hospital and take appropriate measures to either transport the affected persons to the ER or to deal with the situation on site, if appropriate. In the event of a mental or emotional crisis that involves staff and/or students, LMCS will contract with certified counselors or therapists to ensure that the situation is dealt with appropriately.

Building Maintenance. The building's owner, St. Laurence Church, is responsible for all building maintenance issues. LMCS will work with the church to establish acceptable routine inspection and maintenance procedures customized to the facility. Additionally, the school will have general maintenance request forms provided for faculty and staff to complete and submit to the Business Manager, such that any hazard detected by personnel can be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Any hazard of urgent concern should be immediately brought to the attention of the School Director.

SUBSECTION VI: PROCESS FOR PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING

For policies and procedures that the school will use for contracting and procurement, see LMCS Fiscal Policies and Procedures (Appendix F). For a list of services that LMCS anticipates contracting, see the financial plan and budget.

Part VI: Facilities Plans

SUBSECTION I: GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND ANTICIPATED COSTS

From 2011 to 2016, LMCS leased space for operations at the Lincoln Community Center, 365 W. Grand Ave., in Laramie. Completely renovated by LMCS in 2010-2011, this building is the site of the historic Lincoln School on Laramie's West side.

In 2016, the opportunity arose to lease the recently vacated Church of St. Laurence O'Toole School, which was closing. The LMCS Board at the time recognized the opportunity for growth and expanded usage that a move to this facility would provide. Thus, the Board pursued a lease with St. Laurence, did not renew its lease with LCC, which was under review, and secured another occupant for the LCC, Head Start. The move was beneficial for all parties involved.

The current facility leased by LMCS comprises a total of **15,673** ft² and includes:

- A greatly expanded kindergarten classroom space;
- Two lower elementary classrooms;
- An expanded, combined upper elementary classroom;
- A specials classroom;
- A SpEd classroom,
- A library;
- Teacher meeting and prep space;
- A gymnasium/cafeteria with a basketball court and equipment storage;
- A commercial kitchen with storage and adjoining small classroom and private bathroom;
- ADA compliant restrooms;
- A large outdoor education space, garden, and playground; and
- Basement storage.

In summer 2016, the LMCS Board of Trustees and St. Laurence O'Toole approved a five-year lease for the current facility; the lease was revised in June 2020 to reflect current space utilization and State statute. A copy of this lease is attached as Appendix D. The lease terminates if LMCS ceases to operate as a charter school. This full-service lease, which includes all maintenance and utilities costs, is \$23,600.91 per month. The State Facilities Commission/School Facilities Department has approved the current lease agreement between LMCS and St. Laurence.

LMCS does not anticipate any renovations or construction during the lease term. St. Laurence will undertake any required maintenance.

LMCS quickly outgrew its footprint within the LCC. The transition to the St. Laurence facility provided an immediate remedy to limits of growth and has capacity for the school to expand to 100 or more students. As enrollment increases, LMCS requests the assistance of the ACSD#1 and the School Facilities Department to secure a permanent facility for the school.

Part VI: Admissions and Enrollment Policies

SUBSECTION I: ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES

(A) Period for admissions

The period for admissions runs from the lottery deadline of April 15 through September 1 of each year. Each year, the LMCS Board will set an enrollment cap for each classroom. The LMCS Board may also decide to set a late enrollment deadline after which time new pupils will not be admitted even if a classroom enrollment is below the enrollment cap. This is necessary because student success in a Montessori educational environment depends upon familiarity with Montessori materials. Accepting students late in the year would not allow students to gain fluency with the materials as required for learning at the level of a child's peers. Accepting pupils late in the year could also circumvent the lottery process, in violation of the intent of the proscribed lottery process for schools of choice.


(B) Lottery process

LMCS conducts a lottery on or near April 15th of each year in the manner of the UW Lab School and Snowy Range Academy. Parents complete the attached application form to participate in the lottery. Children are admitted in the order drawn by lottery until all available positions in each grade are filled. Maximum enrollments in each classroom are set at the time of the lottery. Maximum enrollments in each class will be determined by the Director in consultation with the LMCS Board of Trustees in response to school needs and enrollment pressures.

(C) Waiting list policy

Children not selected in the lottery may remain on a waiting list in the event of an opening. Children on the wait list will be admitted according to their lottery sequence if and when there is an opening and if the enrollment deadline has not passed.

Figure 7. LMCS Enrollment Form.



REGISTRATION FORM 2021-2022 Today's Date: ___/___/___

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Legal Name _____ Nickname _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade entering in Fall of 2021 _____ Gender (circle) M F

Name of current school (if applicable) _____

SIBLING INFORMATION [Name(s) and grade(s) of any sibling(s)]

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Note: The following questions have no bearing on enrollment.

Has your child had experience in a Montessori classroom before? _____ If so, what age(s)? _____

Student's Ethnicity _____ (data used for grant application criteria)

Is your child currently on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan or does your child have any special needs? Yes No

If so, please describe _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian #1 _____ Parent/Guardian #2 _____

Phone # _____ Phone # _____

Email Address _____ Email Address _____

Street Address _____

City State Zip

We encourage parents of all applicants to attend a parent education meeting or observe a classroom at the school to determine if Montessori is the right fit for your child.

I certify that the information provided above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Return to: Laramie Montessori School, 608 S. 4th St., Laramie, WY 82070, fax: 307-201-6965
phone: 307-742-9964 or email: bthompson@acsd1.org

Part VIII: Financial Information

SUBSECTION I: ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR FIVE YEARS

In its first charter renewal, LMCS projected maintaining enrollment of 80-85 students each year for the term of the charter, with a minimum average of 73 students needed to enable financial feasibility for the School. Table I.A lists actual enrollment for the second charter term. LMCS enrollment has generally maintained at or above the projected level; enrollment in AY2020-2021 is down unexpectedly due to COVID19 restrictions and students moving to dedicated online service providers.

Table 3. Projected versus actual enrollment for the 5-year term of the second charter renewal.

Year	Planned	Minimum	Actual
AY2016-2017	80	73	83
AY2017-2018	80	73	76
AY2018-2019	80	73	84
AY2019-2020	80	73	80
AY2020-2021	80	73	69

Table 4. Enrollment for the 5-year term of the first charter renewal.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total Enrollment	83	76	84	80	69
Students on IEPs		12	10	10	5
Serviced thru Title 1		30	27	33	28
FRL		38	26	30	NA

SUBSECTION II: PRELIMINARY FIVE-YEAR BUDGET

The current budget for the School can be found in Appendix E.1. A comprehensive preliminary budget for the upcoming five-year term of the charter can also be found in Appendix E.2. A description of the main components of the five-year budget follows.

SUBSECTION III: BUDGET NARRATIVE

A. Budget soundness, and B. Description of funds utilized

The main components of the five-year budget are the assumption of Stable income and expenses for the future. The revenues grow at 1% for Title one money and 2% for ADM. The lease assist jumps according to the lease contract. On the expense side, the Lease payment increases at renewal, (2022, 2024) according to the contract, and Inflation is included in professional services as well as payroll.

- **Five-year Budget Assumptions-** General assumptions for the preliminary budget include: End-of-year average daily membership (ADM) for the 2021-2022 year will be approximately 77 students.
- **Five-year Budget Income-** The School will receive ADM funding from the State of Wyoming in accordance with Wyoming statutes. The budget presented here assumes the amount of \$11,644 will be received per ADM, i.e., no increase from 2021-2022 per pupil revenue. 75% of the Schools funding is projected to come from the State based on the Schools' ADM.
- The School will receive funding for leased facilities pursuant to Wyoming statutes and budget footnotes. 15% of the School revenue will be in the form of the lease payment from the State.
- **Five-Year Budget Expenses- Five-Year Budget Expenses-** Budget expenses are show by line item in the 5-year budget (Appendix E). A summary of expenses by major category is in Table 5. The largest expense is payroll with approximately 67% of the budget expenses for a given year in this category. The capital/facilities category is expected to require approximately 24% of the budget expenses and purchased services will require approximately 7%.

Table 5. Expenses by majority category.

Summary	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Total Income	<u>1,191,482</u>	<u>1,217,789</u>	<u>1,237,029</u>	<u>1,264,377</u>	<u>1,284,375</u>
Total Capital/Facilities	286,211	297,539	297,539	309,321	309,321
Total Payroll	796,121	796,121	812,043	828,284	844,850
Total Purchased Services	82,293	90,784	93,453	94,355	98,764
Total Supplies & Materials	16,550	16,650	16,650	16,650	16,650
Total Other	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300
Total Expenses	<u>1,191,475</u>	<u>1,211,395</u>	<u>1,229,986</u>	<u>1,258,911</u>	<u>1,279,885</u>
Change in Net Assets	<u>7</u>	<u>6,394</u>	<u>7,043</u>	<u>5,466</u>	<u>4,490</u>

For year 1, the percentage of each budget category for the major functions of instruction, instructional support, and administrative support are in Table 6. When staff benefits are split proportionately among instruction and administration, approximately 73% of expenses are for instruction, 0% for instructional support, and 27% are for administrative support.

Table 6. Percentage of expenses for major budget categories by instruction, instructional support and administrative support in year one.

	Capital/ Facilities	Payroll	Purchased Services	Supplies Materials	other	Total
Instruction	0%	73%	9%	40%	0%	49%
Instructional support	0%	0%	40%	0%	93%	3%
Administrative support	1%	27%	51%	60%	7%	24%
other	99%	0%	0%	0%	0%	24%

The main components of the five-year budget are the assumption of stable income and expenses for the future. The revenues grow at 1% for Title 1 money and 2% for ADM. The lease assist jumps according to the lease contract. For the expenses, the lease payment increases at renewal, (2022, 2024) according to the contract, and inflation is included in professional services as well as payroll. Health insurance increases are assumed to be 6% per year.

LMCS has paid off the original loan from the Charter School Development Corporation to facilitate the LCC facility renovation and expansion. The loan was very favorably refinanced at low interest by Western States Bank in summer 2016 and will be paid off in summer 2021.

Five-year Budget Net Income- Evidence of economic soundness resides in preliminary net income for the term of the five-year charter. Past financial stewardship, including the original Charter School Development loan payoff, also presents evidence of economic soundness. The School has demonstrated excellent financial record keeping as evidenced by the clean opinion received during each audit by Rolf Peterson, Mader Tschacher Peterson & Co., Laramie, WY.

SUBSECTION IV: FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY STATEMENT WITH EVIDENCE FROM PAST FIVE YEARS

As demonstrated by the net income of the first two five-year budgets, the School will continue to be financially viable. It has been demonstrated that the services provided by LMCS are desired by the community based on the steady enrollment prior to fall 2020 and the COVID19 pandemic.

SUBSECTION V: EXPLANATION OF FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

A. Description of financial policies

Laramie Montessori Charter School abides by the LMCS Fiscal Policies and Procedures (Appendix F). These procedures were approved during the first charter application process and have not changed. In response to yearly audit notes, and with additional administrative personnel at the School, the internal controls have been adapted and strengthened.

B. Description of financial reports: format and frequency

LMCS will continue to contract for accounting services by the CPA Group of Laramie. Intuit, Quick Books hosts the digital accounting records of the School. All documentation of accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, and personnel records are maintained by the School. The CPA Group of Laramie provides monthly financial statements to the Board of Trustees in time for inclusion in the Board packet of the monthly Board of Trustees meetings.

C. Method of annual audit of finances and programmatic operations

LMCS will continue to participate in yearly audits by the auditor chosen by ACSD#1. CPA Group of Laramie will continue to provide financial records for the audit, and School administration will provide requested documentation and participate in onsite data collection.

Part IX: Transportation

SUBSECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A. Description of contracts with district or other provider

Transportation to LMCS for regular school hours, nominally 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. or an equivalent number of contact hours, will continue to be provided by the ACSD#1 bus system. Currently, due to COVID19 restrictions and social distancing, only ~35 children are served each day by two bus routes to the LMCS. No transportation will be provided for before-school or after-school activities. LMCS understands that transportation costs to ACSD#1 are 100% reimbursable from the State.

Part X: Displaced Pupils

SUBSECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF DISPLACED PUPILS

The applicant interprets the language description of this section, as understood from W.S. 21-3-307(a)(xvi), to apply to existing public schools converted to charter schools, known as “converted charter schools.” Therefore, this provision of the law is not applicable to LMCS because no pupils, teachers, or other employees will be displaced by the operation of LMCS.

Part XI: Waiver Requests

SUBSECTION I: DISTRICT BOARD WAIVERS

None.

SUBSECTION II: WYOMING STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WAIVERS

None.