

Charter School Modified Renewal Application

DCS Montessori Charter School

Submitted to: *Douglas County School District - Choice Programming*

Submitted by: *DCS Montessori Charter School*

Submitted at: *08/12/2024 08:37 AM*

Application Elements

A) Basic School Information & Required Attachments

1. Basic School Information

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

Mission & Vision

The Mission of the DCS Montessori is to provide students with an opportunity to acquire an education based on an authentic and accredited curriculum founded on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

Grades served at your school (any and all educational services you provide (i.e. Preschool, Homeschool, Post-Secondary Classes, etc.)

- Pre-K
- K
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 8th Grade

Total Enrollment 550

% Free or Reduced Price Lunch Students 10.37

% Special Ed Students 9.5

% Multilingual Learners Students 4

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Required Attachments

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

Unified Improvement Plan and progress toward achieving the goals set forth.

22-24 UIP Summary - DCS Montessori.pdf

198.71 KB • Added 5 months ago

Areas of perceived strengths in the program and any areas identified as areas in need of improvement.

SAC September 2023 Meeting Minutes.doc

302.17 KB • Added 5 months ago

Other particular achievements you would like the Board to be aware of.
For example... John Erwin, Governors distinguished.

DCSM Website Why Montessori.jpeg

1.55 MB • Added 5 months ago

Board Conflict of Interest forms

**23-24 DCSD Board Conflict of Interest Code of
Contact Volunteer Agreement.pdf**

1.77 MB • Added 5 months ago

ESP Agreement, if applicable.

Enrollment Preferences, Selection Methods, Enrollment Timelines and Procedures.

Enrollment policy.doc

713.06 KB • Added 5 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

B) Mission and Key Design Elements

1. Mission & Key Design Elements

Status: Completed

Form Result

What are the school's key design elements? What have you implemented since your last charter renewal in response to student/community needs? Have there been any focused changes to curriculum, professional learning, or student supports? Emphasize the unique and innovative features of the educational program.

DCS Montessori Charter School is primarily defined by its name as a school offering a Montessori education. The goals of providing choice, agency and flexible pacing to students are all in constant adjustment to be in balance with the academic outcomes and expectations of a public school. While during the last 5 year period, much of our work was manging through COVID, and overcoming educational transitions as a result, we have implemented new READ Act compliant curriculum, and are in modification prcesses with Math and Writing to make them more consistent experiences within our curriculum, while maintain our Montessori mission. Current Universal Improvement Planning (UIP) goals and efforts have bore the fruit of improvement in both Math and English Language Arts as a result of this work.

Attachments (optional)

DCS Montessori Vision & Mission 2024-25.doc

270.12 KB • Added 4 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Curriculum

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Describe the school's curriculum and how it is aligned to the state standards.

DCS Montessori implements Montessori curriculum and works on a periodic basis to align standards to the Montessori works and curriculum. (See attached alignment example) While language development, early literacy to reading, and writing curricula are supported within the Montessori curriculum, DCS Montessori does implement research-backed curricula in accordance with the Colorado Read Act and best practices in education. Currently, DCS Montessori implements the Wonders Reading curriculum, supplemented by American Reading Company's IRLA, Reading materials, and Foundational toolkits, as well as implementing Orton Gillingham resources for Reading intervention. Our Middle School program implements more traditional textbook style curriculum to prepare students for more traditional high school experiences, including Amplify Science, Social Studies DBQ's, CommonLit English Language Arts, and McGraw Hill Math. In order to foster at-home connections to student work, DCS Montessori also provide online adaptive practice tools including Achieve 3000, ALEKS math, and the Renaissance Learning Freckle suite of of Math and ELA tools.

(2) Describe the school's process and rationale for reviewing and revising the curriculum as needed.

Two mechanisms exist for curriculum review and updating: 1) Responsive to Assessment driven reviews and revision, and 2) Annual rotations of curriculum focus so all parts of the curriculum are reviewed every four years.

1) DCS Montessori's School Accountability Committee (SAC), its administrative team, and teaching teams review state-level CMAS data, AND local STAR and MAPS data to identify where gaps in instruction, expectations, and/or curriculum may be present. Changes in methods, curricula, and /or practices may be explored in order to set improvement goals and implement curriculum changes as best practice and research dictates.

2) DCS Montessori's Administrative team implements school wide reviews on a four year cycle to ensure all parts of the curriculum are reviewed every four years. The 24-25 school year is a Writing emphasis school year, 25-26 will be a Math emphasis, 26-27 is a cultural studies (Science and Social Studies), and 27-28 will be a reading emphasis year.

Most of our changes in implementation are adjustments to the Montessori curriculum, or changes to supplements which are more traditional, or less Montessori, in their nature.

(3) Describe the school's Social Emotional Learning Curriculum and its implementation.

DCS Montessori has been implementing the Sources of Strength curriculum in our Middle School for many years, and will expand the usage of this curriculum into the Elementary school in the coming school year. The majority of the implementation of Sources of Strength falls to the DCS Montessori Mental Health team, with administrative support, and with teacher follow through. Mental Health Staff and administration participated in Train the Trainers training this spring and is preparing to kick off this programming in the fall of 24-25. It is important to recognize that this is in addition to the Social Emotional support aspects that are inherent to the Montessori curriculum and environment. Our implementation of Sources of Strength is an addition, not just foundational.

Attachments (optional)

DCSM Montessori Alignment w Standards
(Example).doc

153 KB • Added 4 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

3. Assessment

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Describe the school's assessment systems and how they are used to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.

DCS Montessori implements two main assessment systems, NWEA MAPs and Renaissance Learning's suite of STAR Math, Early Literacy and Reading. All student Kg-8th grade are evaluated in the fall, near the beginning of the school year, and students who need help, or on watch for needing help, are identified. Teachers use these result to group students for differentiated instruction. Secondly, Response to Intervention (RTI) teaching staff are assigned students who are below grade level for intervention work. Students who are below grade level, and/or on watch, will be re-assessed either on intervals based on the READ act, every 6 weeks, or prior to the winter break, and assessed for growth. Then the cycle repeats itself.

(2) Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.

In the classroom, teachers do a variety of observational and classroom assessment feedback (like spelling tests), which influence the instruction of our students. Parents, staff and students all have input into this data as well through school wide surveys which are reviewed by stakeholder groups to consider the school's effectiveness, needs for improvement, and school wide goals. Furthermore, the administration is in consistent observation of all staff providing observational data which will influence both coaching and teaching, but also provide data on school wide effectiveness.

Attachments (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

4. Organizational Capacity

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Describe the school's organizational structure and roles of responsibilities of key personnel. Be sure to include the following in your response:

Process and system for decision-making

DCS Montessori Board of Directors oversees the Head of School. The Head of School oversees everything, but essentially has 6 main reports.

- 1) The Director of the Lower School - who oversees PreK-3rd grade, and 504 Coordination
- 2) The Director of the Upper School - who oversee 4th-8th grades, and CLD programming
- 3) The Academic Dean - who oversees Specials and Special Education staff, assessment, READ and GT
- 4) Registrar/Office Manager - who oversees enrollment, records, communications, and Nurse consultant support for Health planning
- 5) Business Manager - who oversees all revenue and expenditure related tasks, tuition to HR
- 6) Head of Maintenance - who oversees all aspects of facilities maintenance and associated contracts

At every level of the school, team meetings happen on a weekly to monthly basis where decision making occurs at the team level. EX. If all of 1st-3rd teaching staff want a new curriculum the Director of the Lower School wants, then the team can make that decision with available resources. Individual classroom teachers have control over their classroom within the confines of DCS Montessori policies and procedures. Team decision making is prioritized to maximize effectiveness.

Process and system for evaluating school leaders.

In accordance with Colorado Department of Education expectations, DCS Montessori uses the Quality Standards and Elements for Principals as the guidelines for evaluating its school leaders. Input from school wide surveys of parents, staff and students influence the determinations in addition to Board reporting. The Head of School accumulates the data and feedback and coalesces an annual evaluation for school leaders on an annual, or as needed, basis. The Head of School's evaluation is conducted by a Head of School Evaluation Committee, comprised of members of the DCS Montessori Board of Directors. Feedback and data regarding the Head of School's monitoring reports, parent surveys, staff surveys, progress towards Strategic Planning goals, and school wide outcomes, informs the Board's production of an annual Head of School Evaluation.

Process and system for evaluating and coaching teachers.

Teaching staff are all evaluated twice annually using rubrics based on the Colorado Department of Educations Quality standards and Elements, in addition to the principals of Montessori education and the DCS Montessori Board of Directors' Ends. All of these observation/evaluation cycles are conducted by Colorado State Licensed Prinicpal Direct reports and/or in collaboration with the Head of School. Principals have the ability to request coaching support and/or involvement from the Head of School with particular teaching situations or needs. [Please see example of Lower Elementary Observation/Evaluation tool attached.]

Process and system for staff professional development.

DCS Montessori supports staff professional development in the following ways-

- 1) Ten DCSM admin led Faculty PD sessions annually
- 2) 4 Vertical team observation PD framework sessions
- 3) Encouraged and supported PD observations external from the school once annually
- 4) Upon implementation of new curriculum, it is DCSM's policy to engage in developer provided PD to support such new implementation
- 5) Each teaching staff is allotted a minimum of \$700 annually to support PD opportunities of their own choosing like national conferences, courses or credit classes to support advancement
- 6) Coaching session and associated supports are provided upon request
- 7) New teachers are provided a mentor who enables a continuum of PD support

Attachments (optional)

DCSM Lower Elementary Teacher Evaluation.doc

197.46 KB • Added 4 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

C) School Climate & Culture

1. School Climate & Culture

Status: Completed

Form Result

Safety and security

Safety and security plan.

DCS Montessori is a locked campus on a daily basis, all visitors must access the schools through an intercom system where vetting occurs. DCS Montessori follows DCSD safety security protocols like all DCSD schools, including participating in a shared SRO as all elementary campuses in the district. Drills occur on a regularly scheduled basis to ensure our campus is prepared for emergency events.

EMCR plans.

Please find our planning spreadsheets attached.

District security trainings.

DCS Montessori staff participate in security trainings and drills on a regularly scheduled basis, with DCSD Security and Staff, to ensure our campus is prepared for emergency events.

District Data privacy training.

DCS Montessori staff complete annual Data Privacy training provided by DCSD.

Attachments (optional)

ERCM Planning.xls

34.04 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Family & Community Engagement

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) Explain how the school promotes family and community involvement. Be sure to include specific examples.

Evidence of how plans have been realized.

Parent Back to School Nights with their child's teacher
Parent Education - Friday Coffees to allow parents easy access to administration for questions
Parent Volunteering in Library, Reading Support and Spelling support - we provide training
Back To School Bash - community get together to start off the school year
Fun Run - Community fundraising while teaching our students about being healthy
Watch me Work nights - Parents invited to have their child demonstrate working at school

(2) Describe the various partnerships the school has developed with educational institutions and/or community organizations. Be sure to include:

How these relationships promote and help achieve the school's mission.

DCS Montessori is proud partner of other Montessori institutions: We proudly support and participate with the following Montessori organizations...
Colorado Montessori Association (CMA) - local partner connecting teachers and administrators of other Montessori schools to share best practices.
Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR) - local certified Montessori Teacher Preparation program provider. MECR is responsible for training the majority of our teaching staff in the Montessori Philosophy in accordance with our Mission.
International Montessori Council (IMC) member - national organization providing teacher Professional Development, Administrator training, and annual conferences to support our Montessori Philosophical approach.

How they align with the school's education program.

Our Mission is provide an opportunity to acquire an education based on the Montessori Philosophy, and only the participation these, and other similar, organizations can we attest to supporting and completing this mission for the benefit of our students and families.

Attachments (optional)

3618_001.pdf

101.07 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

D) Board Governance

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Provide evidence that the board governs the school effectively. Be sure to include the following in your response:

Evidence that the board has the appropriate skills (legal, financial, educational, community, etc.) and experience to govern the school effectively.

The DCS Montessori Board of Directors has participated in annual training for the last 15 years to ensure preparedness for their job. Please see annual training agenda attached (3619). They maintain legal retainership with Bill Bethke for legal consultation, in addition to having a member who is a lawyer for the last decade, and currently. A strict adherence to governing through policy, and Carver policy governance, with an annual review cycle keeps their governance consistent and efficient.

Evidence that the board regularly monitors progress relative to its priorities.

The DCS Montessori Board of Directors has a consistent Annual Task Calendar which includes a monthly list of monitoring reports to ensure the annual cycle reviews all pertinent information to ensure governing of the school based on its performance. Please review the annual Task Calendar attached.

Evidence that the board evaluates the school leader(s), school business administrator, and/or management organization on an annual basis and holds these individuals accountable for meeting specified goals.

DCS Montessori Board of Directors perform an organizational performance review known as the Head of School Evaluation. The policy governing this process is attached (3620). In addition to monitoring performance overall, the process also includes the monitoring of progress towards goals developed by both, the School Accountability Committee (SAC), and the Board of Directors, annually.

Attachments (optional)

24-25 Board Task Calendar.doc

12.85 KB • Added 3 months ago

3620_001.pdf

90.03 KB • Added 3 months ago

3619_001.pdf

48.33 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

E) Access & Equity

1. Special Education

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) Describe the steps the school takes to identify students in need of Special Education services.

In accordance with MTSS expectations issued by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), DCS Montessori implements universal screenings and monitors the progress of all students, in addition to dialoguing with teachers on a regular basis to identify struggling students. Response to Intervention (RTI) services are provided to students needing support, and where those are insufficient, evaluations for eligibility to receive Special Education services are completed. Please attached description. Parents may request an evaluation for eligibility as well, in accordance with federal IDEA law.

(2) Describe the special educational programs and range of services the school provides for identified students.

RTI services may include academic tutoring or social/emotional support. Special Education services may include lesson and school work support from a Learning Specialist, Occupational Therapy, Speech Language services, and/or Mental Health support services provided by a School Psychologist or School Social Worker. Please see attached description.

(3) Submit a copy of the school's written Rtl or IMTSS procedures.

Upload Procedures

Education Support (SAT, 504, IEP, RTI etc.) at DCS
Montessori.doc

9.06 KB • Added 3 months ago

SPED 23-24.doc

9.18 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Multilingual Learners

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Describe the steps the school takes to identify Multilingual Learners.

If Identification begins in our enrollment process which includes Home Language Surveys to identify if any additional languages are spoken in the home. If so, then an assessment process begins to determine the needs fo the student. DCS Montessori employs the WIDA assessment in compliance with both state and district guidelines in order to determine what services are required. If students are not identified in initial enrollment surveys, the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process can provide an avenue where a student, who speaks languages other than english in the home, may be identified as needing support and referred for assessment.

(2) Describe the programs and range of services the school provides for identified Multilingual Learners students.

Before discussing academic supports, DCS Montessori works to eliminate bias in all forms within the school and to implement a culture where diversity is welcomed as a positive influence to our school community. Academically speaking, the results of the WIDA assessments determine what intervention, instruction, and/or classroom supports are implemented for our Multilingual student(s).

Attachments (optional)

ELD 23.24.doc

6.65 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

F) Fiscal Performance

1. Financial Framework

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) Based on historical financial reporting:

Provide an explanation for any Near Term or Sustainability Ratios that did not meet standard.

DCS Montessori Charter School has remained in compliance in all areas of DCSD fiscal health analysis, ratio and benchmarks (Asset Sufficiency Ratio (ASR), Operating Reserve Ratio (ORR), Operating Margin Ratio (OMR), Change in Fund Balance Ratio (CFBR)) for the past five years and our last charter renewal.

Provide a plan with a timeline for improving any ratios that do not meet standard.

DCS Montessori Charter School currently meets all standards per the **DISTRICT AND CHARTER FINANCIAL HEALTH ANALYSIS**

Attachments (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Financial Audit

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

If applicable, provide an explanation for any notes to financial statements.

Two standard notes offered on the FY23 Financial Audit: Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability and Contributions (PERA calendar year v fiscal year actuarial valuation) and Stewardship, Compliance and Accountability (budgetary information and compliance). No additional explanation required.

Attachments (optional)

DCS Montessori Audit - Final (2).pdf

528.16 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

3. Budget Information

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) 22-30.5-110. 2(b) A charter school renewal application submitted to the chartering local board of education shall contain: (b) A financial statement that discloses the costs of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the charter school that is understandable to the general public and that will allow comparison of such costs to other schools or other comparable organizations, in a format required by the state board of education.

Notes: Use the most recent actual revenues available from the latest enrollment count. Prepare the five year budget assuming revenues are frozen except for increase in enrollment. The purpose of the five-year budget projection is to forecast significant changes in expenses and assess future fiscal viability. Please note that these budgets are solely for forecasting.

Submit a budget summary covering projected sources of revenue and planned expenditures for the next 5 years. Using the DCSD Template.

Attach Budget Template
(with data)

Charter renewal 5 yr forecast.pdf

28.21 KB • Added 3 months ago

Provide a Budget Narrative for the next 5 years.

It is the goal of DCS Montessori Charter School to operate under a balanced budget for the next five plus years. FY25 will see the completion of a significant property improvement project (roof/solar) with the intent of positioning our school to maintain our fiscal health & prosperity. DCS Montessori Charter School does not anticipate to grow enrollment and forecasts similar enrollment counts, previous to the last five years with minor fluctuations.

For the next 5 years, provide a detailed itemized budget narrative and rationale for budget line items that have significant changes from year to year (such as planned facilities expansion, capital investments, or any other significant changes.)

DCS Montessori Charter School forecast the next five budgetary years' expenditures increasing as PPR revenue, tuition revenue, state revenues and contributions allows, resulting in operating under a balanced budget. Our intent is not to grow enrollment. A detailed narrative surrounding salary expenditures increasing stems from the celebratory passing of Ballot 5A, resulting in the DCS Montessori Charter School Board of Directors approving and passing a new salary schedule (matching that of DCSD). DCS Montessori Charter School's improved salary schedule goes into effect at the beginning of the 24/25 school year and is reflected in the Adopted Budget unanimously passed by our Board of Directors on May 13, 2024. Subsequently, the benefit expenditures increasing directly ties to the increased salary account code due to PERA Employer contributions along with Medicare. In addition, DCS Montessori Charter School has had the good fortune of reasonable benefit premium rate increases year after year (medical, dental, vision and life/ltd), although we forecast conservatively this is a potential liability. Moving forward, it is our belief that DCS Montessori Charter School's budget can sustain rational expenditure increases in supplies, professional purchase services and technical services. Lastly, after two years of inflated property improvements expenditures, due to our roof/solar property improvement project, we look forward to returning to a sustainable property expense total for the foreseeable future. It is with pride we accomplished a new roof on our 20+ year old building absent of additional debt, aligning with our commitment to fiscal responsibility and health.

Attach Cash Flow
Schedule (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

G) Five Year Planning

1. Enrollment

Status: Completed

Form Result

(1) Based on the school's current enrollment, provide a five-year enrollment chart by grade level, in the prescribed format below. Note that schools must allow for the natural progression of students from year-to-year; they may not account for year-to-year attrition in their enrollment charts. If the school expects an increase in enrollment over the next charter term, provide that

information in the chart. If your charter is requesting a grade expansion, this chart will serve as the expected enrollment chart of the school over the next five years.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
PK	108	108	108	108	108
K	66	66	66	66	66
1	56	56	56	56	56
2	56	56	56	56	56
3	56	56	56	56	56
4	47	47	47	47	47
5	47	47	47	47	47
6	46	46	46	46	46
7	32	32	32	32	32
8	31	31	31	31	31
9					
10					
11					
12					
TOTAL	545	545	545	545	545

(2) If the school is requesting an increase in enrollment, provide evidence of a plan to obtain an approved amendment to the current Traffic Management Plan, approved by the appropriate local jurisdiction, along with a proposed timeline.

No requested increases, just management of fluctuations.

Attachments (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

2. Facility

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) Provide detailed information on the school's facility plans for the five years of the next charter, being sure to list any and all planned capital improvements. The plan should include an adequate and detailed financial arrangement and timeline for the facility. If the school is planning on a facility expansion, please detail the timeline and budget needs anticipated for the expansion.

As a school entering its 27th year of operations, the cost of continual updating and maintenance is an annual planning piece of our budget cycle. In the last few years, we've been able to re-roof our facility, complete safety upgrades to security cameras and entry controls (with help from DCSD's last bond), and are currently under contract for adding Solar panels to our roof for a more than 90% energy offset supporting our sustainability goals. Please find our 2023 CIP issued with the district to see our next big updating projects, and note the aforementioned roof and security projects on it are now recently completed. Next big projects include a modernization of our elevator, multiple artificial turf installations, modernizing landscaping reducing water consumption, increasing trees for carbon uptake, and adding staff car charging as a sustainability staff benefit. The long term goal from facility financing is to pay off DCS Montessori debt to free up capital for the continual needs of the facility and grounds. There is 13 years left on our bonds.

Attachments (optional)

Charters 5 Year CIP_2023 Update_3.2.2023 (1).xls

122.79 KB • Added 3 months ago

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

3. Five Year Planning

Status: **Completed**

Form Result

(1) Describe the changes and improvements the school will undertake in the next five years based on the school's examination of results and student performance outcomes.

In regards to academic outcomes, DCS Montessori is constantly adapting the traditional practices of Montessori philosophy to the everchanging curricular expectations of Colorado Department of Education, CDE. Our current work revolves around manifesting adaptations in our Math practices and curricula to create social explanations as part of Math education. Montessori mathematics is traditionally about individual math intuitive skill building. We are working to make adaptations to Math curricula to improve student outcomes in Math. Secondly, writing has also been more individualistic regarding teaching Montessori educational practices, and in order to improve outcomes we are mapping out consistencies for teaching writing while maintaining a commitment to our mission of providing Montessori education to the community. See our UIP for more information.

(2) Describe any significant changes the school expects to make in the following areas over the next charter term:

Amendments to your school's charter

None are planned.

Governance and/or Education Service Provider (ESP) structure.

No such changes are planned.

Attachments (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated

H) Optional: Supplementary Information

Status: Completed

Form Result

If there is additional information that you would like to share with the DCSD Office of Choice Programming and/or the DCSD Board of Education that is relevant to your renewal application, please feel free to include that information in this section.

Thank you for your partnership!

Enter additional information here -

Upload any supporting documents (optional)

Evaluation Rubrics

This application element is not evaluated