



ABOUT RIVER MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

River Montessori Charter School began when a group of parents and Montessori educators came together in Petaluma, California to discuss the growing need for elementary Montessori education. Their children had experienced the benefits of Montessori environments – which foster self-paced learning in a mixed-age classroom – and were eager to offer it as a public school option for all interested families. They believed that all children deserved the opportunity to learn within a Montessori learning culture that supports the whole child, creates lifelong learners, and educates for peace.

Launched in fall 2009, River Montessori Charter School (RMCS) now operates a public, tuition-free elementary charter school serving 170 students in grades 1-6. Our prepared classroom environment inspires a love of learning and an individualized process of discovery, as well as respect for self, others, and the environment. This allows RMCS students not only to realize their academic, personal, and social potential, but also to become global citizens.

CORE VALUES

- **COLLABORATION:** Working together, respecting others, and maintaining a global perspective enlighten students, teachers, families, and the larger community.
- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:** A prepared and rigorous Montessori environment challenges children cognitively, physically, emotionally, and socially and provides each student with the freedom to progress at their own developmental level and pace.
- **INDIVIDUALITY:** The limitless potential of every child contributes to the strength and diversity of our school community.
- **COMMUNITY:** Shared experiences foster lifelong commitment to social responsibility.
- **RESPECT:** Uncompromising responsibility for self, others, and the environment is critical to overall success.
- **EDUCATING FOR PEACE:** Inner contentment, self-actualization, and community harmony engender the all-encompassing goal of peace.

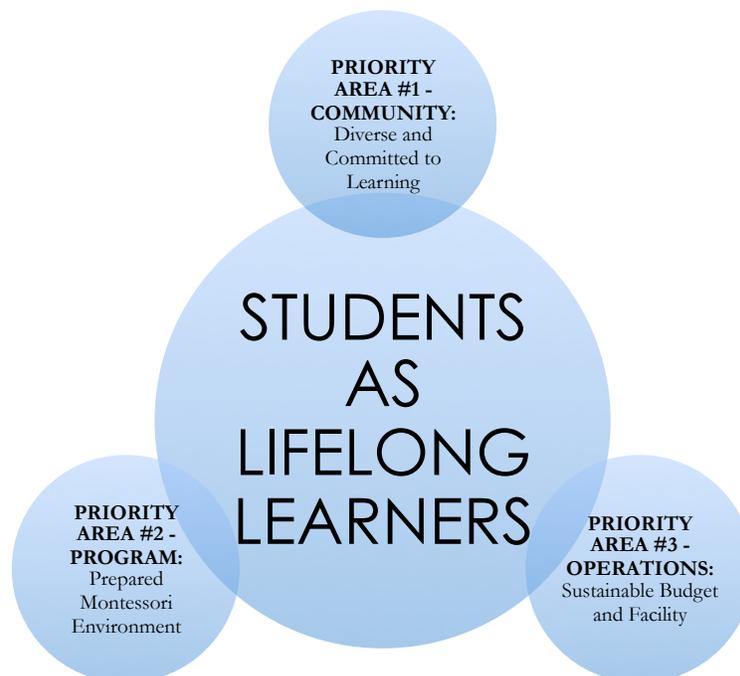


STRATEGIC PLAN (2013-2016)

In the winter of 2012 and the spring of 2013, in preparation for renewal of our school's charter, the governing board and school leadership of River Montessori Charter School (RMCS) came together to establish a strategic plan that would guide our work in the years ahead. We considered our original vision and mission, our accomplishments to date, and our plans for progress. What follows is a strategic plan that will guide our decisions and our work, and to hold ourselves accountable for delivering on our commitments.

Each priority area describes:

- **Status:** What we have achieved
- **Goal:** What we will strive for next
- **Strategies:** How we will approach and achieve progress toward our goal
- **Measures:** How we will demonstrate progress in the area toward our goal





PRIORITY AREA #1: COMMUNITY

STATUS: Over the last five years, River Montessori Charter School has developed a diverse, engaged community of learners, including students, families, staff and governing board members.

GOAL: River Montessori Charter School will continue to strengthen, expand and diversify our learning community.

STRATEGIES:

- **Student Enrollment and Retention:** RMCS targets a diverse population of students who work independently and with their peers in a multi-age Montessori learning environment. Through our outreach, we will seek to maximize student learning and collaboration by enrolling a student population that is representative of the area's diversity, and by retaining as many students as possible through the full six-year Montessori elementary experience.
- **Student Engagement:** RMCS offers an engaging Montessori environment that motivates students to explore constantly and learn continuously. We will strive to maintain high levels of student attendance and engagement.
- **Parent Engagement:** RMCS invites parents to become deeply involved in their children's learning. We will continue to engage families in the classroom, offer them Montessori learning opportunities, and enlist them as active volunteers in our community.
- **Faculty Development:** RMCS guides are central to our Montessori learning community; their curiosity and love of learning inspire the same in our students. We will provide them with opportunities to increase their knowledge, sharpen their skills, and enrich their practice.
- **Board Development.** The RMCS board oversees the organization's work and ensures that it achieves its goals. We will strengthen the capacity of the board through new membership, ongoing training, and focused committees that engage the talents of the community.
- **Civic Involvement.** RMCS deeply values its relationship with individuals and organizations in the surrounding city and county. We will strengthen our outreach by growing public participation in our Montessori learning opportunities and fostering service learning among our students, and invite the neighboring community to help strengthen our Montessori educational program through volunteering and partnerships.

MEASURES:

- Diversity of student enrollment
- Students, parents, faculty and board participate actively in their own learning and in that of others, and express satisfaction with the school's experience and support
- Retain students for full six-year Montessori program, and maintain faculty stability
- Student participation in the surrounding community, and civic participation in the Montessori program
- Expansion of board capacity



PRIORITY AREA #2: PROGRAM

STATUS: River Montessori Charter School provides a Montessori curriculum and environment that focuses on the whole child and develops self-motivated, competent, passionate lifelong learners.

GOAL: By sustaining and refining our Montessori program and materials, River Montessori Charter School will ensure all our students reach their academic, social, and personal learning goals.

STRATEGIES:

- **Student Attributes:** RMCS ensures that students demonstrate the character traits of successful learners, including cognitive understanding and critical thinking skills, as well as confidence and competence, independence, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, ability to handle external authority, social responsibility, stewardship/citizenship and positive self-image. We will continue to instill these skills in students and provide opportunities for them to share their mastery.
- **Student Achievement:** As a public school, RMCS ensures that students not only implement Montessori skills but also attain proficiency on state-mandated academic standards. As California adopts new standards and assessments, we will strive to maintain high levels of proficiency in all subject areas.
- **Kindergarten:** RMCS' program currently begins in the first grade, when students are in Montessori's elementary plane of development. In order to ensure a strong introduction into Montessori and to strengthen students' overall experience, we will add kindergarten and transitional kindergarten to our program.

MEASURES:

- Graduates report feeling prepared for success in middle school and beyond
- Proportion of students that demonstrate each of the attributes of successful learners
- Proportion of students that demonstrate proficiency in each subject and progress on state assessments



PRIORITY AREA #3: OPERATIONS

STATUS: River Montessori Charter School has developed a sustainable Montessori program, budget, and facility that meets and supports the ambitious goals of our learning community.

GOAL: River Montessori Charter School will continue to spend prudently, increase revenue, and ensure that our Montessori program and community can survive and thrive as a free public charter school.

STRATEGIES:

- **Charter Renewal:** RMCS will successfully renew its charter for another five years.
- **Adequate and Affordable Facilities:** RMCS has made its physical home in a facility that supports our vibrant learning community well. We will ensure that RMCS continues to provide an inspiring Montessori environment within a functional, accessible, aesthetically pleasing and cost-effective school facility.
- **School Fundraising:** RMCS supplements its limited public funding with philanthropic funds and other revenues. In order to maintain and expand our Montessori learning offerings, we will increase revenue generation and fundraising.
- **School Spending:** As a public charter school, RMCS receives limited public funding, and so must spend wisely and manage its budget prudently. We will continue to offer a rich Montessori learning environment within our means.

MEASURES:

- Develop short-term and long-term plans for attaining ideal facility (at reasonable cost) to house program
- Increase fundraising as needed to support Montessori program and facility, and strengthen cash reserve for long-term fiscal stability
- Maintain balanced budget, positive cash flow, and clean audits