



# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

## Annual Report

(Including the World's Best Workforce Report)

### 2017-2018

Submitted to:

Volunteers of America

on November 1, 2018

by Alyssa Schwartz, Current Head of School  
Liesl Taylor, 2017-18 Head of School  
Chris Bewell, Director of Business Operations  
Jean Melancon, Current Board Chair  
Elizabeth Coenen, 2017-18 Board Chair

# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES)

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## Introduction

*“With regards to our mission of serving all children we push back on the idea that Montessori works for the ‘privileged’, but that less privileged children need something different; a much more strict, controlled structure. High fidelity AMI Montessori education is an aid to life and provides for optimal human development; we know that doesn’t look different based on privilege.”*

Liesl Taylor  
 Director of Elementary Pedagogy, CMES  
 2017-18 Head of School, CMES  
*In an interview with David Ayer, Montessori Public Newspaper, 8/2018*

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School is the first and only AMI recognized public Montessori Charter School in the Midwest, and one of the few in the country. As such, and to honor our mission and the children we serve, we must not stray in our approach amidst the pressures of implementing high fidelity Montessori in the public sector.

Montessori education is not given as a curriculum. Montessori education is indeed an *aide to life* encompassing all areas of development and in the context, always, of community. In Dr. Montessori’s own words, *“This is education, understood as a help to life; an education from birth, which feeds a peaceful revolution and unites all in a common aim... Mothers, fathers, politicians: all must combine in their respect and help for this delicate work...”* (*The Absorbent Mind*)

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

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

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

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

## MISSION

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

## VISION

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

In 2017-2018, CMES served children ages 5-12 in all-day Kindergarten and Elementary Montessori Environments in a 10-month program starting after Labor Day and ending in early June.

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



## Statement of Purposes

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

To wit:

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

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

### 2) CMES will increase learning opportunities for pupils:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in Math, Reading, and Science will be given in the spring as one measure of proficiency in those subject areas. Montessori General Achievement Tests (GATs) are true achievement assessments that are given on several key Montessori materials in language and in math at the beginning of the year. We then assess those same skills at the end of the year to see a child's skill level relative to their work on the Montessori materials. DIBELS assessments are given at the beginning of each academic year to gather baseline data. Children not reading at grade level are provided intervention proportionate to need and assessed in January for a benchmark and again at the end of the academic year. Cornerstone is piloting the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS) with the Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS) to measure the correspondence between exceptional Montessori Environments and strong executive function skills in all children regardless of socio-economic status or race.



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

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

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



## Authorizer Information

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

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

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



### Volunteers of America of Minnesota

Main Contact: Stephanie Olsen, Manager VOA Charter School Authorizing Program  
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 Cell: 612-270-1998  
 E-Mail: [solsen@voamn.org](mailto:solsen@voamn.org).

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





## School Governance

### School Governance Model

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

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

### Site Operations Committees

#### *Board Level*

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

**Governance:** Chris Bewell, Liz Coenen, Julie Richards, Melissa Santrach

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

**Communication and Development Committee:** Chris Bewell, Amanda Cina, Lorelee DiLorenzo, and Melissa Santrach

#### *School Level*

**Parent Involvement Committee (Part of Title I):** Kara Younkin, Celine Vanderkelen, Casey Woelk, Jeremy Sartain, Julie Richards, Amy Dvergsdal, Amanda Cina and Liesl Taylor (Head of School)

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

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

## 2017-2018 School Year Charter Public School Board

*This table contains information for ALL board members.*

*2017-2018: Election Date: May 15, 2018*

Name	Board Position	Group Affiliation (if teacher, file folder #)	Skills	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term Expiration	Phone Number	E-Mail Address	Member Meeting Attendance Rate
Amanda Cina	Trustee	Parent		6/17/16	7/1/16	6/30/19	651-336-1135	amandacina@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12
Elizabeth Coenen	Board Chair	Parent	Runs non-profit organization	5/19/15	7/13/10	6/30/18	651-493-7194	elizabethcoenen@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/12
Loralee DiLorenzo	Trustee	Community Member	Nonprofit Boards & Grant Writing	6/16/17	7/18/17	6/30/20	651-433-8500	loraleedilorenzo@cornerstone-elementary.org	10/12
Jessica Goff	Trustee	Teacher – file folder # 391619	AMI-certified Montessori teacher	6/17/16	7/1/16	6/30/19	651-774-5000	jessgoff@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/12
Robyn Ingber	Trustee	Community Member	Attorney, Finance	11/21/17	11/21/17	6/30/19	612-670-4723	robymingber@cornerstone-elementary.org	9/10
Jean Melancon	Trustee	Community Member	Previous Montessori Board Chair	6/16/17	7/18/17	6/30/20	651-336-5749	jeanmelancon@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/12
Julie Richards	Vice Chair	Parent	Youth Development	5/20/14	7/1/14	6/30/18	571-435-5350	julierichards@cornerstone-elementary.org	8/12
Melissa Santrach	Treasurer	Community Member	Previous Montessori Board Chair	5/19/15	12/15/09	6/30/18	651-303-3796	melissasantrach@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12
Liesl Taylor	Ex-Officio	Head of School	AMI-certified teacher	NA	NA	NA	651-774-5000	liesltaylor@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/12

## Policy Additions and Changes Adopted in FY 2017-2018

### *100 Series*

103: Whistleblower – revised 3-20-18

### *400 Series*

406: Public and Private Personnel Data – revised 3-20-18

### *500 Series*

516: CMES Student Medication Policy – 11-21-17

### *600 Series*

609: Religious Accommodation – revised 3-20-18

### *700 Series*

706: Acceptance and Administration of Gifts – revised 12-19-17

### *800 Series*

806: Emergency Procedures – revised 9-2017

## VOA Site Visit Report Highlights

VOA provided the following feedback to the school following the October 3, 2017, Fall Visitation.

*School Mission and Vision:* This year the school is piloting the nationally-normed Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS) examining the extent to which the learning environment fosters the development of strong executive functioning skills. Mission and vision are a significant emphasis during back-to-school training. The school is working to maintain the diverse population they were formed to serve, when the lottery sometimes is counter to that. Re-thinking how they do student recruitment and connections to various ethnic communities.

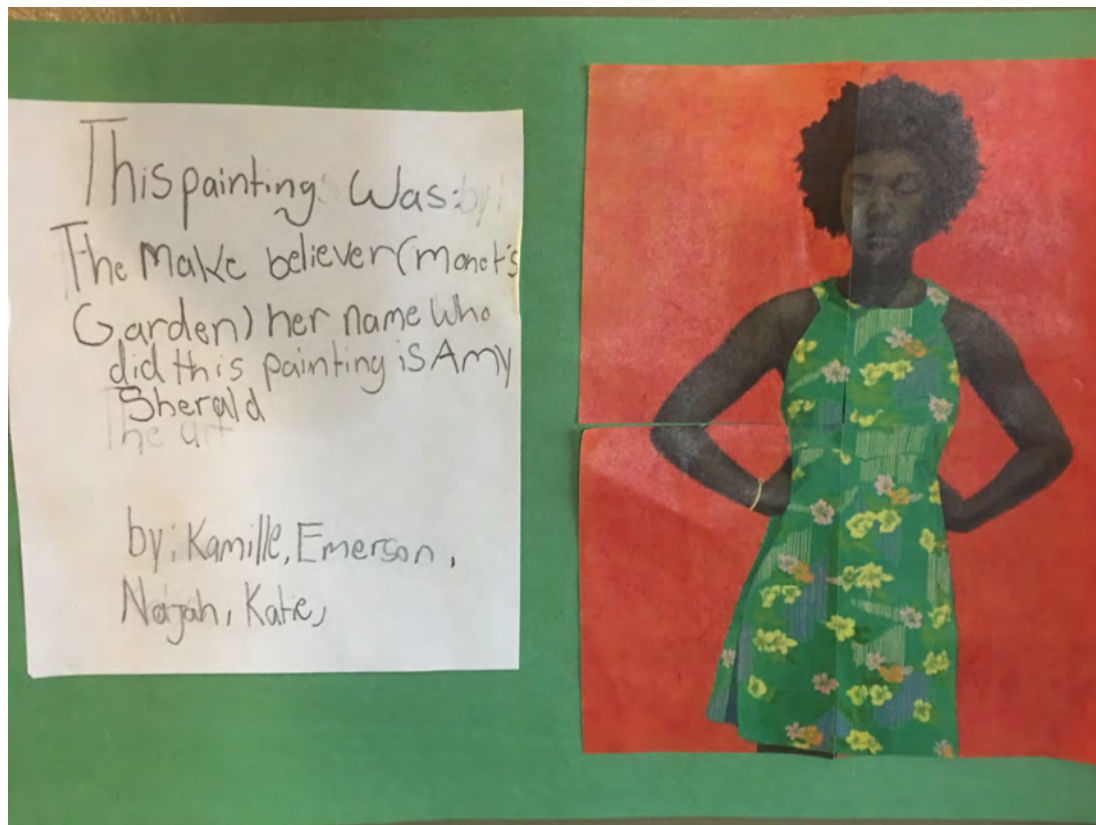
*School Culture and Learning Environment:* Assessment Scores - Because sample size is so small, the school looks at “schoolwide” trend over the three-year trend. Cornerstone also compares how their FRL population performs compared to other area Montessori schools. ELL students significantly grew last year. This is an area of continued focus.

Cornerstone’s Emergency Procedures white binder is available in each room and offices. Procedures were updated in September 2017. The school had training with Homeland Security during back to school workshops. The school is developing a closer relationship with the Boys and Girls Club as the school’s evacuation site partner.

With regard to parent engagement, CMES hosts four Parent Partnership Events each year in addition to Parent/Teacher Conferences held in October and March. Meetings are targeted to further parent awareness of Montessori and further school awareness of the cultures and diversity of the families and community they serve. The school also incorporates parents into planning school events and learning material building.

*Compliance:* The VOA-MN Compliance binder was reviewed by the authorizer and verified to be complete. The Head of School requires that lesson plans include the scope and sequence of Montessori Curriculum and the state standards. Progress is monitored during bi-weekly meetings with staff members. Cornerstone uses the Montessori-based “General Achievement Test (GAT)” scores, MCA scores, and ongoing formative assessments based on scientific observation of children working on didactic materials to directly inform next steps in instruction. A 4-week rotation of meetings/observations/mentoring sessions is followed along with bi-weekly Lead and Specialist meetings. The school staff meet bi-weekly with the Head of School to discuss successes/challenges, report content, learning focus, insights and intervention, plan for next two weeks, and support needs. Informal teacher observations are offered as well as improvement plans as needed.

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



## Board Training

### Required Statutory Training Completed by Seated Board Members

Name	Governance Basic Training Completed	Finance Basic Training Completed	Employment Basic Training Completed
Amanda Cina	9/22/2016 St Paul College Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	10/21 – 10/31/2016 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	10/11/2016 St Paul College Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Elizabeth Coenen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring	12/18/2010 Beltz, Kes, Darling & Assoc Mark Beltz and Chuck Herdegen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring
Loralee Di Lorenzo	9/21/2017 Wilder Center Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	11/27/2017 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	10/3/2017 MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Jessica Goff	3/11/2017 Avalon Charter School Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	11/18 – 11/28/2016 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	3/11/2017 Avalon Charter School Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Robyn Ingber	9/12/2018 Wilder Center Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	5/30/2018 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	
Jean Melancon	9/21/2017 Discovery Woods Montessori School Eugene Piccolo, MACS Executive Director	11/26/2017 (online) MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director	10/3/2017 MACS Tom DeGree, MACS Associate Director
Julie Richards	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke	12/6/2014 University of St Thomas Ellen McVeigh & Linda Tacke
Melissa Santrach	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring	12/18/2010 Beltz, Kes, Darling & Assoc Mark Beltz and Chuck Herdegen	12/18/2010 Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA Amy Mace and Eric Quiring

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

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

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



These board training sessions were held during scheduled board meetings during the 2017-18 school year for all school board members.

- July 18, 2017: Board Development Exercise – Share our “Special Sauce” presentation (Melissa Santrach)
- August 15, 2017: Communication and Development Presentation – “Telling Your Story” (Melissa Santrach)
- September 19, 2017: 2016-2017 MCA Results – Review & Presentation (Liesl Taylor)
- November 8, 2017: Joint Board of Directors Meeting – Presentation by Cornerstone Children on educational topics, presentation by Cornerstone Staff, Head of School and Board Chairs
- November 21, 2017: FY2016 – 2017 Audit Presentation (Clifton Larson Allen, LLP)
- January 16, 2018: Board Development Series - Cornerstone’s Mission; Equity in Education (Julie Richards)
- February 20, 2018: Board Development Series – Scene On Radio podcast Seeing White (Julie Richards)
- April 17, 2018: Board Development Series – Exercise in Identity (Julie Richards)
- May 15, 2018: Annual Meeting State of School Presentation (Liesl Taylor)
- May 15, 2018: CMES Revised FY2018 Operating Budget and Proposed FY2019 Budget – Review and Presentation (Sandy Schmidt)
- June 19, 2018: Transition Meeting Retreat with Outgoing and Incoming Board Members

Additional trainings attended by individual Board Members:

*Amanda Cina*

- No additional trainings reported

*Elizabeth Coenen*

- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International Resilience Summit - National Resilience Institute – October 16-18, 2017
- Human Systems Dynamics Workshop: Integrate: Find Your Fix That Fits – December 7, 2017
- Human Systems Dynamics Workshop: Culture Change: Moment by Moment into the Future – May 3, 2018
- Human Systems Dynamics Workshop: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Patterns not Problems – June 7, 2018

*Loralee Di Lorenzo*

- No additional trainings reported

*Jess Goff*

- No additional trainings reported

*Robyn Ingber*

- No additional trainings reported

*Jean Melancon*

- Attended the St. Paul East Side Area Business Association Annual Gala – provided an opportunity to mingle with a variety of key influential leaders and residents that may be helpful in the future for marketing our Children’s House and Elementary School options to more families and may lead to fundraising options.
- Books read and Discussed with Peer Group

- *Evicted –Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmon. About poverty and economic exploitation for those without the financial means to secure stable housing.
- *Lakota Woman* by Mary Crow Dog. Describes the cruelties perpetuated against American Indians, and of the Native American struggle for rights.
- *Just Mercy, A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. About the inherent inhumanity of the American justice system.
- Guthrie Plays including post-performance Discussion with Actors
  - *Familiar* – A Zimbabwean-American family’s daughter prepares to marry her white fiancé from Minnesota.
  - *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* – Provided for reflection on two families confronting their prejudices.
  - *West Side Story* – The cultural tension between two different ethnic groups as they interface with each other in New York.
  - *The Legend of Georgia McBride* – The many reasons underlying one’s decision to become a drag queen.

#### *Julie Richards*

- No additional trainings reported

#### *Melissa Santrach*

- Melissa’s ongoing board training this past year has been focused on making connections within the East Side community. She has attended several of the East Side Area Business Association (ESABA) monthly meetings, including a December “Lunch Bunch” meeting at Metro State University where she connected with people from Farnsworth Aerospace school, the Lower Phalen Creek Project (possible student research/service opportunities), the East Side Elders, a Native American service organization, Fire on the Bluff, which does community radio projects and storytelling, and Urban Roots, an East Side organization committed to youth internships for conservation, gardening, and healthy cooking. She attended ESABA’s fish fry in March, and the annual Gala in May, each time introducing Cornerstone to more people on the East Side.
- At the regular ESABA business meetings, Melissa has spoken about Cornerstone and its mission, hopefully sowing seeds for potential collaboration, financial support, or board volunteers. She has built a strong relationship with the Executive Director of ESABA, Paris Dunning, who has visited Cornerstone and is working with school leaders to schedule one of their monthly meetings at the school.
- Melissa held three “Discover Cornerstone” events over the course of the year which have drawn local politicians, philanthropists, and policy makers, effectively broadening Cornerstone’s network of supporters and setting the stage for continued outreach and growth.

## School Management

### 2017-18 School Management and Faculty Information

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

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 17/18	Not Returning 18/19
Christine Bewell		Director of Business Operations	7		
Hayley Bahnemann		Building Float	3		Changing Position
Thomas Fendt		Special Education Paraprofessional	2		
Catherine Kennedy		Classroom Assistant	1		
Elyse Lennington-Chaffee		Special Education Paraprofessional	1		Changing Position
Molly McDermott		Classroom Assistant	2		Changing Position
Frankie Nesbitt		Special Education Paraprofessional	4		
Maisah Outlaw		Classroom Assistant	1		Changing Position
Estefani Paz Garcia		Classroom Assistant	1		
Tatiana Reigada		Special Education Paraprofessional	1		
David Shubat		Special Education Paraprofessional	2		
Liesl Taylor	424839	Head of School	7		Changing Position
Jordan Taylor		Classroom Assistant	1		Changing Position
Andi Zimmerman		Classroom Assistant	2	X	X

## School Management

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

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

***See Appendix C for the 2017-18 CMES Organizational Chart that describes the structure of the CMES management team.***

## Administrative Professional Development

Liesl Taylor, our Head of School - *In addition to all staff trainings:*

- February 15-19; Speaker, AMI Refresher Course; breakout session *Support Services and Interventions for Children in AMI Elementary Environments*
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018
- Attendee: *Cultivating Freedom and Responsibility in the Montessori Elementary Environment* by Montessori Elementary Trainer, Jamie Rue
- DERS Training (Developmental Environment Rating Scale)

Chris Bewell, our Director of Business Operations:

- FNS Verification Reporting Webinar – MDE – November 7, 2017
- Employment Law for Charter Schools Workshop – Booth Law Group – November 17, 2017
- McKinney-Vento School Homeless Liaison Training – MDE – December 8, 2017
- Experienced Technology Coordinator Training – MDE – December 13, 2017
- FNS Procuring a Vendor Meal Training - MDE - January 16, 2018
- FNS Managing Your Vended Meal Training – MDE – January 23, 2018
- Test Administration Training – MDE – February 1, 2018
- MDE Title I, II & III Application Training – MDE – March 28, 2018

## Head of School Professional Background

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

## School Leader Review – 2017-2018

In May 2017, Cornerstone's Head of School, Liesl Taylor, informed the Board of her decision to step down as Head of School at the close of the 2017-2018 school year. In light of this, changes were made to the school leader review process to include a comprehensive assessment of administrative and pedagogical needs and areas for growth. Additionally, Liesl Taylor served on the Joint CMES-MCM Head of School Search Committee and oversaw the transition planning as it related to children, families and staff. The Head of School Evaluation Committee consisted of CMES Board Chair Liz Coenen, and President and Director of Primary Training of MCM Molly O'Shaughnessy.

The decision was made to again employ the more qualitative methods of evaluation introduced in the 2016-2017 school year. The Head of School conducted individual meetings with each staff member and met regularly with the CMES Board Chair and the President and Director of Training of MCM. In addition, the committee reviewed the 2017-2018 Parent Survey responses. The survey responses indicate that progress has been made in addressing concerns raised in the 2016-17 survey. The surveys also cited opportunities for continued growth and development – all of which were being actively addressed by the Head of School and Staff.

To conclude the 2017-18 year, CMES Board Chair, Liz Coenen, met with the Head of School to share reflections of the year. The Head of School addressed the goals and challenges she offered at the beginning of the year, commented on the things that went as planned as well as how she modified the plan as the year unfolded. Overall, each area was thoroughly and thoughtfully attended to so that by year's end significant advancements were made in all areas. The reflections from the 2017- 18 year will inform the new Head of School's 2017-18 professional and school goals. Additionally, the goals specific to the Head of School transition were emphasized and achieved. Of particular significance is the creation of a new administrative position, Director of Elementary Pedagogy, a role focused on the learning program and teacher development.





## Staffing / Teaching Faculty Information

### Teaching Staff Information

Seven of the nine teachers at CMES are licensed in their area of instruction. One teacher, Suzi Splinter, received a Personnel Variance for the 2017-2018 year and completed her Special Education licensure in the Spring of 2018. One teacher, Molly McDermott, is working towards licensure completion. Ms. McDermott has AMI certification as well as a Community Expert Waiver approved by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Name	File Folder Number	Assignment	Years Employed by the School	Left During 17/18	Not Returning 18/19
Cynthia Crooks	267424	ELL teacher	7		
Jessica Goff	391619	Upper Elementary teacher	5		
Mara Johnson	486194	Upper Elementary teacher	4		
Molly McDermott	500248	Kindergarten teacher	1		
Amber Osterkamp	455024	Lower Elementary teacher	4		
Megan Riemer	396133	Literacy Specialist	3		
Kristin Schoenherr	469500	Kindergarten teacher	2		X
Suzanne Splinter	332621	Special Education teacher	4		
Sara Wade	407070	Lower Elementary teacher	3		

### Academic Professional Development – Staff

#### All Staff In-service Trainings

The entire staff meets 5 times annually to engage in Professional Development trainings pertinent to growing in the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to carry out our mission, i.e. providing high quality Montessori education for all children. Specifically, during the 2017-2018 academic year, meetings and topics were as follows:

**Pre-program week, August 28-September 1, 2017;** Training by Board Chair, Liz Coenen, *What is a Charter School? What is the Role of the Board in Supporting Our Work?*

**Wednesday and Thursday, October 18 and 19;** Dr. Travis Wright joined us again to support our work with children in crisis. Dr. Wright observed all classroom environments on Wednesday. On Thursday the staff had a day-long debriefing and training based on case studies of our own children and Dr. Wright's observations

**Spring, 2018; Staff Professional Development Book Study;** Staff each read one of a group of books chosen to support either aspect of our mission, AMI Montessori and meeting the needs of children in the public sector.

Children Who are Not Yet Peaceful by Donna Bryant Goertz

10 Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew by Ellen Notbohm

Understanding Montessori; A Guide for Parents by Maren Schmidt M.Ed.

Education and Peace by Maria Montessori

Other People's Children by Lisa Delpit

The staff then reflected on these questions:

1. What did you learn?
2. How does it apply to your work? Give examples.
3. As a result of what you learned, what are you going to apply this spring?
4. Report back on the results

**Post Program Week, June 11-15;** evaluating our program relative to our transition to a new Head of School and more administrative capacity. Each staff member met individually with the Head of School sharing hopes and questions to support a strong transition.

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

Standing Agenda

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

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

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

Additional Staff Development Training by Individual:

Hayley Bahnemann (Classroom Float)

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training

Cynthia Crooks

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Montessorians for Social Justice Workshop; June 28-July 1, 2018

Tom Fendt (Special Education Paraprofessional)

- Montessorians for Social Justice Workshop; June 28-July 1, 2018

Jess Goff

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Montessorians for Social Justice Workshop; June 28-July 1, 2018
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018

Kevin Jewell (School Psychologist / School Based Mental Health)

- Healing Shame: Mindfulness and Self-Compassion in Clinical Practice
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Mindfulness: An Integrated Evidence-Based Approach
- Certificate in Mindfulness Based Interventions for Children and Teens

Mara Johnson

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training

Catherine Kennedy (Trained Early Childhood Classroom Assistant)

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018
- Circles of Security; 8-week session by Terri Strom, Licensed Social Worker

Molly McDermott

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018
- Circles of Security; 8-week session by Terri Strom, Licensed Social Worker
- MFES Training (Minnesota Executive Function Scale)

Amber Osterkamp

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018

Maisah Outlaw (Trained Early Childhood Classroom Assistant)

- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018
- Circles of Security; 8-week session by Terri Strom, Licensed Social Worker

Estefani Paz Garcia (Classroom Assistant)

- Montessori Center of Minnesota Teacher Assistant Training; June 11-22, 2018

Kristin Schoenherr

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training
- Association Montessori Internationale 2018 Refresher Course; February 15-19, 2018
- Circles of Security; 8-week session by Terri Strom, Licensed Social Worker
- MFES Training (Minnesota Executive Function Scale)

David Shubat (Special Education Paraprofessional)

- *Classes taken at Normandale College; seeking degree from Minnesota State University, Mankato*
  - Educational Technology – 3 credits
  - Professional Practice and Design of Individual Education Program – 2 credits
  - Learning and Human development for Diverse Learners – 4 credits
  - Individuals with Diverse and Exceptional Needs – 4 credits

Suzanne Splinter

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training

Sara Wade

- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) training

## Staff Turnover and Staff Longevity

This year we had nine licensed staff members, one with a personnel variance and one with a community expert waiver. Eight of these staff members plan to return to the classroom next year. One classroom assistant completed her elementary licensure and moved on to another teaching opportunity. One Montessori trained guide and kindergarten teacher is changing her focus and will stay at home with her family for the coming year. The retention rate for licensed staff is at 88%; for overall staff, our retention rate is 91% (or 21/23).



## School Admissions and Enrollment

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

Also included in this section is the demographic information about the children who attended CMES this past year. We have a few more male versus female children (51%-49%), approximately 16% of Cornerstone children are Hispanic, 24% are African-American, 8% are Asian, 3% are American Indian and 49% are Caucasian. 44% percent of CMES children qualify for free and reduced lunch, 17.9% of children receive special education services at CMES, and 9% of children qualify for limited English proficiency services (LEP). CMES children reside in St. Paul more than anywhere else (62% with 27% coming from Roseville/Maplewood/Oakdale/North St. Paul and Woodbury and 11% from the Twin Cities Metro area).

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Enrollment Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Acceleration & Retention Policy**

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

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

*Board Approved May 17, 2011*

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

## **Enrollment Process**

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

## Student Background and Demographics

2017-18 School Year	October	%	June	%
Total # of Students	137	-	138	-
Females	66	48.18	68	49.28
Males	71	51.82	70	50.72
American Indian	4	2.91	4	2.90
Asian	12	8.75	12	8.70
Black	31	22.64	33	23.91
Hispanic	21	15.34	21	15.22
White	69	50.36	68	49.27
Free & Reduced	58	42.34	61	44.20
Special Ed (incl. 504)	23	16.79	25	18.12
LEP	13	9.48	13	9.42

Resident District	2017-2018	
	#	%
St. Paul	85	61.59
North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale	24	17.39
Washington County/Woodbury	4	2.89
Inver Grove Heights/Cottage Grove/Eagan	6	4.35
Roseville/Little Canada	6	4.35
Minneapolis	10	7.25
Stillwater/Marine-on-St Croix	3	2.18

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



## Student Attrition

We began the school year with 22 children on the Kindergarten waitlist, 11 children on the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade waitlist, 7 children on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade waitlist, and 7 children on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade waitlist. One family moved to another state. Several families moved their children into other charter school programs that offered a middle school option. Several new families enrolled their children during the school year. We began the school year with an enrollment of 137 children and with the movements and decisions of families, total enrollment was 138 by the time the school year ended. Our Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the 2017-18 school year was 137.92. For the 2018-19 school year, we see waitlists continue to grow for Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades, a sure sign that word has spread about CMES's impact on young people's lives.

## Student Enrollment and Attrition Rates

*This table identifies the 2017-18 end of year enrollment and an estimated 2018-2019 enrollment. Data based on end of year Average Daily Membership (ADM).*

School Year	Total	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	Attrition/Retention Rates
2011-2012	58	21	22	15					89%
2012-2013	81	22	23	22	14				96%
2013-2014	102	22	21	18	21	17	2	1	94%
2014-2015	118	19	23	19	16	25	16	0	91%
2015-2016	129	24	18	21	15	16	22	13	93%
2016-2017	132	21	18	18	21	18	19	17	94%
2017-2018	138	24	24	18	16	22	18	16	90%
2018-19 est.	140	20	22	27	17	19	26	9	85%



## Academic Program / School Performance

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

At the close of our seventh year of operation, *we celebrate four years of consecutive, strong growth in both math and language skills school-wide.* With the stability of a committed, highly qualified staff and our grounding in high fidelity AMI recognized Montessori environments, we are seeing the *cumulative and beneficial effects of longevity in such a program for all children*, regardless of background or socioeconomic status, on growth; tremendous growth developmentally and continuous, strong academic growth as measured by Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

We remain intentional each year analyzing trends in academic progress as well as areas of need. We again prioritized resources and energy towards lagging skills in addition to helping the children navigate standardized assessments when the approach varies so greatly from the type of learning and experience we know is optimal.

This year we looked closely at the Minnesota Growth Scores as well as the new rating system, North Star, and are more encouraged than ever as we watch our children, including the most struggling children, demonstrate increased proficiency; catching up and surpassing proficiency measures in many cases of children in schools state-wide and particularly in St. Paul School District and our closest neighboring schools. To highlight in particular, is the score Minnesota calls percent "on track for success" based on proficiency growth. In Minnesota in Reading *among the Free and Reduced Lunch population* the percent of children on track for success state-wide is 44%. In the St. Paul School District (our neighboring schools) percent on track for success is 36%. At Cornerstone the percent of children in this demographic on track for success is 50%. Clearly there is room to grow and clearly we are supporting meaningful growth and success for children who are often underserved - consistently chipping away at that gap!

Additionally, looking at this same measure in Reading, but including "All Children", the state percent on track is 57%, St. Paul Schools 44%, and Cornerstone is 59%. All scores are discussed in detail in Assessment Test Results, following.

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

## **Learning Program Description**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### *Children's House (Kindergarten)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Language:** children are introduced to nomenclature and vocabulary through spoken-language games. They are also introduced to the 26 letters of the English alphabet and their associated sounds. With the help of a movable alphabet, children are able to write words, sentences, and stories. Reading quickly follows with materials that help explore grammar and the structure of language.
- Math:** children are taken from the concrete to the abstract through manipulation, experimentation, and invention by using math materials.

### *Elementary (Ages 6-12)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Assessment Test Results

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

### MCA-III Goal Series

MCA III Math - 2017-2018 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	16	6.25%	25%	0%
Grade 4	22	14%	36%	4.5%
Grade 5	18	22%	28%	0%
Grade 6	16	31.25%	18.75%	0%

MCA III Reading - 2017-2018 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	16	25%	25%	6.25%
Grade 4	22	18%	41%	9%
Grade 5	18	17%	67%	11%
Grade 6	16	25%	31.25%	12.5%

MCA III Science - 2017-2018 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 5	18	17%	56%	6%

CMES continues to see fairly large fluctuations in scores from year to year because with such small grade level groups one or two test scores can dramatically impact the mean of the test results. For example, one child's score can swing a grade level four to seven percentage points. In neighboring schools who most closely serve our demographic, they are assessing a large number of children, on average just under 100 children per grade, meaning their children "count", for lack of a better word, as only nine tenths of a percentage point. Though we use the information displayed above to analyze in detail how different groups of children are performing on this assessment, the most meaningful data for us to look at is whether we are showing, school-wide, continuous improvement over time. Indeed, this is the case as illustrated in the charts below ~ we celebrate this accomplishment.

*See Appendix G for the 2017-18 MCA Minnesota Report Card Details.*

## All Students Career and College Ready by Graduation

Another measure we find valuable and helpful is looking at the growth of our children relative to the growth of the children statewide and relative to the growth children attending schools they would otherwise attend in the area. These scores take a look at how much growth low performing and average-to-high performing children are making. It is expected that low performing children make high growth and average-to-high performing children make at least average (a year's worth) growth. These are called "student on track for success" scores. In math, 35% of Cornerstone children are on track for success, 37% of SPPS children are on track for success in math and 54% of children are on track for success in math State-wide. While we have work to do, it is important to note that though we are close to SPPS on this measure, we have a higher percent of children who made "High Growth" than both SPPS and the State. In reading, Cornerstone has surpassed both SPPS and the State in percentage of children 'on track for success' with 59% of children being on track for success. SPPS is 44% and the State is 57%. As a very young school, we are quickly demonstrating the power of exceptional Montessori education in supporting all children, and especially the children typically underserved, in the development of strong academic skills, step by step.

## Close the Achievement Gap(s) Among All Groups

While most of our sub-groups are too small to track trends over time, in comparison to our closest similar-demographic, similar-methodology neighboring school, Cornerstone Free and Reduced Lunch population is *outperforming children in that neighboring school by 13% in math and 16% in reading*. When comparing Cornerstone with several other schools in the area we see similar significant discrepancies and it is extremely important to note that children who are typically underserved are doing considerably well compared to how they might be doing in another area school. In Minnesota in Reading *among the Free and Reduced Lunch population* the percent of children on track for success state-wide is 44%. In the St. Paul School District (our neighboring schools) percent on track for success is 36%. At Cornerstone the percent of children in this demographic on track for success is 50%.

Important to note as well is "Growth by Proficiency Status". We would expect, as we seek to close the gap and serve typically underserved children well, that the children with the lowest proficiency make the highest growth. This is exactly what we are seeing at Cornerstone. In math among 'non-proficient students' 9% of the children state-wide made high growth, 12% of the children in SPPS made high growth, and 26% of the 'non-proficient' children at Cornerstone made high growth. 16% and 24% of state-wide and SPPS non-proficient children, respectively, made 'medium growth' in math. 40% of non-proficient children made medium growth at Cornerstone. In reading among 'non-proficient students' 12% of the children state-wide made high growth, 15% of the children in SPPS made high growth, and 24% of the 'non-proficient' children at Cornerstone made high growth.

Finally, in comparing our proficiency scores with three neighboring public magnet Montessori schools, often forced to compromise key components of strong Montessori programs, we are able to see that high-quality Montessori works for *all children* and especially for children who are struggling academically or otherwise.

Clearly there is room to grow and, clearly, we are supporting meaningful growth and success for children who are often underserved - consistently chipping away at that gap.

## **All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy**

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

Kinder DIBELS: 54% reading at grade level

1<sup>st</sup> Grade DIBELS: 64% reading at grade level

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade DIBELS: 71% reading at grade level

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade DIBELS: 50% reading at grade level

## **All Students Ready for School**

All Kindergarten children at Cornerstone are assessed with the Minnesota Executive Function Scale and the NIH Toolbox Picture Vocabulary in the Fall and again in the Spring to assess for school readiness.

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

## **Mission Specific Academic Goals**

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

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

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

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

## Attendance Rate

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

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

Our Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was 130.34, Average Daily Membership (ADM) 137.92, giving CMES a 95% attendance rate. The AMI Montessori method challenges and excites children, inspiring them to be present for what each new day brings. Cornerstone children truly enjoy their school experience and are inspired to be present as evidenced by the attendance rate.





## Finances

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

FY 15, the school's 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation, CMES had an audited fund balance of \$282,364, which represented 20.62% of expenditures, achieving its stated policy goal for the first time. In FY 16, CMES achieved an audited ending fund balance of \$350,571, which represented 21.92% of expenditures incurred for the year. In FY17, CMES achieved an audited ending fund balance of \$422,286, or 22.4% of expenditures.

This consistent and conservative stewardship of Cornerstone's financial affairs has earned Cornerstone the Minnesota Department of Education 2018 School Finance Award for 2017 Financial Reporting, and the VOA Finance Award of Excellence 2018.

## Internal Controls and Board Oversight

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

## Overview of Financial Health

The unaudited end-of-year fund balance as of June 30, 2018, was \$463,740, or 24.8%. The fact that the school has consistently achieved an uncommitted fund balance of at least 20% of expenditures since its fifth year of operation is both consistent with the school's fund balance policy and wise operating procedure, as the fund balance will help the school weather unanticipated emergencies and unforeseen events, including increased state funding holdbacks.

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

## 2016-2017 School Audit

CMES ended FY 2016-2017 with a fund balance of \$422,286, which reflected an increase of \$71,715. Sandra Schmidt, using Skyward School Finance Software, provided the accounting services. Clifton Larson Allen, Certified Public Accountants, audited the school's financial records.

Clifton Larson Allen issued a "clean" audit report with no findings. The audit report was presented to the Board of Directors by Clifton Larson Allen on November 21, 2017 and was accepted by the Board.

*See Appendix H for the 2017-18 Financial Statements and Revised Budget.*

## Innovative Practices and Implementation

### Curriculum - AMI-Certified Montessori Approach

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

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

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

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

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

## Special Education Services

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

## English Language Learners (ELL)

The English as a Second Language program at Cornerstone involved twelve children in kindergarten through sixth grade who attended from September 2017 to June 2018. Cornerstone's ELL population is very stable; most of these children have been at the school for nearly all of their elementary years. The small size and Montessori methods and materials make Cornerstone a unique setting. Language learners have the benefit of many opportunities to speak with peers and adults for a variety of reasons in different settings during the school day. Oral language develops very naturally for Cornerstone's ELL children.

The English Learners took the ACCESS language test in March of 2018. Oral language scores were higher than literacy scores for slightly over half of the children, with six of the twelve at the required competency level of 6 for Listening. There was growth for most of them in reading. None of the children's comprehensive scores were at the level of leaving ELL services.

Many of the children worked to add new vocabulary, correct pronunciation and fluent reading with expression to their set of reading skills in the 2017-18 school year. Upper elementary children enjoyed quality literature in a group that used the books as a foundation for discussions and writing projects. They often chose to read in their free time, sometimes even choosing to read books without picture support, which is a large step for language learners.

To compose a written piece using all of the correct spelling and grammar conventions of English is the most difficult skill for language learners. We will continue to teach direct lessons on the skills needed for composing various types of writing and practice these skills in the coming school year.

## Student Highlights

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

1st Annual CMES/UN Nations International Day of Peace/World Peace Day Celebration.



Students made flags of the 193 UN member nations and learned about the 30 rights documented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (this was a cross-class work in UE)



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was used as an introduction to the celebration.



UN Peace Day Dance Party





Black Lives Matter, #takeaknee  
& US civil rights project



US History Research Projects



Upper Elementary Going Out







Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School - 6th Year Graduates - June 8, 2018

## Staff Highlights

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

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

Sara Wade, Hayley Bahnemann, and Tom Fendt have graduated from their three-year Montessori Elementary training program. Congratulations!

Chris has again led the way to receiving the Charter School Finance Award as well as supporting us in receiving a spotless audit! Chris has become a leader and mentor for other programs seeking to start charters as well as supporting programs with improved compliance and accountability practices. Chris secured grants from both the O'Shaughnessy Foundation and the James Walton Foundation to support programs directly impacting the success of our children.

Liesl spoke at the AMI Refresher Course regarding Support Services for All Children in High Quality Montessori environments and wrote an article for the Montessori Public newspaper on the same topic. Liesl participated as the Elementary trained member of AMI's local pilot study for their Global School Accreditation program.

Suzi successfully completed her graduate work, becoming a licensed Special Education Teacher, among her many other areas of expertise. Congratulations Suzi!

Kevin, Megan and Cynthia continue to develop increasingly effective programs, each in their area of expertise, and remain sensitive and committed to implementing their work with the children beautifully in a Montessori setting.

Estefani and Jill successfully completed their Elementary Assistant's training. Congratulations!

Tatiana became licensed in the State of Minnesota. Congratulations, Tatiana.

Catherine was awarded the opportunity to attend the Sixth Assembly of Educateurs Sans Frontieres in Stellenbosch, South Africa, for a week this year in August! We are so excited for her to share her experience to inform our work here at Cornerstone.

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

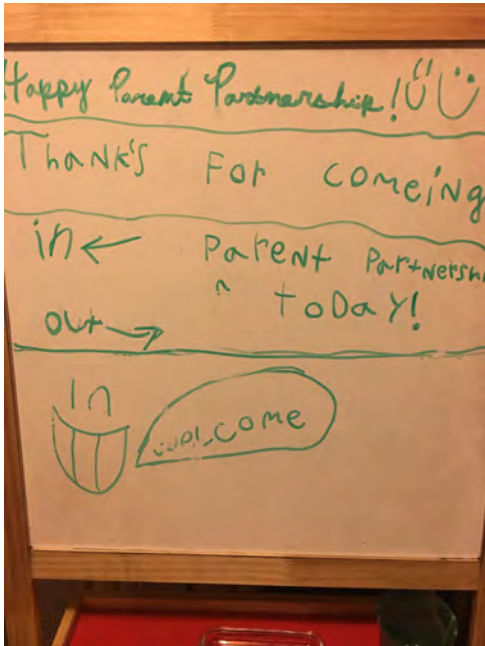


## 2017-18 Awards

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the 2018 VOA School Board Governance Award

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the 2018 VOA School Finance Award

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the Minnesota Department of Education FY 2018 School Finance Award



## Service Learning

As the service learning program has strengthened and evolved, the children continue to be supported in following their natural desire to help when and where they find a need. Again, this year, the children in the upper elementary classrooms stenciled the drains all around the neighborhood letting everyone know that the water and litter that goes into the drains goes straight into the river as part of their work with The Friends of the Mississippi. In addition, the children continued their work bi-monthly at the local food shelf and ran a food drive during our annual “Cornerstone Stone Soup” community event. On site, the children provide support and service to each other daily. Specifically, and most endearing, the older children read to younger children who are struggling during certain times of the day, such as transitions, providing them a calm and enjoyable few moments during a time of day that would otherwise be stressful and counterproductive to development. The older children also provide daily support to the Toddler community during their outside time and the relationships that are developing between our youngest and oldest members of the community are priceless.



## Future Plans – 2018-19

Cornerstone is in a growth year, as our enrollment has reached its highest point yet and as changes have been made to the administration. Under new leadership, Cornerstone seeks to continue its legacy of high-fidelity Montessori education in a diverse community. Over the last two years, we have engaged in significant work to support the school's health, for guides, specialists, support staff and children. A school-based mental health program now provides psychological resources to children and support for adults daily, and the staff and administration have worked towards an increased understanding of how trauma impacts the children in our classrooms and how to engage in self-care to mediate the effects of secondary trauma. This year we are considering more implicit trauma, as we consider our racial biases and the impact they may have on the children we work with. We are also refocusing on the quality of our Montessori pedagogy, with a new position that will help inform all aspects of our approach through a Montessori lens.

- We have hired two new positions – a Director of Elementary Pedagogy and a full-time Receptionist – to help support the Head of School. The increased capacity will allow for Cornerstone to be represented more frequently at charter school functions and in the broader community
- The Director of Elementary Pedagogy will specifically work to support guides, paraprofessional staff and children in math presentations, to ensure consistency across the program and strong relationships between the language presented to children and the language used in Minnesota state standards and standardized tests. She will also support the specialists (Special Education, Literacy, School-based Mental Health, and English Language Learning) to integrate their work smoothly with the Montessori method.
- We are implementing a campus-wide investigation into implicit bias and core competencies. During this year we will engage in training and reflection, as a community, on our own biases and will collect data related to the discipline of children by race/ethnicity.
- The Board of Directors has begun strategic planning which will inform this next phase of the school's growth. We have applied for a change of authorizer, in the hopes of more fully engaging with our peer schools and recommitting to our mission of offering a rigorous Montessori education to the culturally and economically diverse children living in St. Paul's East Side. Strategic planning will also consider our physical plant, particularly the integration of our outdoor environment, as well as how to meet our goal of increasing access to high quality AMI Montessori education.

# World's Best Workforce Report Summary

## Part A: Required for All Districts

### Annual Report

**WBWF Requirement:** For each school year, the school board must publish a report in the local newspaper, by mail or by electronic means on the district website.

*Cornerstone's Annual Report and World's Best Workforce Summaries are posted on the school website at: <http://cornerstonemontessoris.schoolinsites.com/Default.asp?PN=DocumentUploads&L=2&DivisionID=22252&DepartmentID=26115&LMID=1068886> The 2017-18 report summary document will be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education by the December 15, 2018 deadline and posted to Cornerstone's website.*

### Annual Public Meeting

**WBWF Requirement:** School boards are to hold an annual public meeting to communicate plans for the upcoming school year based on a review of goals, outcomes and strategies from the previous year. Stakeholders should be meaningfully involved, and this meeting is to occur separately from a regularly scheduled school board meeting.

*Cornerstone's Annual Public Meeting was held on September 24, 2018*

### District Advisory Committee

**WBWF Requirement:** The district advisory committee must reflect the diversity of the district and its school sites. It must include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents. Parents and other community residents are to comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members, when possible. The district advisory committee makes recommendations to the school board.

*Cornerstone's District Advisory Committee reflects the diversity of the school which includes teaching staff, support staff, parents and administration.*

### Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers

**WBWF Requirement:** WBWF requires districts to have a process in place to ensure low-income students, students of color, and American Indian students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers. The legislation also requires that districts have strategies to increase equitable access to effective and diverse teachers.

*All of Cornerstone's lead teachers and specialists (literacy, special education, ELL) are licensed and have been employed at the school for at least three years. In addition to Minnesota state teaching licenses, the lead teachers are also AMI-certified Montessori guides, highly trained to address each child's needs. We are committed to ensuring that all of our students, including low-income children and children of color, have equal access to these adults, and all children are matched to their environment based on conversations with their previous level guide and the Head of School to assure classroom diversity and the best fit for individual children. 30% of our Special Education population are on track for success in math, double the percent of Special Education children on track at our closest similar-demographic, similar-methodology neighboring school. Similarly, 50% of our Free and Reduced Lunch population are on track for success in reading, as compared to 42.6% of the same population at our comparison school. Overall Cornerstone's children are continuing to improve in the annual MCA tests: in both reading and math, children who did not meet standards declined by nearly 8% in 2018.*

*Cornerstone is committed to hiring teachers who reflect our community, although the challenge of recruiting trained AMI Montessori guides with state teaching licenses is one shared by AMI schools and teacher training programs across the country. Both kindergarten classes have a Montessori teacher who is a woman of color, and women of color also work as paraprofessionals and assistants in the lower elementary classes. We are cognizant of the message it may send to children that our lead guides are white, while support staff are more likely to be people of color, and are working with the Montessori Center of Minnesota, our landlord, to train people of color as Montessori lead guides.*

*As part of Cornerstone's community professional development, all staff have engaged in conversations around implicit bias and have had direct training around trauma and supporting children with diverse home experiences. Alicia Sojourner, Racial Equity Manager for St. Louis Park, led a conversation for families and staff around developmentally appropriate ways to talk with children about race.*

### **All Students Ready for School**

**Goal:** *85% of children enrolled in Kindergarten October 1, 2017, will be ready for school as measured by the Minnesota Executive Function Scale, NIH Toolbox, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).*

**Result:** *79.2% of children are ready for school in literacy, as measured by the DIBELS. 100% of children score average or above average in the MEFS assessment and 83% of children score average or above average in the NIH Toolbox, with only 3% scoring well below average (1 child).*

**Goal Status:** *Goal Met*

*The kindergarten year at Cornerstone is a part of the Children's House, a mixed age, developmentally appropriate classroom led by a trained AMI primary guide. The Montessori environment is known for its support of the development of strong executive function; our expectation is that children will show growth through the year. Children who are not demonstrating strong executive function are given individual support and lessons in areas of the classroom that best support this growth. Children whose DIBELS scores suggest extra support is needed are given additional reading/writing lessons with our Literacy Specialist.*

### **All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy**

**Goal:** *Between October 1 and May 1, the percent of students enrolled in third grade achieving grade-level literacy at Cornerstone Montessori will increase by 5% as measured by the DIBELS.*

**Result:** *The percent of students enrolled in third grade achieving grade-level literacy increased by 6.25%, with 68.75% of third graders achieving grade-level literacy by the end of the year. This tracks closely with 60.1% of third grade children achieving proficiency on the MCAs in reading.*

**Goal Status:** *Goal Met*

*Cornerstone began using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in fall 2017 to establish a benchmark for children's literacy; children are assessed three times each year with the DIBELS, allowing growth to be measured from fall to spring. Children whose scores indicate they are behind grade-level or at risk of falling behind are given additional lessons by our Literacy Specialist and children for whom English is not a first language work with our ELL Teacher.*



## **Close the Achievement Gap(s) Between Student Groups**

**Goal:** *The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who make up subgroups will increase 2% each year towards being on track for success and closing the gap between the subgroup and all students assessed at Cornerstone as assessed by the MCAs.*

**Result:** *Cornerstone's subgroups are often too small to measure reliably. For populations that are large enough to measure, the Special Education population decreased in being on track in reading by 1.2%, while the overall population increased by 7.6%. However, the Free and Reduced Lunch population increased in being on track in reading by 4.8%, well over the 3% goal. In math, the FRL population increased in being on track by 2.4%, while the general population increased by 7.7%. The Special Education population increased in being on track in math by 1.7%.*

**Goal Status:** *On Track (Multi-year Goal)*

*Because our populations are so small, one child's score can affect the overall measurements significantly. Overall, however, we observe that both our Special Education and Free and Reduced Lunch populations are succeeding in comparison to our neighboring schools serving similar demographics. We work very hard with our specialists (literacy, ELL, special education) to support children in these demographics.*

## **All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation**

**Goal:** *The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who are on track for success will increase 2% in reading and 3% in math from 2017 to 2018 as measured by the MCAs.*

**Result:** *The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 at Cornerstone Montessori who are on track for success in math increased 3.3% to 35.3% and increased 2.8% in reading to 58.8%.*

**Goal Status:** *Goal Met*

*We have devoted many resources in the last few years to improving children's on track for success measurements in reading, and are working toward improving math scores comparably, largely by ensuring the language children are using in math lessons correlates to the language used in state assessments. Our internal DIBELS assessments corroborate the success our children show in reading, with the majority of children reading at or near their grade levels across the school.*

## Conclusion

As we concluded the 2017-2018 year, our seventh year, we likened the stage of our school to that of a child completing the first plane of development; the profound explosion of growth in the first three years and then the tenacious building of internal systems, teams and individual skills over the next three to four years have laid a strong foundation for our young school. We remain the first and only AMI Recognized Public Montessori School in the Midwest. Again, during a year when proficiency scores remained relatively static statewide in Minnesota, or continued to trend downward in the traditional district, Cornerstone's proficiency scores increased, especially among children who are typically underserved. Much intention went into the search for a new Head of School and an expanded administrative team to support our next stages of growth, namely developing a strategic plan to clearly address sustainability of our mission, structure, systems and funding. We must continue to pay attention to the climate in our society and understand and expertly address the effects of trauma, crisis, and violence on the well-being of our children and their ability to learn; we must continue to provide what staff members need to sustain their deeply passionate commitment to this work; we must listen to our parents and creatively and consistently embrace all aspects of our work with our families who have so very much to offer; we must address issues of equity in education; we must open our school spaces and our hearts and have hard conversations to deepen understandings of ourselves and our community; we must listen; we must establish a strong donor base to fund programs so critical to our success. *The sustainability of Cornerstone depends on our ability to attend to these details.*

We remain energized for this work by the realization that our mission of providing high-quality, rigorous, authentic Montessori education in the public setting is a reality that parents, staff, and most importantly, the children experience in the exceptionality of the education at Cornerstone. Our efforts are bolstered by the vision and expertise of our new Head of School, expanded administration, and the steadfast commitment of a deeply talented staff. We look forward to sharing our continued growth towards our mission with you in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.





## Appendices

### Appendix A – VOA Accountability and Oversight System



#### **School Accountability and Authorizer Oversight System**

##### **I. School Accountability System & Authorizer Oversight**

##### **II. Authorizer Intervention Tool**

##### **III. Contract Renewal Rubric**

#### **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **BOARD GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS**

### **Is the organization effective and well run?**

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

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

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

## **SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SCHOOL SPECIFIC ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE GOALS**

**Goal increase: Term 5 year contract**

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

**2013-2014 (contract renewal year)**

**Proficiency**

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

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

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

## **Growth**

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

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

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

### **Proficiency**

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

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

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

## **Growth**

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

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

### **Goal increase: Term 5 year contract revised JUNE 2015**

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

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

### **Proficiency**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Growth**

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

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

### **2016-2017 (year 3)**

#### **Proficiency**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Growth**

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

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

### **2017-2018 (year 4)**

#### **Proficiency**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## **Growth**

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

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

## **2018-2019 (year 5 contract renewal year)**

### **Proficiency**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Growth**

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

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

## **SCHOOL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

### **Does the school exhibit strong fiscal health?**

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

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

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

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

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

## **SITE VISITS**

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

## **BOARD MEETINGS**

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

## **SCHOOL PUBLISHED ANNUAL REPORTS**

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

## **AUTHORIZER PUBLISHED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

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

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

Stephanie Olsen, Senior Manager  
VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program  
612-270-1998  
solsen@voamn.org

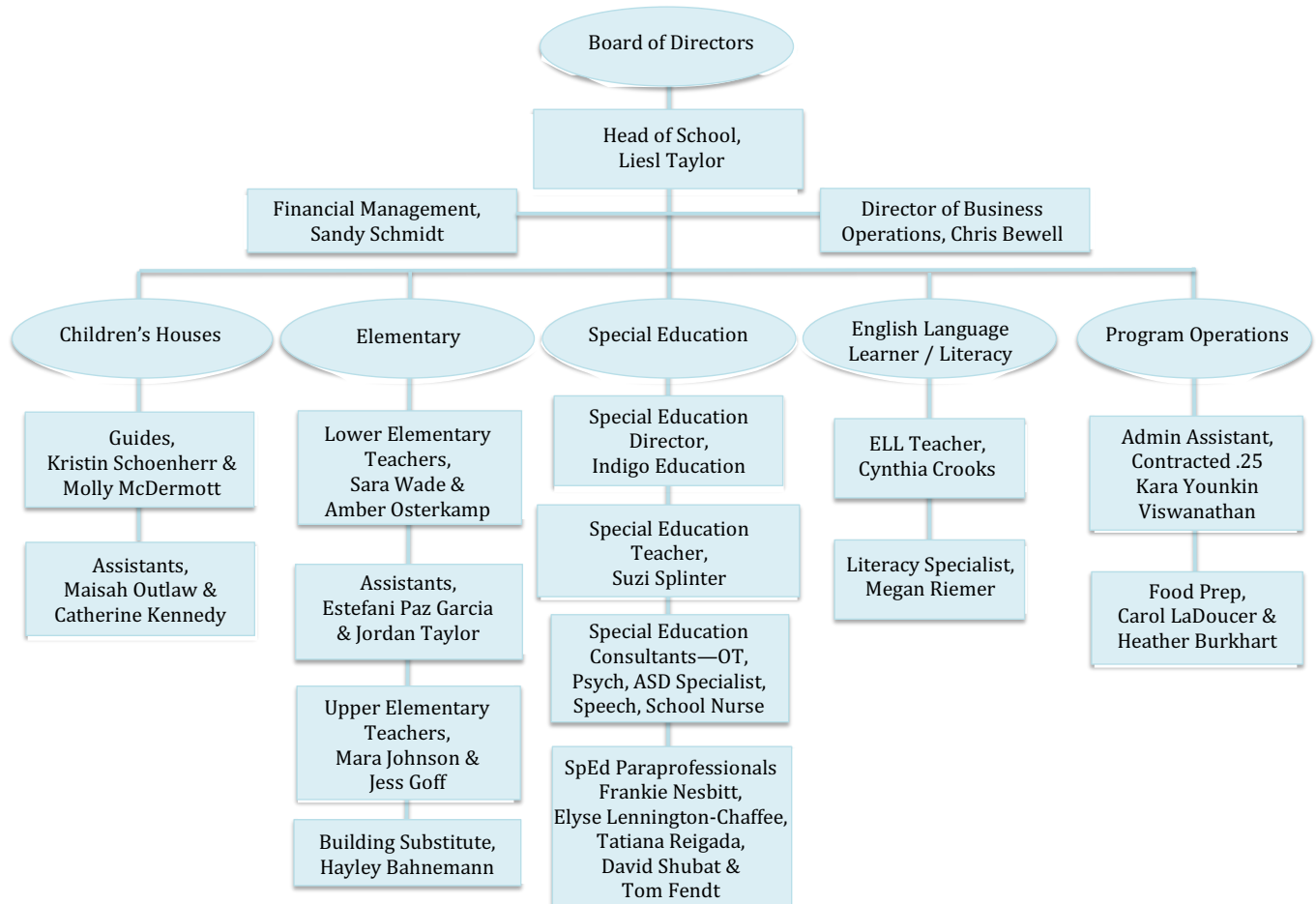
## Appendix B – Non Profit Status

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

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

## Appendix C – CMES 2017-18 Organizational Chart

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Org Chart—Positions as of 2017-2018 School Year



# Appendix D – 2017-18 Application Form

## Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Application Form for the 2017-2018 School Year Enrolling grades K-6 for the 2017-2018 School Year

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will accept applications for enrollment for the 2017-18 academic year, from **November 1 to December 1, 2016**. To be eligible for kindergarten your child must be 5 years old by September 1, 2017. If you wish to enroll your child at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School, please fill out the information and return it to:

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

For more information, please contact the school at 651.774.5000

### Student Information (Please print clearly)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
2017-2018 Grade (please circle one):      K      1      2      3      4      5      6

### Parent/Guardian Information (Please print clearly)

Mother/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Father/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act requires that you be informed that the information you provide is considered private. You are not legally required to provide any information on this enrollment application. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School staff will have access to any information you do provide and use it in the enrollment process. Failure to provide the information requested would necessitate that an enrollment decision be made without the benefit of reviewing the information you could provide. If you do provide the requested information, it is our expectation that any information you provide will be truthful.

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

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

If more people apply than the number of spaces available for a given grade, program, or facility, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will conduct a public lottery to determine admittance to the school. The only preference we give in admitting students is for children who are siblings of current Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School students or children of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School staff. In order to get this preference, parents MUST submit an application before the end of the open enrollment period. The lottery will be held on Monday, December 12, 2016, at 5:00 p.m.

(CMES Office Use Only)

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Notice of Enrollment Sent on Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E – 2017-18 Student Enrollment Form

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

1611 Ames Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55106

Phone: 651.774.5000 Fax: 651-209-0846

### Student Enrollment Form 2017-18

**Student Name** (first middle & last) \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Last School Attended \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (Sept. 1, 2017) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Home Primary Language \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian/Mother Name** (first & last) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian/Father Name** (first & last) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Siblings

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ School Attending \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

- ☐ **No, not Hispanic/Latino**
- ☐ **Yes, Hispanic/ Latino**  
(A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.)

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

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

- ☐ **American Indian or Alaska Native**  
(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.)
- ☐ **Asian**  
(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.)
- ☐ **Black or African American**  
(A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)
- ☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**  
(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.)
- ☐ **White**  
(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa)

Did your child receive special services or participate in special programs at a previous school? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Does your student have an IEP? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Does your student receive any other community services? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Provider \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any custody related issues? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Other Comments:

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act requires that you be informed that the information you provide is considered private. You are not legally required to provide any information on this enrollment form. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School staff and the Minnesota Department of Education will have access to any information you do provide. Failure to provide the requested data would necessitate that education decisions are made without the benefit of reviewing the information you could provide. If you do provide the requested information, it is our expectation that any information you provide will be truthful.

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F – CMES By-Laws

# BY-LAWS OF CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND OFFICE

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

### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND AFFILIATION

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

### ARTICLE III – MINNESOTA LAW COMPLIANCE

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

### ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

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

### ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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

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

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

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

## ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

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

## ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD



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

#### ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS

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

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

#### **ARTICLE IX – DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS**

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

#### **ARTICLE X – INDEMNIFICATION**

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

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

## **ARTICLE XI – FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

## **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

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

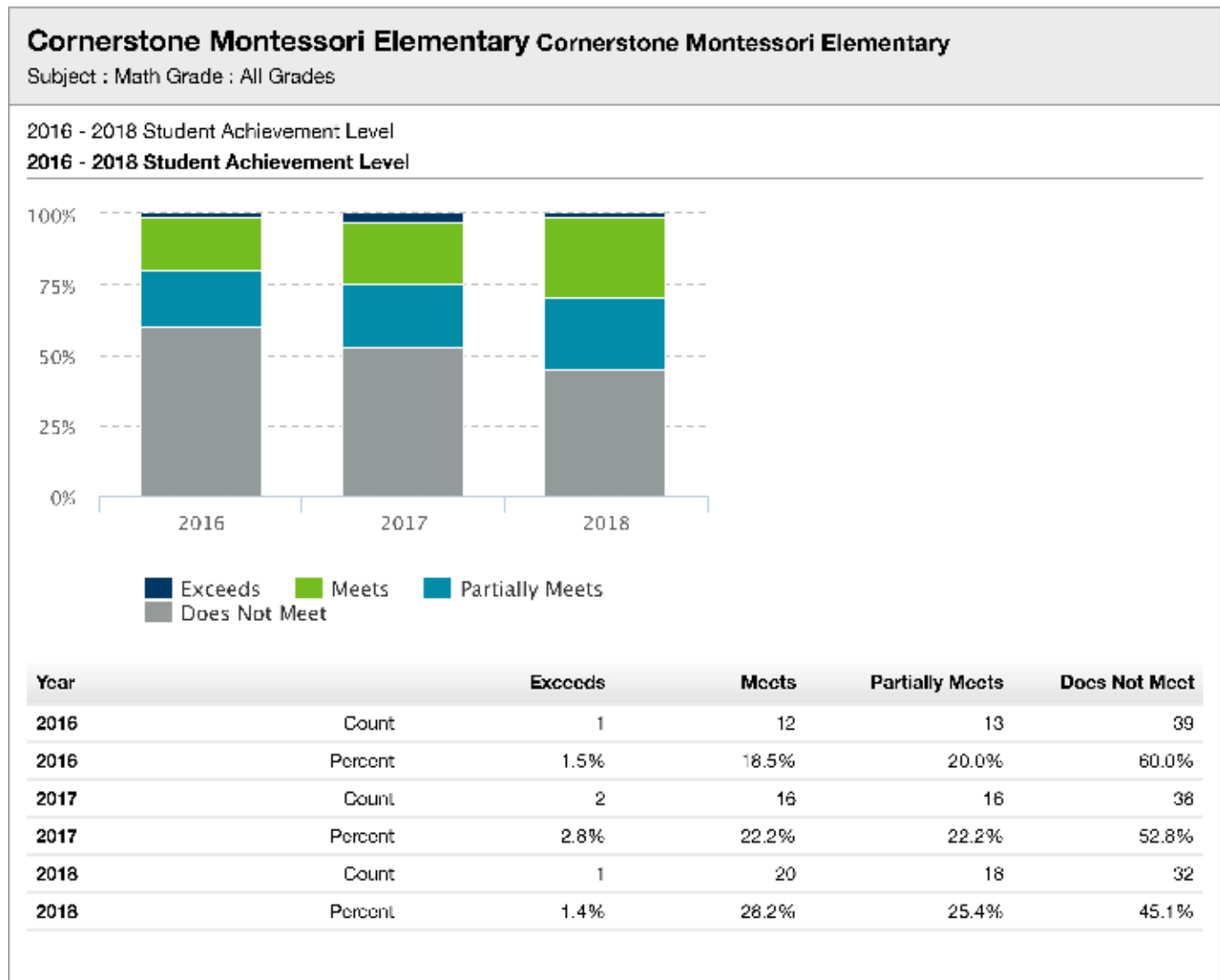
**CERTIFICATE**

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

  
Secretary

## Appendix G - 2017-18 MCA Minnesota Report Card Details

### MCA/MTAS: Are students meeting academic standards?

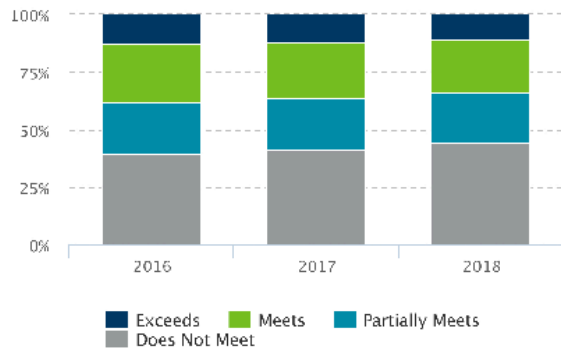


## St. Paul Public School District

Subject : Math Grade : All Grades

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level

**2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level**



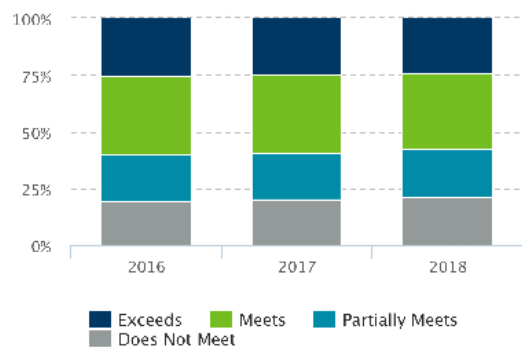
Year		Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
2016	Count	2,143	4,237	3,799	6,618
2016	Percent	12.8%	25.2%	22.6%	39.4%
2017	Count	2,018	4,026	3,735	6,891
2017	Percent	12.1%	24.2%	22.4%	41.3%
2018	Count	1,854	3,789	3,634	7,446
2018	Percent	11.1%	22.7%	21.7%	44.5%

## Statewide

Subject : Math Grade : All Grades

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level

**2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level**



Year		Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
2016	Count	110,766	149,976	88,989	84,242
2016	Percent	25.5%	34.6%	20.5%	19.4%
2017	Count	110,358	150,007	90,559	88,919
2017	Percent	25.1%	34.1%	20.6%	20.2%
2018	Count	106,240	149,282	92,008	95,115
2018	Percent	24.0%	33.7%	20.8%	21.5%



# **Minnesota Growth:** Are students making expected growth?

## **Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary**

Subject : Math

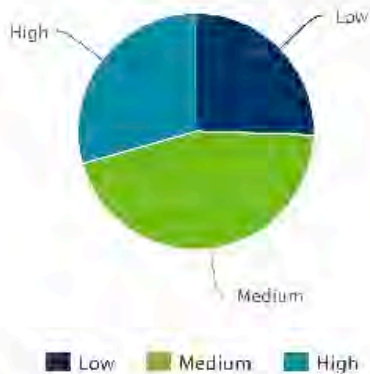
Students 'on track' for success

**Students "on track" for success**



2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

**2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students**



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	13	25.5%
Medium	23	45.1%
High	15	29.4%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

**2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students**

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	6	11.8%	7	13.7%
Medium	3	5.9%	20	39.2%
High	2	3.9%	13	25.5%

## Statewide

Subject : Math

Students 'on track' for success

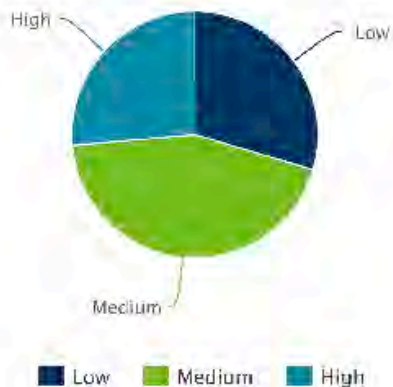
Students "on track" for success



Year	Percent On-Track
2018	54.1%

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	108,029	29.6%
Medium	157,545	44.0%
High	94,363	26.4%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	58,816	16.4%	47,213	13.2%
Medium	99,096	27.7%	58,450	16.3%
High	61,881	17.3%	32,482	9.1%

## St. Paul Public School District

Subject : Math

Students 'on track' for success

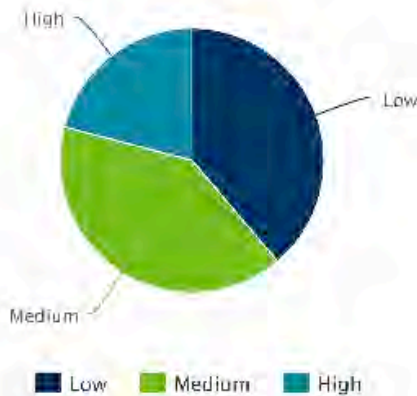
Students "on track" for success



Year	Percent On-Track
2018	36.8%

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	5,004	36.8%
Medium	5,203	40.3%
High	2,683	20.9%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	1,815	12.5%	3,389	26.3%
Medium	2,054	15.8%	3,149	24.4%
High	1,121	8.7%	1,572	12.2%

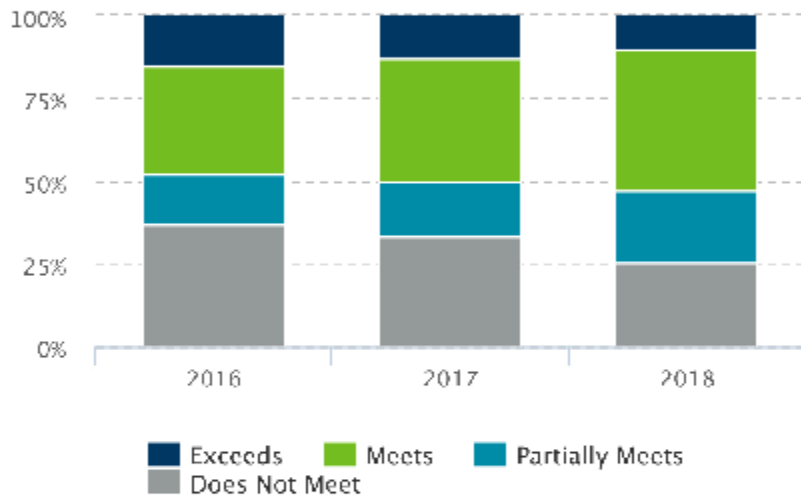
## MCA/MTAS: Are students meeting academic standards?

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Reading Grade : All Grades

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level



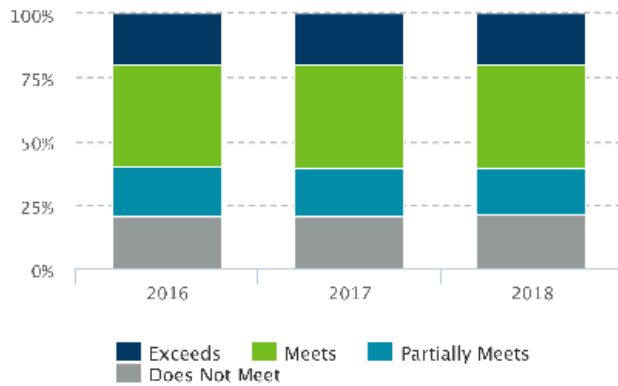
Year		Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
2016	Count	10	21	10	24
2016	Percent	15.4%	32.3%	15.4%	36.9%
2017	Count	9	27	12	24
2017	Percent	12.5%	37.5%	16.7%	33.3%
2018	Count	7	30	15	18
2018	Percent	10.0%	42.9%	21.4%	25.7%

## Statewide

Subject : Reading Grade : All Grades

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level



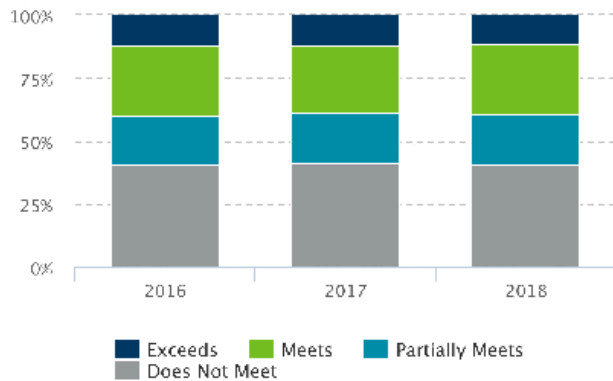
Year		Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
2016	Count	88,408	176,703	82,737	92,178
2016	Percent	20.1%	40.2%	18.8%	20.9%
2017	Count	89,355	180,670	83,390	92,270
2017	Percent	20.0%	40.5%	18.7%	20.7%
2018	Count	89,011	181,203	82,067	95,206
2018	Percent	19.9%	40.5%	18.3%	21.3%

## St. Paul Public School District

Subject : Reading Grade : All Grades

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level

2016 - 2018 Student Achievement Level



Year		Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet
2016	Count	2,064	4,768	3,415	6,935
2016	Percent	12.0%	27.7%	19.9%	40.4%
2017	Count	2,034	4,581	3,408	7,010
2017	Percent	11.9%	26.9%	20.0%	41.2%
2018	Count	1,969	4,729	3,439	6,962
2018	Percent	11.5%	27.7%	20.1%	40.7%

## Minnesota Growth: Are students making expected growth?

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Cornerstone Montessori Elementary

Subject : Reading

Students 'on track' for success

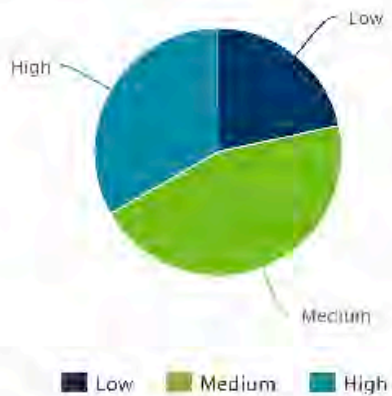
Students "on track" for success



Year	Percent On-Track
2018	58.8%

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	11	21.6%
Medium	23	45.1%
High	17	33.3%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	6	11.8%	5	9.8%
Medium	13	25.6%	10	19.6%
High	5	9.8%	12	23.5%



## Statewide

Subject : Reading

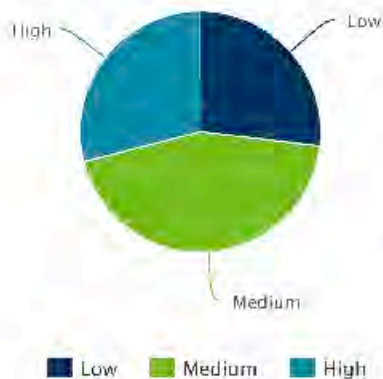
Students "on track" for success

Students "on track" for success



2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	97,508	26.9%
Medium	160,145	44.1%
High	105,089	29.0%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

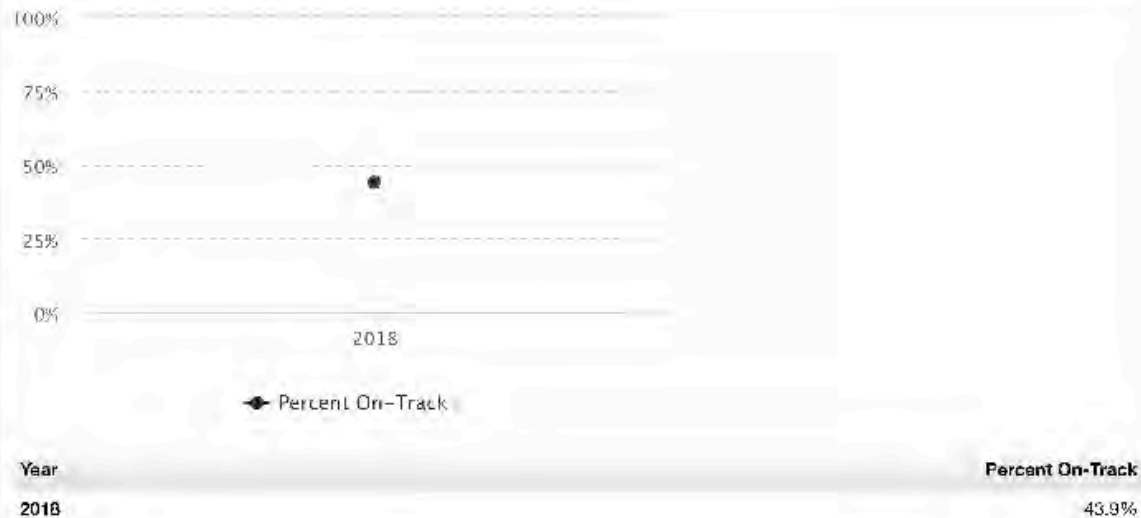
Growth Level	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	55,965	15.4%	41,543	11.5%
Medium	101,378	27.9%	58,767	16.2%
High	62,766	17.3%	42,323	11.7%

## St. Paul Public School District

Subject : Reading

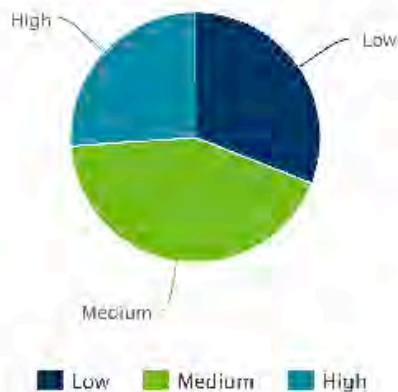
Students 'on track' for success

**Students "on track" for success**



2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students

**2017 - 2018 Student Growth, all students**



Growth Level	Count	Percent
Low	4,112	31.0%
Medium	5,694	42.9%
High	3,462	26.1%

2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students

**2017 - 2018 Growth by last year's proficiency status, all students**

	Proficient Students		Non-Proficient Students	
Growth Level	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Low	1,396	10.5%	2,716	20.5%
Medium	2,368	17.8%	3,338	25.2%
High	1,372	10.3%	2,090	15.8%

## Appendix H - 2017-18 Financial Statements and Revised Budget

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School  
Saint Paul, Minnesota  
Balance Sheet  
As of June 30, 2018**

	<b>Beginning Balance Audited June 30, 2017</b>	<b>Ending Balance Pre-Audit June 30, 2018</b>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Investments	\$ 289,017	\$ 436,616
Accounts Receivable	7,720	6,064
State Aids Receivable	189,605	210,892
Federal Aids Receivable	14,661	12,839
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	30,142	22,405
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 531,146</b>	<b>\$ 688,816</b>
<b>Total All Assets</b>	<b>\$ 531,146</b>	<b>\$ 688,816</b>
<b><u>Liabilities and Fund Balance</u></b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Salaries and Wages Payable	\$ 67,940	\$ 72,537
Accounts Payable	26,288	117,989
Line of Credit Payable	-	-
Payroll Deductions and Contributions	14,632	14,550
Deferred Revenues	-	20,000
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 108,860</b>	<b>\$ 225,076</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>		
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 350,571	\$ 422,286
Fiscal Year Net Income (Loss)	71,715	41,453
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 422,286</b>	<b>\$ 463,740</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 531,146</b>	<b>\$ 688,816</b>

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary  
Revenue and Expenses  
July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018**

<b>Annual Organization Revenue and Expense</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2017-2018 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2017-2018 Actual FYE</b>
<b>Annual Revenues</b>			
Governmental Source Revenue	Federal Funds	91,897	101,081
Earned Income Revenue & Donations	Local Funds	88,452	90,943
State Aid & Funds	State Funds	1,731,454	1,722,792
<b>Total Organization Annual Revenues</b>		<b>\$ 1,911,803</b>	<b>\$ 1,914,815</b>
<b>Annual Expenditures</b>			
Administration		\$ 103,916	\$ 91,731
District Support Services		189,588	179,562
Instructional Program Services		1,021,057	1,025,980
Instructional Support Services		36,456	23,008
Pupil Support Services		289,547	283,937
Buildings and Equipment		254,199	254,322
Fiscal and Other Fixed Cost Programs		11,932	14,823
<b>Total Organization Annual Expenditures</b>		<b>\$ 1,906,695</b>	<b>\$ 1,873,362</b>
<b>Revenue Less Expenses Increases (Decreases) Fund Balance</b>		<b>\$ 5,108</b>	<b>\$ 41,453</b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance, All Funds, July 1, 2017</b>		<b>\$ 422,286</b>	<b>\$ 422,286</b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance, All Funds, June 30, 2018</b>		<b>\$ 427,394</b>	<b>\$ 463,740</b>
<b>Percent Fund Balance to Expenditures</b>		<b>22.4%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>

\* This report is intended to display the revenue and expenditures during the fiscal year. Please note these are pre-audit numbers. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School has an annual audit of its financial statements. An audited version of the 2017-2018 financials will be made available by December 2018.