



# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

# Annual Report

## 2013-2014

Submitted to:  
Volunteers of America  
on October 1, 2014

by Liesl Taylor, Head of School, and Melissa Santrach, Board Chair

# Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES)

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## Introduction

*A group of the youngest elementary children practice tally counting. They walk through the Training Center, recording the numbers of doors, lights, and table legs in each part of the building. An employee from the Center overhears two children carrying clipboards:*

*Worker A: "This is hard and fun."*

*Worker B: "Yeah, 'same'."*

Ayla and Isaac's tally counting experience and quiet, simple comments regarding their work exemplify the essence of AMI-certified Montessori elementary education. The fact that the children are walking together, exploring their work outside the confines of their classroom, acknowledging the challenge and expressing joy in that challenge, is evidence of each child's strong understanding of freedoms balanced with responsibility, which they must demonstrate in order to leave the room, as well as evidence of an established exceptional work ethic in the classroom. The children are practicing a necessary skill in a way that appeals to every natural developmental characteristic of an elementary child. Human needs and tendencies, common to what makes all of us human ~ the need to communicate, explore, orient ourselves, and create order ~ are also all at play in this work. Not only are the children developing a necessary cognitive skill in a way that is appealing to their developmental stage, in addition, the children are using and refining skills that are at the very heart of being human.

In 2010, dedicated parents, in connection with the Montessori Center of Minnesota (MCM) wrote an application to create a K-6 charter. In January of 2011, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES) was recognized as a Minnesota Charter School authorized by Volunteers of America (VOA) and opened in the fall of 2011 serving children in grades K-2. In the fall of 2012, CMES continued to grow, serving children in grades K-3. The fall of 2013 was especially exciting as we continued to serve a larger and older group of children by opening our first Upper Elementary classroom, housing 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade children! Embracing this expansion allowed us to move yet another step towards the realization of the mission and vision of Cornerstone as it was written in our founding days and to experience in an increasingly complete way, the affects of an authentic Montessori environment on our student and family population.

### 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 2013-2014, 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 2011, 124D.10, subd. 1*) 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 book (wrote many books) about differentiating instruction. Each child moves at his or her own pace in his or her own manner. The learning environment allows for this multiplicity of children's approaches to the materials.

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

Using the Northwest Education Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in mathematics and reading to establish baseline data and areas in need of remediation or exceptional challenge for children K-6, CMES will extend its individualization of instruction by looking at standardized test data as a way to focus and inspire learning. Then, as children enter 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they will have the opportunity to take state MCA tests as an additional way to measure progress and direct learning. Lastly, and though not yet complete, CMES is in the process of developing an independent and standardized assessment tool to gauge learning and growth within the AMI-certified Montessori classroom.

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, 2011, 124D.10, subd. 14*), 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 (according to its website, voamn.org) to help people "gain self-reliance, dignity, and hope."

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.

Main Contact: Stephanie Olsen, Senior Manager of the Charter School Authorizing Program  
Address: VOA-MN Education Center, 924 – 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
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 G 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 Brenda Kes (of Beltz, Kes, Darling, and Associates – our financial management firm (BKDA))

**Governance:** Patricia Bachmeier, Chris Bewell, Liz Coenen, Jane Reilly, Melissa Santrach

**Accountability Committee:** Jane Reilly, Melissa Santrach, Liesl Taylor

**Head of School Evaluation Subcommittee:** Jane Reilly, Melissa Santrach, Molly O'Shaughnessy (MTCM)

#### *School Level*

**Parent Involvement Committee (Part of Title I):** Nick Coenen (Parent), Michelle Walker Davis (Community Member), Amber Hanson (Parent and CMES Board Liaison), Jessica Minino (Parent), Monica Morrocco (Parent), Margo Roberts (Parent), Liesl Taylor (Head of School), Nesret Theba (Parent)

**Reading Well by 3rd Grade Literacy Plan Committee/Child Study Team:** John Albright (Lower Elementary Teacher), Susan Buerger (Special Education Teacher), Kristen Campbell (Children's House Guide), Cynthia Crooks (ELL Teacher), Jessica Goff (Upper Elementary Teacher), Sylvie Gahan (Lower Elementary Teacher), Steven Kramer (Upper Elementary Teacher), Sara Papacek (Children's House Guide), Liesl Taylor (Head of School)



## 2013-2014 School Year Charter Public School Board

*This table contains information for ALL board members.*

*2013-14 Election Date: May 20, 2014*

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
Melissa Santrach	Board Chair	Community Member	Previous Montessori Board Chair	5/21/2013	12/15/09	6/30/2015	651-303-3796	melissasantrach@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/13
Benedict Moudry	Vice Chair	Community Member	Licensed teacher Great River Montessori	Founding member	12/15/09	6/30/2014	612-269-2495	benedictmoudry@cornerstone-elementary.org	6/13
Jane Reilly	Secretary	Community Member	Child in a Montessori school	5/21/2013	8/16/11	6/30/2016	651-216-4014	janereilly@cornerstone-elementary.org	13/13
Elizabeth Coenen	Treasurer	Parent	Runs non-profit organization	5/21/2013	7/13/10	6/30/2015	651-493-7194	elizabethcoenen@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/13
Patricia Bachmeier	Trustee	Community Member	AMI-certified Montessori teacher	9/14/2010	9/14/10	6/30/2014	651-295-7951	patriciabachmeier@cornerstone-elementary.org	9/13
Ambar Hanson	Trustee	Parent	Latino community expertise	8/28/2012	9/18/12	6/30/2014	612-636-8074	ambarhanson@cornerstone-elementary.org	6/13
Kristen Campbell	Trustee	Teacher – file folder #471882	AMI-certified Montessori teacher	5/21/2013	7/1/13	6/30/2016	651-774-5000	Kristencampbell@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/13
Eve Lo	Trustee	Parent		5/21/2013	7/1/13	6/30/2016		evelo@cornerstone-elementary.org	11/13
Liesl Taylor	Ex-Officio	Head of School	AMI-certified teacher	NA	NA	NA	651-774-5000	liesltaylor@cornerstone-elementary.org	12/13

## Policy Additions and Changes Adopted in FY 2013-2014

### 400 Series

492 Nepotism Policy (11/19/2013)

### 500 Series

503.01 Homeless Children Attendance Policy (3/18/2014)

### 700 Series

725 Record Retention Policy and MN Records Retention Schedule (7/16/2013)

## VOA Site Visit Report Highlights

VOA provided the following feedback to the school following the October 30, 2013, Fall Visitation.

*Mission and Vision:* CMES is observed to be a mission and vision driven school with exemplary devotion to their mission and Montessori education. The faculty and board are strongly committed to offering a quality, personally relevant education to all students. The CMES program clearly aligns to the VOA-MN Hallmarks and “Uplifting all Lives.”

*Curriculum and Instruction:* Through interviews with students, parents and teachers, as well as observations, CMES provides differentiated range of learning opportunities that will enable students to have individual learning needs met through Montessori methods. CMES teachers were observed to use time well to support student learning and time on task is maximized. CMES teachers are consistent and effective in implementing positive behavior management strategies.

*School Culture:* The CMES climate and culture are observed to be very positive and uniformly quite tranquil. Students that were interviewed reported that they are having a positive experience at CMES and are encouraged to perform well and expected to behave well. Teachers that were interviewed indicated that CMES is a positive environment to work in. Students observed are on task and motivated to learn. Anti-bullying policies and procedures are evident in both policy and practice. As a Montessori school, CMES does not appear to incorporate as much technology in classroom instruction or student learning as other, more traditional schools however, that is in no way viewed as a concern by the authorizer. CMES is encouraged to continue to advance student performance data analysis (data demonstrating if students are on track to meet the standards on the MCA exams) and data-driven decision making. The CMES environment is collaborative and student performance centered. Parents that were interviewed indicated that CMES works with them to build positive relationships and to engage them as partners in their children’s learning. Students that were interviewed expressed strong appreciation for the school faculty and nurturing learning environment.

*Special Populations:* The special education team is very competent, compassionate and devoted to compliance and serving the needs of their students. Responses provided to authorizer questions were very thorough. Based on interviews, special education and classroom teachers work collaboratively and are supported by the administration. The school has a defined Child Find process that is adhered to.

*Academic Leadership:* The school transitioned to a new director this year and the authorizer viewed the transition as very smooth and positive. The school management team continues to be well balanced in skills, genuinely thoughtful and caring, knowledgeable, attentive to authorizer suggestions and devoted to continuous improvement. The CMES management team ensures that there is strong accountability for

student achievement throughout the school, for individual employees as well as the collective school culture.

*Management Effectiveness and Legal Compliance:* CMES leadership demonstrates an exemplary command of state and legal compliance. During the fall visit the authorizer confirmed compliance with the “VOA-MN School Compliance Binder.” The authorizer also examined documents to verify that all CMES faculty have current job descriptions delineating roles, responsibilities, and qualifications. The authorizer also verified that CMES engages in faculty performance observations and evaluations aligned with defined policy and procedure guidelines. The meeting with the school management team and inspection of documents confirms that CMES complies with laws pertaining to student enrollment and discipline, as well as laws pertaining to student data – collection, storage, and distribution. The school has an exemplary record of compliance, meeting state and authorizer reporting deadlines. The school maintains and distributes annually a thorough student/family handbook and employee handbook.

## **Board Training**

Several Board training activities were geared toward planning for Cornerstone’s future. With an eye on fundraising/development, board members participated in two workshops in the fall that introduced them to the concept of “branding” Cornerstone. While this is most often thought of as a “product-oriented” activity, it is also critical for non-profits. Cornerstone must be able to carefully articulate its “personality” as well as its mission, vision, and values. The follow-up session focused on strategic messaging as well as the use of story, particularly the stories of children and families who have benefitted from all that Cornerstone has to offer.

To assist in identifying the strengths that Cornerstone would want to build on, the Governance Committee held a day-long retreat for board and staff that helped identify the positive forces in our community – those unique values and characteristics that we honor and appreciate. This collaborative activity has provided a solid foundation upon which next year’s strategic planning activities can build.

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

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

As a member of Charter School Partners, board members are invited to various seminars and presentations throughout the school year with other member charter schools. Notice of these events are passed along to board members.

Charter School Partners also offers various governance-oriented webinars in conjunction with The High Bar. These may cover such topics as board structure, committee purpose, board meeting management, and goal setting. Some members attended a webinar on Head of School Evaluation.

Four board members attended the Capstone Conference for Charter Schools in July 2013. This conference covered the following topics:

- Academic achievement and family involvement

- Finance, Governance, and Operation
- Charter School Fundraising.

*Patricia Bachmeier*

- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

*Kristen Campbell*

- Rob Davis – Marketing Workshop – BOARD MEETING August 27, 2013
- Rob Davis – Follow-up Marketing Workshop – BOARD WORKSHOP September 5, 2013
- Governance, Financial Matters and Employment Matters Training – Center for Business Excellence, University of St. Thomas December 7, 2013
- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

*Liz Coenen*

- Rob Davis – Marketing Workshop – BOARD MEETING August 27, 2013
- Rob Davis – Follow-up Marketing Workshop – BOARD WORKSHOP September 5, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

*Ambar Hanson*

- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014

*Eve Lo*

- Rob Davis – Marketing Workshop – BOARD MEETING August 27, 2013
- Rob Davis – Follow-up Marketing Workshop – BOARD WORKSHOP September 5, 2013
- Governance, Financial Matters and Employment Matters Training – Center for Business Excellence, University of St. Thomas December 7, 2013
- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

*Benedict Moudry*

- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014

*Jane Reilly*

- Capstone Conference for Charter Schools presented by CliftonLarsonAllen – July 31, 2013
- Rob Davis – Marketing Workshop – BOARD MEETING August 27, 2013
- Rob Davis – Follow-up Marketing Workshop – BOARD WORKSHOP September 5, 2013
- Give to the Max Webinar – October 3, 2013
- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Marci Cornell-Feist – Charter School CEO Evaluation (Webinar) – March 20, 2014
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

*Melissa Santrach*

- Capstone Conference for Charter Schools presented by CliftonLarsonAllen – July 31, 2013
- Rob Davis – Marketing Workshop – BOARD MEETING August 27, 2013
- Rob Davis – Follow-up Marketing Workshop – BOARD WORKSHOP September 5, 2013
- Dennis Hoogeveen – Audit Report: Cornerstone Financial Analysis – BOARD MEETING December 17, 2013
- Marci Cornell-Feist – Charter School CEO Evaluation (Webinar) – March 20, 2014
- Lease Aid Workshop – MDE – March 27, 2014
- Rick Swanson – Strategic Philanthropy – Sponsored by East Side Area Business Association – April 8, 2014
- Board Retreat – Board/Staff Appreciative Inquiry in preparation for subsequent strategic planning – April 26, 2014
- Brenda Kes, BKDA – Budget Presentation – BOARD MEETING June 17, 2014

## School Management

### 2013-14 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 13/14	Not Returning 14/15
Christine Bewell		Director of Business Operations	3		
Tiffany Heaver		Educational Assistant	3		X
Meriel Kosokar		Educational Assistant	1		X
Mirae Nace		Special Education Assistant	2		X
James Papacek		Special Education Assistant	1		
Corinne Shields		Educational Assistant	2		
Suzanne Splinter		Special Education Assistant	1		
Liesl Taylor	424839	Head of School	3		
Padee Thao		Educational Assistant	1		

### School Management

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

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

***See Appendix C for the 2013-14 CMES Organizational Chart that describes the structure of the CMES management team.***

### Administrative Professional Development

Liesl Taylor, our Head of School:

- AMI/USA Refresher Course – Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014
- CMES Board/Staff Retreat – Cornerstone April 26, 2014

Chris Bewell, our Director of Business Operations:

- Participated in MDE monthly webinars for SERVS Financial Training and ESEA Title Program
- Homeless Liaison Workshop – MDE – Roseville, MN October 15, 2013



- DAC Train the Trainer Test Security Training Webinar – MDE October 28, 2013
- ISES Special Education Transportation Workshop – Roseville, MN November 4, 2013
- DAC Pretest Editing Training Webinar – MDE January 8, 2014
- 2014 School Yard Gardens Conference – Arboretum February 28, 2014
- Lease Aide Workshop – MDE March 27, 2014
- Direct Reporter’s Webinar – MDE April 1, 2014
- ISES Business Manager’s Meeting – White Bear Lake, MN April 21, 2014
- CMES Board/Staff Retreat – Cornerstone April 26, 2014

## **Head of School Professional Background**

Liesl Taylor received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and Family Studies from St. Olaf College. Prior to pursuing her career in education, she served as the Supervisor of Early Intervention and the birth-to-three cognitive specialist in a program reaching out to an underserved population in Chicago. Liesl taught parenting classes while raising her own family and then began her career as a Montessori educator by receiving her AMI Montessori Elementary certificate through the Montessori Center of Minnesota (MCM) and her Minnesota State Teaching License through the College of St. Scholastica. Liesl worked and taught in public Montessori elementary classrooms for 12 years (two at Cornerstone) and assisted MCM teacher-training assessing student work and mentoring new teachers for three years prior to beginning her work in administration.

## **School Leader Review**

The Head of School Evaluation Committee, in conjunction with the Montessori Center of Minnesota, developed a comprehensive process for evaluation of Cornerstone’s Head of School. This process and timeline was clearly articulated and approved by the board.

The Head of School Evaluation committee consisted of CMES Board Chair Melissa Santrach, Executive Director of MCM Molly O’Shaughnessy, and Board member Jane Reilly. Jane served as Chair of the committee.

The committee began working on a comprehensive Head of School Evaluation Tool that would be used by parents, staff, and board. Working together with the Head of School, the committee created a meaningful set of questions for each constituency, with plenty of room for comment. The questionnaire would be sent to families from both the charter school and the private preschool. It would take 15 – 20 minutes to complete, and could be completed electronically (through Formsite) or on paper forms. The questionnaire was also translated into Spanish, for use either electronically or on paper.

Response rate for the survey was very good for the first year:

- 30 Parents (7 have children in the private preschool only; all others have children in CMES)
- 4 Staff members
- 4 Board members
- 2 Parent/Staff members
- 1 Parent/Board member

Gathering and analyzing the various textual response was a formidable task, but one that provided excellent feedback for the Head of School. At the end of the school year, the Head of School met again with the Head of School Evaluation Committee to reflect on her first year as Head of School at Cornerstone. She used her Professional Development Plan, created in the fall of 2013, as a framework for the discussion, and will be providing the Board with a new set of goals for 2014-2015.

## Staffing / Teaching Faculty Information

### Teaching Staff Information

Seven of the nine teachers at CMES are licensed in their area of instruction. One teacher, John Albright, was granted a waiver to teach outside his licensure area, and one teacher, Sara Papacek, is working towards licensure completion. Ms. Papacek 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 13/14	Not Returning 14/15
John Albright	465409	Lower Elementary teacher	1		
Susan Buerger	392840	Special Education teacher	1		
Kristen Campbell	471882	Kindergarten teacher	3		
Cynthia Crooks	267424	ELL teacher	3		
Jessica Goff	391619	Upper Elementary teacher	1		
Sylvie Grahan	459649	Lower Elementary teacher	3		X
Steven Kramer	325693	Upper Elementary teacher	1		X
Sara Papacek	997893	Kindergarten teacher	3		
Andrea Wood	407859	Special Education teacher	3		X

### Academic Professional Development

#### Staff:

**August, 26, 2013:** Opening Staff Meeting Review of All Policy; Health and Safety Procedures, Mission and Vision, Blood Borne Pathogens, CPR and First Aid Training, Food and Nutrition in Schools Training

**August 27, 2013:** Assessment Training/Review – NWEA MAP for Primary and MAP, Work Sampling (K Only) and Orton Gillingham as well as DRA for Reading Well by 3rd Grade

**August 28, 2013:** Freedom Balanced with Responsibility; Montessori Classroom Management

**October 17-18, 2013:** Preparing Student-led conferences

**November 15, 2013:** Communicating Effectively with Elementary Children

**February 14-17, 2014:** AMI Refresher Course

**April 26, 2014:** All-Staff/Board Retreat; Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going? Strategic Planning Session

**May 5, 2014:** Behavior Tracking and Modification with Carrie O'Rourke from the Minnesota Autism Center.

**All Staff Meetings (Monthly):** All staff must attend – Standard Agenda:

- Updates/important upcoming dates
- Policy/procedure review or changes
- Staff development topic (i.e. special education intervention training, assessment training or review, Montessori reading and topic, cultural competency training)
- Suggested topics from staff

**Head Guide Meetings (Bi-Weekly):** Head of School and all lead teachers expected to attend – Standard Agenda

- Immediate issues/concerns
- Classroom sharing – successes, challenges, assessments, progress towards goals.
- Child study (reserve at least 20 minutes for this discussion, longer if needed) and intervention discussion.

**Level Meetings (Bi-weekly at least, weekly as necessary):** lead teachers and assistants or aides as requested for each level, Head of School attends frequently and reviews reports – Standard Agenda

- Immediate issues/concerns
- Lesson planning discussion (informed by observation, children's work, assessments)
- Intervention discussion for children who may need additional support.

**Week End Reports:** Done by all lead teachers to Head of School and by Head of School to all staff.

*Additional Staff Development Training by Individual:*

John Albright

- AMI/USA Refresher Course-Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014

Kristen Campbell:

- AMI/USA Refresher Course-Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014

Sara Papacek:

- AMI/USA Refresher Course-Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014

Susan Buerger:

- None

Andrea Wood:

- None

Cynthia Crooks:

- Minnesota TESOL Annual Meeting
- Arrive Minnesota, Teaching English with Somalis workshop
- Minnesota Literacy Council workshops

Jess Goff

- AMI Course Work; 4-day January Seminar; Geometry

Sylvie Gahan:

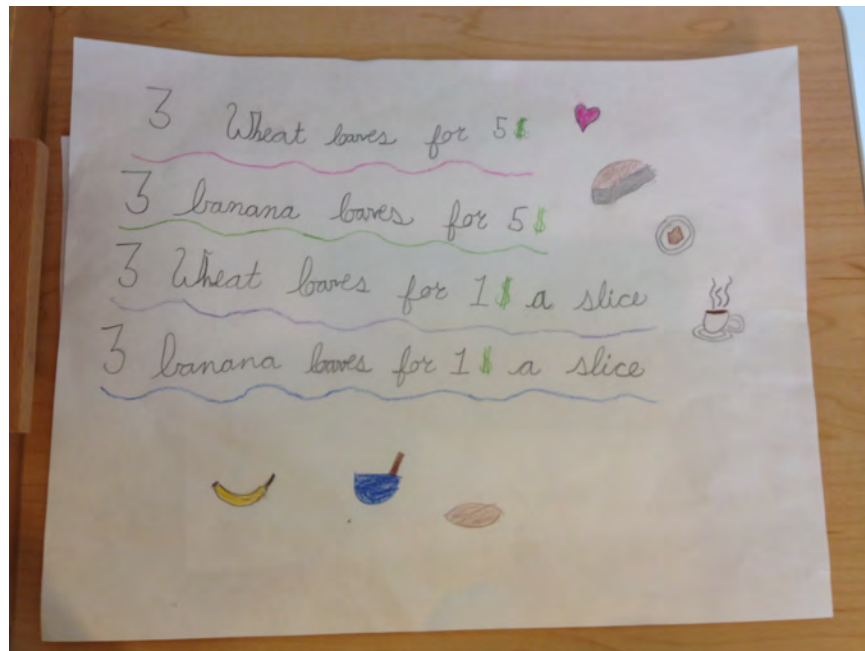
- AMI/USA Refresher Course-Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014

Steve Kramer

- AMI/USA Refresher Course-Houston, TX, February 14-17, 2014

### Staff Turnover and Staff Longevity

This year we had nine licensed staff members, two with waivers. Six of these teachers plan to return to the classroom. One teacher will be leaving the classroom and will continue to work with Cornerstone coordinating the reading/tutoring program and another is leaving teaching at this time. A part-time Special Education teacher has accepted a full-time position in another district. One of the educational assistant staff members not returning has completed her Montessori Birth-to-Three-Year Training and will be moving into a new position as lead guide in the toddler environment for the Montessori Center of Minnesota. Another educational assistant will be pursuing a lifelong dream as she begins Veterinary Medical School. The last educational assistant not returning next year is moving on in her Montessori career. The retention rate for licensed staff is at 67%; for overall staff, our retention rate is 67% (or 12/18).



## School Admissions and Enrollment

Enthusiasm continues to grow for CMES in St. Paul's East Side community, as is evidenced by our waitlists for each grade level. 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 approximately the same number of males as females (50%-50% in the past year), approximately 24% of Cornerstone children are Hispanic and 27% are African-American. Fifty-eight percent of CMES children qualify for free and reduced lunch, 18% of children receive special education services at CMES, and 23% of children qualify for limited English proficiency services (LEP). CMES children reside in St. Paul more than anywhere else (76% with 15% coming from Maplewood/Oakdale/North St. Paul and Woodbury and 9% 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 two-week 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

2013-14 School Year	October	%	June	%
Total # of Students	106	-	102	-
Females	53	50.00	51	50.00
Males	53	50.00	51	50.00
American Indian	1	.95	1	.98
Asian	17	16.03	18	17.65
Black	30	28.30	27	26.47
Hispanic	24	22.64	24	23.53
White	34	32.08	32	31.37
Free & Reduced	58	54.71	59	57.84
Special Ed (incl. 504)	11	10.38	18	17.65
LEP	21	19.81	23	22.55

Resident District	2013-2014	
	#	%
St. Paul	78	76.48
North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale	11	10.78
Washington County/Woodbury	4	3.92
Inver Grove Heights/Cottage Grove	2	1.96
Roseville	2	1.96
Minneapolis	2	1.96
Mounds View	2	1.96
Eden Prairie	1	.98

As demonstrated in these two tables, CMES works predominantly with children living in St. Paul who qualify for free and reduced lunch and identify as Hispanic, African-American, or Asian. 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 13 children on the Kindergarten waitlist, 17 children on the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade waitlist, 2 children on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade waitlist and 10 children on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade waitlist. The family of one child moved from St. Paul and left CMES during the school year. Two families living outside the St. Paul area chose to move their children to neighborhood schools closer to home. One family returned their children to the private school they attended in the previous year. Two new families enrolled their children during the second half of the school year. We began the school year with an enrollment of 106 children and with the movements and decisions of families, total enrollment was 102 by the time the school year ended. Our Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the 2013-14 school year was 104.87. Over the course of the year, we served a total of 109 children, meaning that 6% were not retained, putting our retention rate at 94%. For the 2014-15 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 2013-14 end of year enrollment and an estimated 2014-2015 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 est.	124	20	23	21	21	21	18	0	

## **Academic Program / School Performance**

As established with VOA before the school opened, our goals for academic success 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 third year, we are provided another opportunity to increasingly define areas in need of support and focus (discussed in program challenges), as we continue to pursue our goals and high expectations – namely, that each child will catch up to and exceed grade-level performance as measured by state, NWEA, and Montessori-based assessments. In the first year, we implemented an authentic Montessori program and supported a student body, most of whom were new to Montessori and thus needed to adapt to the expectations of a Montessori environment which offers the freedom to responsibly move about school, to choose work and work partners, and to follow one's interest. During our second year, the children grew in their capacity to make responsible, challenging work choices that demonstrated academic growth while at the same time fostering an increasingly caring, conscientious and giving community. This combination is the foundation of authentic Montessori elementary education: challenging, integrated work within the context of community and with concern for the good of all.

This year we were thrilled to see the next exciting step in elementary Montessori education come to fruition: Going out. Going out is a significant component of a Montessori elementary classroom. Going out evolves from a small group of children who are invested in a certain project of their own design needing to acquire some materials or more knowledge in order to bring that project to fruition. Going out experiences happen when, for example, a small group of children who are interested in minerals want to go out to the mineral exhibit and gather more information. Going out is also when children are responsible for the care of a particular animal in the classroom and they have to go out and get the materials and food that they need to care for the animal. While Montessori teachers provide supervision to ensure safety and success of a going out experience, unlike a field trip, going out trips are organized by the children; this builds leadership, organization, research skills, and a connection to the larger community. By having to go to the library to get questions answered, children have to find out when the library is open, make travel arrangements, obtain library cards, and then conduct themselves appropriately and know how to navigate an institution outside of the classroom. When children have such a foundation, developed in the context of an environment that fosters an exceptional work ethic, they have the skills to be especially successful in higher education and in society.

### **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 director Liesl Taylor is AMI certified and has been a classroom teacher in an AMI environment. 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 rooms 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

CMES conducted NWEA (Northwest Education Association) and its MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row and MCA III tests for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, as it was the second year we have had 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade children. It should be noted with such small grade level sizes, 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.

### NWEA Goal Series

NWEA MAP ASSESSMENT - Math			
Grade	# Tested	Percent at or above national median	Percent meeting or exceeding RIT growth targets
Kindergarten	22	55%	45.5%
1 <sup>st</sup>	21	27%	35%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	18	5%	23.5%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	21	33%	23.8%
4 <sup>th</sup>	17	18%	18.8%
5 <sup>th</sup>	2	50%	100%
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	100%	100%

NWEA MAP ASSESSMENT - Reading			
Grade	# Tested	Percent at or above national median	Percent meeting or exceeding RIT growth targets
Kindergarten	22	55%	36.4%
1	21	33%	20%
2	18	17%	11.1%
3	21	48%	28.6%
4	17	24%	37.5%
5	2	50%	0%
6	1	0%	0%

In reviewing our NWEA scores, we were disappointed to see that there are still some discrepancies between the skills we see demonstrated in the classroom and what the children are demonstrating on their NWEA assessments. Though we began strong reading support this year through tutors, a leveled reading program, and Orton-Gillingham instruction, and supported our children's success in the math portions of the test by allowing the use of Montessori materials, we understand that this is only a start. Cornerstone has hired a literacy specialist to make sure that our efforts are purposeful in helping the children demonstrate strong skills on their assessments. We have scheduled a second training session to support the teachers in using the NWEA data for informed instruction, and have researched the purchase of math books to support the children's knowledge of testing vocabulary and practice in doing work that looks like what they are going to be asked to do when formally assessed. We continue to have confidence that as more children experience the full cycle of each level, we will see a marked increase in their academic skills as well as their abilities to demonstrate them successfully on standardized assessments.

## AYP Goal

Indicator	4	3	2	1
Adequate Yearly Progress The school is making adequate yearly academic progress (AYP), as measured by the Minnesota Department of Education's system of accountability.	Met AYP across all subgroups for at least the last two school years	Met AYP across all subgroups for the last school year	Did not meet AYP across all subgroups for the last school year	Did not meet AYP across all subgroups for the last two school years or more

CMES awaits its Multiple Measures Rating (MMR) from the Department of Education.

## MCA-III Goal Series

MCA III Math - 2013-2014 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	21	14%	29%	10%
Grade 4	16	31%	6%	0%
Grade 5	2	0%	50%	0%
Grade 6	1	0%	100%	0%

MCA III Reading - 2013-2014 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 3	20	5%	40%	20%
Grade 4	16	6%	31%	0%
Grade 5	2	0%	50%	0%
Grade 6	1	100%	0%	0%

MCA III Science - 2013-2014 School Year – Meeting and Exceeding Standards				
Grade Level	# of Students Tested	% Partial Meeting	% Meeting	% Exceeding
Grade 5	2	0%	0%	50%

We are optimistic and excited about the upward trend in our MCA scores (realizing we've only had one year to compare), and at the same time tireless in our effort to continue programmatic improvements to support not only demonstration of continuous progress, but truly strong academic success for each child.

Our less experienced fourth years, with some children brand new to Montessori, showed only 6% meeting standards in Math and 31% meeting standards in Reading. Cornerstone has prioritized, in particular, this group of children as we implement yet more supports in terms of extra math practice times in before school programming and the support of our newly hired Literacy Specialist.

It is clear that we assessed very few fifth and sixth year children and a few were strong and one really demonstrated need. We will address that aggressively this year.

In 2013, in Math, 15% of our third year children “met” standards with 0% exceeding standards. This year, in 2014, 29% of our third year children “met” standards with 10% exceeding standards. It is exciting to compare 15% to 39% and know that we are on the right track. In addition, 14% of the children partially met Math standards.

In 2013, in Reading, 31% of our third year children “met” standards with 0% exceeding standards. This year, in 2014, 40% of our third year children “met” standards and 20% exceeded them! What a joy to compare 31% to 60%. It is worth noting that this group of third year children is the group who has been in a Montessori environment for a full cycle, plus some years in Children’s House and Toddler Community beforehand. As these children become stronger test-takers and developmentally ready to abstract (in their fourth and fifth years) we will expect to see some nice jumps in their scores, as well. We expect this trend to continue with each group of children experiencing more longevity in Montessori Environments!

### Mission-Specific Academic Goals

Cornerstone continues to see exceptional growth in our mission-specific goals of fostering development of executive functions but has not yet found a quantifiable, valid way to share our results. We deepened our work with Dr. Steven Hughes, pediatric neuropsychologist, this past year to find the right tool to measure and present this information. In addition, we have begun conversations for possible grant opportunities to fund this work.

### 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 76.81, Average Daily Membership (ADM) 81.46, giving CMES a 94% 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.

## School Climate

### Parent Involvement and Satisfaction

CMES made available a school satisfaction survey for families in spring 2014, and our response rate was 27%. Parents expressed support of the school, its growing community, and the new administration and also expressed the need for more communication, closer connection to their children's academic progress, and more opportunities to be involved as volunteers in the school and on various committees. In addition, with the rapid addition of older children (many of whom have little or no Montessori experience) and a growing population of children with special needs, Cornerstone community experienced some challenging and persistent behavior issues, which affected the overall climate of the school. Parents expressed concern, understandably, around this issue as well. We positively and aggressively addressed these issues and immediately implemented programmatic improvements to address these concerns. By the end of the school year, which culminated in an exceptionally well-attended community potluck dinner and flying up ceremony, there was positive feedback around the changes that were being experienced so far and excitement in the air about the next school year.

Administration will continue sending weekly newsletters home that help parents more fully understand both our school's culture and community, as well as their children's development and academic growth.

In addition, Cornerstone will begin surveying children old enough to participate so that we can take into account the opinions of the very people we are here to serve! Not only will this be especially valuable information for the development of our school, it will say volumes to the children about how much we truly value their opinions and input with regards to their education ~ a key component of Montessori education!

Daily, there are hugs and chatter, as well as compassion and support shared among parents, children, and staff at drop-off, pick-up and at Cornerstone events. We are proud of our warm, wonderful, diverse community and wholeheartedly look forward to fostering its continued growth in every way.

***Review Appendix F for the School Satisfaction Survey for Spring 2014 with the results.***



## Finances

Thanks to both BKDA (a financial management firm contracted with CMES) and to our Finance Committee, the school's finances are strong, and we have built a good foundation to move forward. Due to the conscientious approach of our Finance Committee Chair Liz Coenen, Board Chair Melissa Santrach, Director of Business Operations Chris Bewell, and Head of School Liesl Taylor (all of them working in concert with BKDA), CMES has wisely plotted a course to achieve a 20-30% fund balance within five years and has made significant progress in achieving that goal.

### Internal Controls and Board Oversight

Cornerstone's Finance Committee, which consists of the Board Chair, Board Treasurer, the school's contracted finance manager, and school administration, 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, 2014, was \$155,235 or 13.8%. This represents 16.6% more than budgeted. The financial goal of the school is to continue to increase enrollment and work toward a fund balance of 20% to 30%. A finance summary is presented at the end of this section. The accounting and payroll services for Cornerstone Montessori Elementary are performed by Beltz, Kes, Darling, & Associates (BKDA).

### 2012-13 School Audit

CMES ended FY 2012-13 year with a fund balance of \$124,747. This was \$38,821 better than the projected budget. Beltz, Kes, Darling & Associates, using Skyward School Finance Software, provided the accounting services. Clifton Larson Allen, Certified Public Accountants, audited the school's financial records.

Clifton Larson Allen conducted an independent audit of the financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School as of and for the year ended June 30, 2013. The financial statements were presented fairly and the auditor issued a "clean" audit report.

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, Clifton Larson Allen issued their report on December 9, 2013, and it was submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education and Volunteers of America. Clifton Larson Allen presented the 2013 Fiscal Year Audit at the December 17, 2013, School Board Meeting and the audit was accepted.

***See Appendix H for the 2013-14 Financial Statements and Revised Budget.***

# Innovative Practices and Implementation

## Curriculum - AMI-Certified Montessori Approach

*“If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little hope from it in the bettering of man’s future. For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual’s total development lags behind?”*  
*Dr. Maria Montessori*

Innovative practice is AMI 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, but remain innovative. Now, more than ever, it is of particular importance for our student population to experience authentic Montessori education in the public sector. 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 to, in part, 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**

Nineteen children of 102 (19%) qualify either for special education services or a 504 plan to provide appropriate accommodations to maximize learning. General education staff and special education staff worked tirelessly this year to develop a deeper understanding of each others' roles with the children receiving Special Education services. As a new charter school with a growing special education population, this was an area that needed much attention this year so that we develop an exceptional, flexible and compliant Special Education Program. In addition to much work learning how to work together to provide this exceptional program, we've also implemented Zones of Behavior education for all children needing extra support with external regulation of their behaviors. We also hired behavior specialists to observe the school environment for a day and then provide written feedback to staff about how we might more effectively address challenging behavior. Behavior specialists from Minnesota Autism Center also provided a two-hour training for all elementary staff in the Functions of Behavior.

Our Special Education Director for the 2013-14 school year was Carol Knicker from ISES. Our Special Education Staff consisted of two Special Education teachers (a .1 FTE and a .9 FTE), two floating Paraprofessionals, and two one-on-one Paraprofessionals.

## **English Language Learners (ELL)**

CMES has met requirements by Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to provide English language support to children identified by the Home Language Questionnaire as English Learners. Twenty-three percent of the CMES population was identified as English Learners, speaking Spanish, Hindi, Oromo, and Hmong at home.

We embrace the development of a strong ELL Program to foster exceptional literacy skills in both native languages and English for our bilingual learners. Cornerstone offers extra support with English whenever a child who enrolls has used mainly their home language since beginning to speak and doesn't yet have enough proficiency with English for his or her work at Cornerstone. Sometimes the main focus is on listening and speaking, and at other times the work is mainly on reading or writing. Adding to a child's vocabulary is also a large part of English language work. Social language develops first, and can be proficient at the same time that academic language needs much support. At Cornerstone we strive to encourage the continued use of the home language so that English is an additional language, not a replacement language.

CMES continues to employ Cynthia Crooks as the ELL teacher. Ms. Crooks used the WIDA baseline assessments in the fall. Once baselines were determined, children were either provided group instruction a couple times a week (for those who were determined to be more advanced with English) or individual lessons (for those who needed the most support in building vocabulary and understanding). Some children were advanced enough to receive limited support with a focus being placed on writing due to recognized need in this area.

Ms. Crooks met with teachers in their morning planning periods to address ways to tailor individual lessons to individual needs. Ms. Crooks continues to support ELL children in all areas of the Reading Well by Third Grade program. She monitored each child's progress and met with the Head of School quarterly to discuss needs, direction, and success of the ELL program at CMES.

In March, 23 children took the ACCESS assessment, which measures listening, reading, speaking and writing. Scores range from 1-6: 1=Entering, 2=Beginning, 3=Developing, 4=Expanding, 5=Bridging, 6=Reaching.

Overall scores

- 5 children scored between 1-1.9
- 2 children scored between 2-2.9
- 6 children between 3-3.9
- 8 children between 4-4.9
- 2 child between 5-6

Many of the children are still in the **emergent** stage according to ACCESS, but CMES staff also noted that there was continued growth in the spring, which may not be reflected in the ACCESS assessment scores. Progress reports sent home to parents in the summer summarized ACCESS reports and each child's progress while also providing suggestions of ways parents can support children's work at home throughout the summer months.

## Student Highlights

### Writing to the President!

One morning, a child procured the small movable alphabet, a classic Montessori material, and began drafting a letter, letter-by-letter, to President Obama! He was writing a thank-you note. He'd written the president earlier in the year, and had received a response, which included a letter, photograph, and other materials. In his letter, Obama reminded the child that, "...nothing is beyond your reach as long as you are willing to dream big and work hard."



### Going Out!

This year children independently planned and raised funds (by baking and selling many loaves of bread) for three different Going Out trips: to the Raptor Center, to a glass blowing factory, and to an animal rescue facility!



## **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. While our staff is relatively new (either to Montessori, to public school requirements, or to teaching all together), they have continuously demonstrated a tireless commitment to creating high-quality environments for Cornerstone children and families. What follows are some more specific highlights about the people with whom we are fortunate to work.

Jess Goff, Upper Elementary Teacher, Amber Osterkamp, Lower Elementary Teacher, and Nadiya Rapp, Lower Elementary Teacher Assistant, finished their second rigorous summer of AMI Elementary Teacher Training. They will be entering the classrooms in 2014-15 with a wealth of energy, knowledge and presentations to support exceptional classroom development and inspire the same exceptionality in the children's development socially, emotionally, and academically.

John Albright, Lower Elementary Guide, worked persistently with administration to develop the Going Out program at Cornerstone! John supported parent and Board meetings with writings to explain the philosophical importance of Going Out in Montessori Elementary, as well as the practical logistics of supporting safe and purposeful trips for the children. The end result was the successful and very exciting outings of three groups of children, one from each elementary classroom.

Liesl Taylor, Head of School, was asked to speak at NAMTA next Fall on the topic of "Grace and Courtesy in Elementary" as a result of the work she has done at Cornerstone with the children and teachers to promote development, common language, and strong progress in the area of Civility in Elementary.

Chris Bewell, our Director of Business Operations, continues to be the go-to person for those involved in charter school startups. Volunteers of America contracted with her as their CSP grant specialist to assist new charter schools in the CSP grant process.

## **2013-14 Awards**

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received a 2014 Governance Award from Volunteers of America.

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School earned a 5-year (as opposed to a 2-year), Charter Renewal Contract from Volunteers of America, and was commended for doing so.

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School received the Minnesota Department of Education 2014 School Finance Award.

## Service Learning

Each year at our Winter Solstice Event, the children and families participate in service projects by making toys for the animals at the Humane Society, making cards for residents in an area assisted living facility, and packaging rice and beans for an area food shelf.

Children experience service learning within our own school community as well, when they volunteer to support classroom communities with younger children. One such example is eight-year-old Katie volunteering to support toddlers with their arrival routine each morning before she enters her own classroom.

On the receiving end, again this fall, Cornerstone children accepted with excited eyes and grateful hearts, fleecy hats handmade for each child by the older students at Spectrum High School a charter school also authorized by VOA! This year Spectrum students also visited us in the spring to bring gifts of books for individual children and for the classrooms and to run an exciting “Field Day” for the children!

## **Operational Performance**

### **Running at Full Capacity**

Our Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the 2013-2014 school year was 104.87. Over the course of the year, we served a total of 109 children, meaning that 6% were not retained, putting our retention rate at 94%.

### **Facilities**

CMES continues to rent from the Montessori Center of Minnesota (MCM). Through thoughtful reflection and negotiation, CMES has been able to share space and other resources without distracting CMES from its overall mission and vision.

For the 2013-2014 academic year, CMES leased 5706 square feet of classroom and program space from MCM, which is a separate non-profit organization, also located at 1611 Ames Avenue in St. Paul. Most excitingly, MCM expanded in 2013-2014 to include additional classroom space solely to support the continued growth of CMES. Cornerstone, which consisted first of the main building housing two classrooms - one space intended as a classroom and one space adapted to become a classroom - and next as the main building with a 'pod', became, this year, a young (still developing) campus! Even on the coldest days our Minnesota winter could offer, the spaces between the now three buildings were bustling continuously with children, staff, and tutors as we went about our daily business at Cornerstone.

In August 2013, we excitedly gained occupancy, two days prior to the start of school, to the new classroom that was to house the first Upper Elementary community at Cornerstone! The children were involved in setting up their community both in all the usual ways elementary children establish community, and in some unique ways, too, like carrying in materials and screwing on table legs!

### **The Final Classroom**

By August of 2014, our last new custom classroom will be constructed just to the east of the second modular classroom. The facility was designed in conjunction with the CMES staff and refined based on experiences with the first two modular rooms. The space will provide an additional 1400 square feet of instructional space for the second community of upper elementary children.

## Program Challenges

As we look back over the year, we are thrilled to see that our mission of providing high-quality, rigorous, authentic Montessori education in the public setting is being realized. We see it in the effusive delight with which the children approach their work; we see it in their compassionate actions towards others, we see it in their conscientious problem-solving sessions, and we see it in their thoughtful approach to all aspects of their day. We see it in the fact that the halls and outdoor spaces are buzzing with the learning activities and explorations of children. We continue to make purposeful progress in addressing our initial program challenges, and at the same time realize that our new challenges center around establishing stability after a time of extremely rapid growth, and around establishing systems that allow for long-term sustainability both of exceptionally qualified staff and of programmatic aspects that support our mission.

## Accountability to the Standards

Cornerstone continues to see discrepancies between the work of which a child is capable in the classroom and his or her ability to demonstrate that skill correctly on abstract standardized tests. Even though we implemented strong components to support the children's reading skills, we feel that more has to be done to support our struggling readers' success. To address these issues we have done the following:

1. Cornerstone has hired a part-time literacy specialist to oversee all aspects of the development of an exceptional literacy program, including conducting student assessments, training and supporting reading tutors, collecting and reporting necessary data, and providing some direct instruction to our most struggling readers.
2. Cornerstone is continuing the Explore Corps Reading Tutor program through Volunteers of America.
3. We have provided sample, traditional textbooks as references for the children and teachers in meeting the requirements of the Minnesota academic standards, as recommended in our Montessori elementary albums. Cornerstone has purchased math and reading examples, aligned to the Minnesota standards, for first through fourth grades from Houghton-Mifflin to meet this need. We expect these materials to provide a level of competency for the children as they become accustomed to the way things are presented, as well as bridge the gap between vocabulary we use in our Montessori presentations and the vocabulary of testing.
4. We are increasing the consistency with which we provide brief daily or weekly homework exercises that are presented in the same way the material is presented in formal testing situations.
5. We are providing homework support after breakfast before children enter the classroom for the children who may not have access to homework support outside of school.
6. Cornerstone has purchased leveled readers and suggested practice exercise cards from American Reading Company's 100-step program to support the children, families, tutors, teachers, and administrators in working together to reach our literacy goals. Cornerstone will send home weekly folders this year with this information, with the support of parent volunteers.
7. Cornerstone children, families, teachers, and administration will benefit greatly this year after having received an exceptional new tool from AMI, documenting in a clear and detailed way, the linking of Common Core Standards to our Montessori presentations. (Not adjusting and aligning our Montessori presentations to the standards, which could compromise the richness of the program, were we to narrow it to the standards.) The document clearly outlines any areas ~ there are very few ~ in which Montessori presentations may not directly address a standard. Teachers will receive training to support any minor adjustments necessary in addressing these areas as

well as addressing, specifically, any differences in the Minnesota State Standards. This was an 18 + month project involving many highly qualified Montessorians from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and nationwide, and we are so grateful for their work!

Last year, Cornerstone participated in a CMES Board Workshop presented by Rob Davis titled, “Cornerstone Montessori Elementary Branding.” Rob facilitated a discussion that helped us identify key positioning statements and messages about CMES for the purposes of recruiting, fundraising, and strategic planning in accordance with our mission and vision. After much discussion, we decided it would be hard to move forward with that process until we had important conversations with the full staff. We began that process this year with a Board-Staff retreat during which we were guided, in the appreciative inquiry method, through a purposeful conversation about where we have been as a young charter and where we see ourselves going now that we are past our start-up phase. At the end of that session we prioritized what needs to happen to support those priorities.

### **Sustaining our Staff**

One such need is the need for support for our exceptional teachers, lest they become exhausted and burned out early in their careers. Cornerstone teachers are passionate, committed, certified in AMI Montessori, and licensed by the state of Minnesota. Teachers are with children and families ~ some in our year round program ~ for three and sometimes six or more years with siblings, cousins, and other extended family. Teachers and all staff need specific guidance and support around healthy coping and processing of the intense emotional experiences (positive and challenging) that happen when working with our diverse population. When we compare ourselves to programs that have been successful in sustaining this level of high quality staff and high quality education to an underserved and diverse population we realize they have strong, consistent mental health components and trainings for their staff members, something we do not yet have.

### **Parent/Guardian/School Communication**

With rapid growth and the implementation of an innovative educational method comes the need for exceptional, frequent, and consistent parent communication around all aspects of a child’s development and a family’s involvement with the school. We struggled to meet parents’ needs in this area this year, particularly with regards to providing enough information to parents so they were knowledgeable as to their child’s academic progress.



## Future Plans

Though we recognize our challenges and seek to address them head-on, we are also extremely excited by the future!

In a sincere effort to support the development of a strong, genuine, emotionally present and cohesive team of teachers, administration, and support staff, we have sought and scheduled a session with Bettie Spruill, Certified Management Effectiveness Coach (CMEC). Bettie is an international coach, management consultant, entrepreneur, public speaker and writer with 30 years' experience in the field of transformational technology. She is also a certified Master Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner and a leader in the field of ontological and ecological coaching. Bettie comes very highly recommended to us and we are looking forward to her visit in October 2014.

Also, Cornerstone has contracted with a new Special Education Director team consisting of Cory Wahl and Dave Stright of EdVisions Cooperative. We are excited to begin a long relationship with this small team who is eager to provide services tailored to our needs as a small charter school with a new Special Education program and a growing population of students being served in that program. Mr. Stright will be on-site one-half-day per week to support with oversight and training.

We have been encouraged by the progress many children made last year through their work with our Experience Corps tutors, but there is still more to be done to ensure stronger reading skills ~ and demonstration of those skills ~ in all of our children. Cornerstone has hired a Literacy Specialist, Sylvie Gahan, to support all aspects of accountability towards Minnesota's Reading Well By Third Grade program. In addition, Ms. Gahan will train and supervise tutors, and provide direct service to our most struggling readers in terms of assessment and instruction. Ms. Gahan will work closely with the teachers to make sure that the literacy support is firmly integrated in all aspects of the children's classroom work.

Cornerstone is looking forward to filling up the third and final modular classroom or "pod" with the second community of Upper Elementary children under the guidance of Daniel Bachhuber, a 25-year-veteran teacher who has joined us in his desire to embrace our mission and establish a state-of-the-art Montessori Elementary Program as we move forward. We couldn't be more thrilled!

## Conclusion

The Elementary Program is now well-established, yet we realize we are still in the very beginning years of the school and there is much work to be done! We are renewed and energized for the immensity of this work by the realization that our mission of providing high-quality, rigorous, authentic Montessori education in the public setting is a reality that many children and families are now experiencing. We see it in the effusive delight with which the children approach their work, we see it in their compassionate actions towards others, we see it in their conscientious problem-solving sessions, and we see it in their thoughtful approach to all aspects of their day, always in the context of community, whether it is their classroom community, their neighborhood, or the worldwide community. We look forward to sharing our continued growth towards our mission with you in the 2014-2015 Annual Report.



## Appendices

### Appendix A – VOA Accountability and Oversight System



#### Authorizer Accountability and Oversight System

##### 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 Accountability Plan

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 may have multiple indicators of success and the charter school’s performance on each indicator will be rated as:

- Meets standard;
- Partially Meets/Approaching standard;
- Does not meet standard.
- The highest rating a school can achieve in any section of evaluation is meets 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).

Three essential questions drive VOA-MN’s accountability of charter schools:

#### **1. Academic Program Performance - Is the school’s Learning Program a Success?**

**Academic Performance-** 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 as well as

Title 1 Designation utilizing Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) will be compiled and evaluated in the Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report by the authorizer. Charter schools are 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.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually an Academic Performance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source of academic program and performance information on the fifteen VOA-MN- authorized charter schools, including academic program, performance, and professional development data.

The intent of the Academic Performance Report is to provide an annual multi-faceted understanding of student performance at the charter school. VOA-MN authorized charter schools also have charter contract specific performance goals in academic and nonacademic areas for which they agree to be held accountable by authorizer VOA-MN. The expectations for academic performance contained in the Annual Network Report will be standardized for all schools.

In addition, VOA-MN schools will have school specific annual SMART goals for academic performance contained in the charter contract appropriate for their student population served.

The Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Academic Performance Report will contain multiple indicators of school academic success (The authorizer reserves the right to have flexibility to reasonably amend these broad standards as needed (e.g., if the state school accountability plan changes or NACSA further updates their Performance Framework):

- Students are performing well on state examinations in comparison to students at schools they might otherwise attend.
- 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.

**Example from 2013 VOA-MN Academic Performance Report**  
(As modified from NACSA Core Performance Framework & Guidance)

Are students performing well on state examinations in comparison to students at schools in their local district?
<p>★Exceeds Standard:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School's average proficiency rate exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend by 10 or more percentage points</p>
<p>Meets Standard:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School's average proficiency rate meets or exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend by up to 10 percentage points</p>
<p>Partially Meets Standard:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School's average proficiency rate meets or exceeds the average performance of students in schools they might otherwise attend by up to 5 percentage points</p>
<p>Does Not Meet Standard:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School's average proficiency rate is equal to or less than average performance of students in</p>

schools they might otherwise attend.

- School is meeting state designation expectations as set forth by state and federal accountability systems (Minnesota Multiple Measurement Rating).

**Examples from 2013 VOA-MN Academic Performance Report**  
(As modified from NACSA Core Performance Framework & Guidance)

<b>Are students making expected annual academic growth compared to their academic peers using Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR)?</b>
★Exceeds Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> At least 80% of students are making expected growth
Meets Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> Between 65-79% of students are making expected growth
Partially Meets Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> Between 50-64% of students are making expected growth
Does Not Meet Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 50% of students are making expected growth

<b>Has the school been recognized for high performance or identified for additional supports based on the federal accountability system using the MMR?</b>
★Exceeds Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> School was identified as a “Reward” school
Meets Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> School is “Celebration” school or does not have a designation
Partially Meets Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> School was identified as a “Focus” school
Does Not Meet Standard: <input type="checkbox"/> School was identified as a “Priority” school

**2. Financial Viability – Does the School Exhibit Strong Financial 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 for the current 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. The Annual VOA-MN Authorized Charter Schools Financial Performance Report contains multiple indicators of school financial strength and compliance:

VOA-MN’s financial expectations include the following:

- 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. For the Finance report, VOA-MN also determines a standard for fund balance annually based on school funding trends, funding hold-backs, averages, etc).
- The school board has a finance committee that meets monthly to review financials.
- All board members exhibit working knowledge of financial oversight.

### 3. Is the organization effective and well run?

- **Governance** – 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.

**The VOA-MN Charter School Authorizing Program publishes annually a School Board Governance Report on their network of authorized charter schools.** The purpose of this report is to be a single annual source on the board operations and compliance of the fifteen VOA-MN- authorized charter schools. Authorizer VOA-MN also observes a minimum of one school board meeting annually. VOA-MN's governance expectations 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.

• **Management & Operations** - 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 and reported on annual in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. *VOA-MN’s management and operations will be reported by the authorizer using the Formal Site Visit Rubric. Authorizer expectations include, but are not limited to:*

- The school maintains 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.
- All school staff have completed criminal background checks.
- The school meets / maintains its enrollment goals.
- 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.

• **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.

## **SITE VISITS**

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.

- **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL PRE-OPERATIONAL STAGE (Start-up Checklist)**

A charter school’s ability to successfully fulfill the three primary components of its contractual agreement with VOA-MN – academic success, fiscal viability, and organizational aptitude – depends a great deal on what happens well before the doors of the school ever open. The most complicated tasks, critical timelines, and



demanding commitments are parts of a charter school's pre-operational year(s). While a Start-Up Coordinator is often hired by the interim board to handle many functions, the volunteer efforts of board members and parents are often necessary to absorb much of the work and provide direction to any pre-operational staff.

Due to the broad scope of activities and the modest number of players involved in seeing them through, VOA-MN has organized a charter school's start-up year into a calendar. The Start-Up Progress Form is designed to help start-up groups work more efficiently and provide a relatively simple vehicle for VOA-MN oversight of start-up activities. VOA-MN hopes this tool will focus board efforts and relieve some of the inherent collective anxiety as the myriad of pre-operational tasks and deadlines mount. Progress and completion of Start-Up Checklist items will be reviewed at all board meetings in which VOA-MN representatives are in attendance, and should be included in the Board Chair or Start-Up Coordinator report at every board meeting whether the authorizer is present or not. An electronic version of this template is available for easier completion and the Board Chair or Start-Up Coordinator should maintain a "master copy" of both the paper and electronic versions. Start-Up Coordinators are required to have monthly check-in meetings with VOA-MN staff.

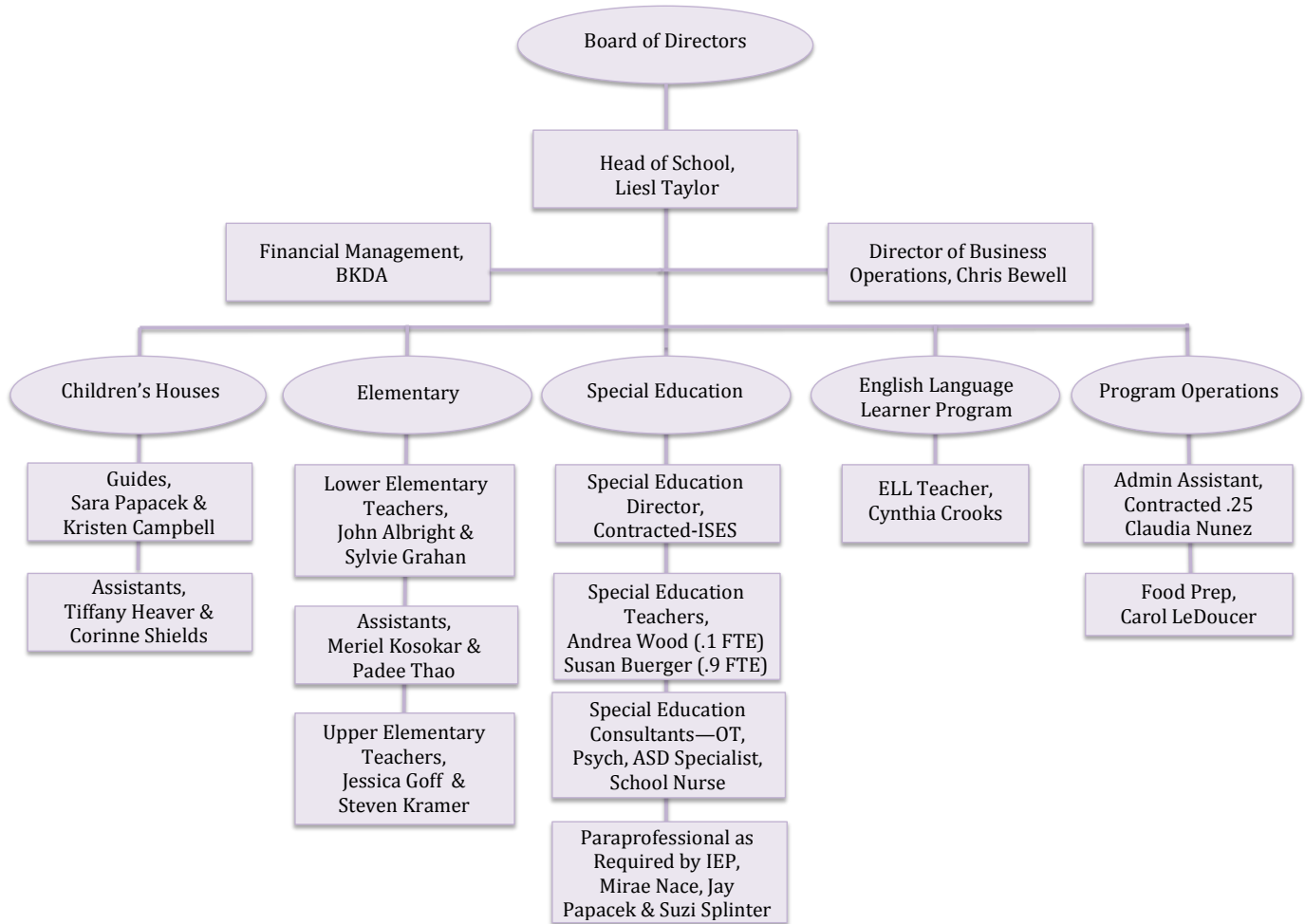
## Appendix B – Non Profit Status

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	None

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

## Appendix C – CMES 2013-14 Organizational Chart

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Org Chart—Positions as of 2013-2014 School Year



## Appendix D – 2013-14 Application Form

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Application Form for the 2013-2014 School Year Enrolling grades K-6 for the 2013-2014 School Year

Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will accept applications for enrollment for the following academic year, from **November 1 to December 1, 2012**. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

2013-2014 Grade (please circle one):                      K            1            2            3            4            5            6

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

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

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

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

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

If more people apply than the number of spaces available for a given grade, program, or facility, Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School will conduct a public lottery to determine admittance to the school. The only preference we give in admitting students is for children who are siblings of current Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School students or children of Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School staff. In order to get this preference, parents **MUST** submit an application before the end of the open enrollment period. The lottery will be held on Monday, December 10, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

(CMES Office Use Only)

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

## Appendix E – 2013-14 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 2013-14

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

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

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

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (Sept. 1, 2013) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

**Mother/Guardian Name** (first, last) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

**Father/Guardian 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 child 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 child's race to be.**

Part B. **What is the child'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 child have an IEP? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

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

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

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

Other Comments:

## Appendix F – CMES School Satisfaction Survey Spring 2014

### Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School Parent Survey Spring 2014 RESULTS

19 responses received. Survey was set up online via Survey Monkey and also available in paper form.

When the survey was published we had 102 children enrolled from 70 families.

19 families responded = 27% response rate

CMES 2013-14 Parent Satisfaction Survey		
<b>In which language would you like to complete the survey?</b> <b>¿En qué idioma desea completar la encuesta?</b>		
<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	25	100.0%
Español	0	0.0%
<b>A-1. My child is supported well at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. (19 responses)</b>		
<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	5	26.3%
Agree	11	57.8%
Agree Somewhat	3	15.7%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%
<b>A-2. I am satisfied with the school's lunch program. (19 responses)</b>		
<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	2	10.5%
Agree	9	47.3%
Agree Somewhat	4	21.0%
Disagree Somewhat	2	10.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	1	5.2%
Does Not Apply	1	5.2%

**A-3. I would recommend Cornerstone to my family or friends. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	6	31.5%
Agree	8	42.1%
Agree Somewhat	4	21.0%
Disagree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**B-1. I feel comfortable bringing my concerns to the school's administrators. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	9	47.3%
Agree	6	31.5%
Agree Somewhat	4	21.0%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**B-2. I am satisfied with the communication I receive from the school. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	0	0.0%
Agree	7	36.8%
Agree Somewhat	7	36.8%
Disagree Somewhat	3	15.7%
Disagree	1	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	5.2%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**B-3. I feel comfortable talking to my child's guide. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	8	42.1%
Agree	8	42.1%
Agree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree	1	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**B-4. Did the school host workshops or courses that helped you understand and work with your child? (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Yes	16	84.2%
No	1	5.2%
I don't know	2	10.5%



**B-5. Approximately how many workshops or courses did Cornerstone provide for parents on parenting skills (i.e., discipline, child development, etc.) this year? (19 responses)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
None	0	0.0%
1-2	3	15.7%
3-4	7	36.8%
5-6	8	42.1%
7 or more	0	0.0%
I don't know	1	5.2%

**B-6. How many workshops or parenting courses did you or your family attend this year? (19 responses)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
None	0	0.0%
1-2	16	84.2%
3-4	3	15.7%
5-6	0	0.0%
7 or more	0	0.0%
I don't know	0	0.0%

**B-7. If you DID attend workshops/courses this year, did they provide you with useful information? (19 responses)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Yes, Always	12	63.1%
Usually	7	36.8%
Not usually	0	0.0%
Never	0	0.0%

**B-8. If you DID NOT attend some or any workshops/courses at Cornerstone this year, please specify why. Choose all that apply. (24 responses in 19 results)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
I was not provided with enough information or notice	4	16.6%
Workshop(s) not held at convenient times	7	29.1%
No child care available	1	4.1%
Workshop information provided is difficult for parents to understand	0	0.0%
I was not interested in workshop topic(s)	1	4.1%
Workshop(s) not provided in language I understood easily	1	4.1%
Other—please specify:	10	41.6%

**B-9. This year when you visited Cornerstone...(19 responses)**

**Was the reception staff friendly and helpful?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	10	52.6%
Most of the time	5	26.3%
Some of the time	4	21.0%
None of the time	0	0.0%

**Were the teachers easy to talk to?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	12	63.1%

Most of the time	4	21.0%
Some of the time	3	15.7%
None of the time	0	0.0%

**Were the administrators easy to talk to?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	10	52.6%
Most of the time	6	31.5%
Some of the time	2	10.5%
None of the time	1	5.2%

**Did you feel comfortable interacting with parents of cultural and ethnic backgrounds different from yours?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	8	42.1%
Most of the time	6	31.5%
Some of the time	4	21.0%
None of the time	1	5.2%

**Did you feel welcomed?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	9	47.3%
Most of the time	6	31.5%
Some of the time	4	21.0%
None of the time	0	0.0%

**Were written communications from the school available in a language you understood?**

Result	Responses	Percentage
All of the time	19	100.0%
Most of the time	0	0.0%
Some of the time	0	0.0%
None of the time	0	0.0%

**B-10. How many parent-teacher conferences did you attend this year? (19 responses)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
None	0	0.0%
1	0	0.0%
2 or more	19	100.0%

**B-11. This year, were you contacted by Cornerstone staff regarding... Choose all that apply (48 responses)**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Your child's academic successes	12	25.0%
Your child's academic struggles	9	18.7%
Your child's positive social behavior	11	22.9%
Your child's challenging social behavior	12	25.0%
No reason, just to make contact	0	0.0%
Other—please specify	4	8.3%

**C-1. Were you asked this year about your interests, talents, or availability for volunteering at Cornerstone? (19 responses)**

**Result Responses Percentage**

Yes	16	84.2%
No	3	15.7%

**C-2. If you volunteered this year, please indicate how often for each activity: (19 responses)**

**Helping for community gatherings**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Never	14	73.6%
1 time	3	15.7%
2-3 times	2	10.5%
4 or more times	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%

**Sharing a talent or custom from your culture**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Never	17	89.4%
1 time	0	0.0%
2-3 times	1	5.2%
4 or more times	1	5.2%
Other	0	0.0%

**Organizing a school event**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Never	15	78.9%
1 time	4	21.0%
2-3 times	0	0.0%
4 or more times	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%

**Other, please specify**

Result	Responses	Percentage
Never	13	68.4%
1 time	1	5.2%
2-3 times	1	5.2%
4 or more times	1	5.2%
Other	3	15.7%

**C-3. If you did not volunteer this year, please indicate why. Choose all that apply. (22 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
I was never asked	3	13.6%
I didn't know who to contact or how to get involved	1	4.5%
I didn't feel I had the skills to volunteer	0	0.0%
I had a conflict with my work schedule	10	45.4%
I didn't feel comfortable	0	0.0%
I wasn't interested	0	0.0%
Other—please specify	8	36.3%

**D-1. My child is safe at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	6	31.5%
Agree	10	52.6%
Agree Somewhat	3	15.7%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**D-2. I feel welcome when I visit Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. (19 responses)**

Result	Responses Percentage	
Strongly Agree	6	31.5%
Agree	9	47.3%
Agree Somewhat	3	15.7%
Disagree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**D-3. The school is clean and neat. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	11	57.8%
Agree	8	42.1%
Agree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**D-4. Children demonstrated age-appropriate, respectful behavior. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	7	38.8%
Agree	7	36.8%
Agree Somewhat	5	26.3%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**E-1. My child's teacher is well qualified. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	8	42.1%
Agree	8	42.1%
Agree Somewhat	2	10.5%
Disagree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**E-2. I am satisfied with how the school supports my child's development regarding reading. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	5	26.3%
Agree	7	36.8%
Agree Somewhat	4	21.0%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	3	15.7%

**E-3. I am satisfied with how the school supports my child's development regarding math skills. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	7	36.8%
Agree	7	36.8%
Agree Somewhat	2	10.5%
Disagree Somewhat	2	10.5%
Disagree	1	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**E-4. I am satisfied with the Montessori program provided at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	5	26.3%
Agree	13	68.4%
Agree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree Somewhat	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

**E-5. My child is being supported in his/her development and is learning a lot at Cornerstone Elementary. (19 responses)**

<b>Result</b>	<b>Responses Percentage</b>	
Strongly Agree	6	31.5%
Agree	6	31.5%
Agree Somewhat	6	31.5%
Disagree Somewhat	1	5.2%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Does Not Apply	0	0.0%

## Appendix G – CMES By-Laws

**AMENDED AND RESTATED  
BY-LAWS  
OF  
CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
(Effective October 12, 2010)**

### **ARTICLE I – 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), §124D.11 (Revenue for a Charter School), MN Stat. §13D.01 et seq (Minnesota Open Meeting Law), MN Stat. §13.01 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act), 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 shall be ex-officio nonvoting board members. Director seats shall be designated as seats A, B, C, etc. initially to be drawn by lot. 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, or such earlier date as the Board may determine, one third of the directors (e.g., Directors A, B, and C) 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. Additionally, the statutory designated teacher, parent, and community member directors shall at this time be elected to three year terms. 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 from time to time without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum shall be present. Notwithstanding the foregoing, 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, the directors remaining may continue to transact business until adjournment.

**5.8 PRESENCE AT MEETINGS.** Unless at some date permitted by Minnesota law, members of the Board of Directors or of any committee, as applicable, may participate, but not be deemed present or vote, 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 shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.



- 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 or without cause, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a majority of all remaining directors of the Corporation. The Board may, but shall not be required, adopt a policy defining "cause" for the purposes of these By-laws.
- 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 MEETINGS.** Meetings are to be scheduled and conducted in accord with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law and Roberts Rules of Order. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held not less than 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 AND EMERGENCY MEETINGS.** As permitted by Minnesota law, special and emergency meetings of the Board of Directors may be called. 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. 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. Committee actions shall have no effect unless approved by the Board.
- 7.3 PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS.** Committee meetings shall be conducted in accord with the provisions of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. 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 who need not be members of the Board of Directors including, but not limited to, designating as officers the chief administrator and the chief financial officer of the School, who are serving as ex-officio members of the Board of Directors, 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 Amended and Restated By-Laws were adopted and approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors this 12 day of October 2010.

Margo Roberts, Secretary

## Appendix H - 2013-14 Financial Statements and Revised Budget

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary  
Revenue and Expenses  
July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014**

Annual Organization Revenue and Expense	Description	2013-2014 Revised Budget	2013-2014 Actual FYE
<b>Annual Revenues</b>			
Local Grant Revenue	Walton	\$ 110,036	\$ 110,036
Government Grants Revenue	Federal Grants	98,744	88,943
Earned Income Revenue	Local	48,413	38,527
State Aid Payments	State Aid	1,014,364	1,008,019
<b>Total Organization Annual Revenues</b>		<b>\$ 1,271,557</b>	<b>\$ 1,245,525</b>
<b>Annual Expenditures</b>			
Administration		\$ 71,246	\$ 49,153
District Support Services		176,862	146,043
Instructional Program Services		570,630	603,606
Instructional Support Services		24,327	26,622
Pupil Support Services		183,500	214,498
Buildings and Equipment		218,109	173,982
Fiscal and Other Fixed Cost Programs		18,529	7,607
<b>Total Organization Annual Expenditures</b>		<b>\$ 1,263,203</b>	<b>\$ 1,221,511</b>
<b>Revenue Less Expenses Becomes Fund Balance</b>		<b>\$ 8,354</b>	<b>\$ 24,014</b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance, All Funds, July 1, 2013</b>		<b>\$ 124,748</b>	<b>\$ 124,748</b>
<b>Projected Fund Balance, All Funds, June 30, 2014</b>		<b>\$ 133,102</b>	<b>\$ 148,762</b>
<b>Percent Fund Balance to Expenditures</b>		<b>10.5%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>

\* This report is intended to display the revenue and expenditures during the fiscal year. Please note these are **preliminary numbers**. Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School has an annual audit of its financial statements. A final version of the 2013-2014 audit will be made available in December 2014.

**Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of June 30, 2014, Preliminary as of August 21, 2014**

	<b>Beginning Balance Audited June 30, 2013</b>	<b>Preliminary Ending Balance June 30, 2014</b>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Investments	\$ 64,526	\$ 91,706
Accounts Receivable	-	-
Due From Other Funds	722	22,213
State Aids Receivable FY12-13	119,443	-
MDE/State Aids Receivable Balance FY13-14	-	93,710
Federal Aids Receivable FY13-14	79,378	-
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	8,244	17,858
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 272,313</b>	<b>\$ 225,488</b>
<b>Total All Assets</b>	<b>\$ 272,313</b>	<b>\$ 225,488</b>
<b><u>Liabilities and Fund Balance</u></b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Salaries and Wages Payable - FY13-14	\$ 23,011	\$ 39,841
Accounts Payable	9,503	6,473
Line of Credit Payable	-	-
Due to Other Funds	722	22,213
Payroll Deductions and Contributions	4,293	8,198
Deferred Revenues	110,036	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 147,565</b>	<b>\$ 76,726</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>		
Fund Balance as of 06-30-13	\$ 124,748	\$ 124,748
Net Income (Loss) to Date	-	24,014
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 124,748</b>	<b>\$ 148,762</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 272,313</b>	<b>\$ 225,488</b>