

CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC
CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**

AND

SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

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CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT

This CHARTER SCHOOL AGREEMENT (this “**Agreement**”) is dated as of July __, 2011 and entered into by and between the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD (the “**Board**”) and SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation (the “**School Corporation**”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 38-1802.03 of the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995, as amended (as now and hereafter in effect, or any successor statute, the “**Act**”), the Board has the authority to approve petitions to establish charter schools in the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, the School Corporation submitted a petition in accordance with Section 38-1802.02 of the Act to establish a public charter school (such petition, as amended through the date hereof, the “**Application**”; a copy is attached hereto as Exhibit A);

WHEREAS, the Board has (i) determined that the Application satisfies the requirements set forth in Subchapter II of the Act; and (ii) approved the Application subject to the execution of this Agreement by the Board and the School Corporation; and

WHEREAS, the Board and the School Corporation hope to foster a cooperative and responsive working relationship;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the agreements, provisions, and covenants herein contained, the Board and the School Corporation agree as follows:

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL

1.1 Charter. The School Corporation shall establish a public charter school (the “**School**”) in the District of Columbia and shall operate such school in accordance with the Act, this Agreement, and the Application. The Application is incorporated into this Agreement and is binding on the School Corporation. To the extent any provision in this Agreement conflicts with any provision of the Application, the provision in this Agreement shall govern. This Agreement and the Application shall constitute the School Corporation’s charter for purposes of Section 38-1802.03(h)(2) of the Act.

1.2 Term; Renewal. **A.** This Agreement shall commence on the date hereof and shall continue for a term of fifteen (15) years unless sooner terminated in accordance with Section 6.1 hereof.

B. The School Corporation may seek to renew its authority to operate the School as a public charter school in the District of Columbia pursuant to the terms of the Act. If such renewal is granted by the Board, the Board and the School Corporation shall (i) renew this

Agreement with amendments satisfactory to the Board and the School Corporation; or (ii) enter into a substitute agreement satisfactory to the Board and the School Corporation.

1.3 Location; Permits; Certifications. The School shall be located at 2616 Georgia Ave, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001 (the School Corporation's fee or leasehold interest in such property, the "**School Property**"). The School Corporation shall not operate the School at a location other than the School Property without the prior written consent of the Board through an amendment of this Agreement pursuant to the Act and Section 8.4. The Board reserves the right to delay or prohibit the School's opening until the School Corporation has provided the Board with each of the following items at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the School's first academic year or at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the School's operation at a new School Property.

A. The School Corporation shall submit to the Board (i) a report regarding the status of all Authorizations required for the School Corporation's use of the School Property, including occupancy permits and health and safety approvals; and (ii) a report identifying any lease, sublease, deed, or other instrument authorizing the use or evidencing the ownership of the School Property by the School Corporation and summarizing any financing entered into in connection therewith, along with true, correct, and complete copies of each of the documents referenced in the report. "**Authorizations**" shall mean (a) any consent, approval, license, ruling, permit, certification, exemption, filing, variance, order, decree, directive, or other authorization of, by, or with; (b) any notice to or from; (c) any declaration of or with; and (d) any registration with any governmental authority, in each case relating to the operation of the School.

B. The School Corporation shall provide the Board a copy of the certificate of occupancy for the School Property.

C. The School Corporation shall provide the Board the certificates of insurance required by Section 3.2, within the time periods set forth in Section 3.2.

D. The School Corporation shall provide the Board with a certification from an officer of the School Corporation, a member of the Board of Trustees of the School Corporation as defined in the Act (the "**Board of Trustees**"), or the chief administrator of the School that the School Corporation has conducted background checks on all employees and persons who volunteer ten (10) or more hours per week at the School.

A copy of any information submitted to the Board or otherwise required by Clauses A-D of this Section 1.3 shall be kept on file at the School.

SECTION 2. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

2.1 Mission Statement. The School Corporation shall operate the School in accordance with the mission statement set forth in the Application.

2.2 Age; Grade. In its first academic year, the School shall instruct students in Preschool through Kindergarten. In the subsequent four (4) academic years, in accordance with Schedule I, the School may instruct students in grades Preschool through Grade 4. The School shall not instruct students of any other grade without prior written consent of the Board.

2.3 Enrollment. A. Enrollment in the School shall be open to any pupil in Preschool through Grade 4, as set forth in Section 2.2, who resides in the District of Columbia. Students who are not residents of the District of Columbia may be enrolled at the School to the extent permitted by the Act. Subject to clause B below, the School Corporation shall maintain an enrollment of no more than fifty-four (54) pupils in its first academic year and no more than one hundred and fifty-seven (157) pupils in subsequent academic years substantially in accordance with Schedule I attached hereto.

B. Prior to the end of the five-year period included in Schedule I, the School Corporation may petition the Board to increase the maximum enrollment of the School from the original maximum enrollment for such five-year period provided that the School Corporation delivers to the Board (i) evidence that (a) the School Property has sufficient capacity to accommodate the increased enrollment, and (b) the quality of the educational program at the School is satisfactory and will not deteriorate as a result of such increase; (ii) a revised Schedule I; and (iii) such other items as the Board may request.

C. If eligible applicants for enrollment at the School for any academic year exceed the number of spaces available at the School for such academic year, the School Corporation shall select students pursuant to the random selection process set forth as Exhibit B attached hereto and in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

D. The School Corporation shall keep accurate records of student enrollment and daily student attendance that are sufficient to permit preparation of the reports described in Sections 4.1E and 4.1F.

2.4 Curriculum. The School Corporation shall design and implement the educational program set forth in the Application, as modified in accordance with this Agreement. The School Corporation's curriculum shall adopt student content and performance standards for all subject areas at all grades or other performance levels served by the School Corporation. The School Corporation's curriculum shall be aligned with the School Corporation's educational program. The School Corporation shall petition the Board in writing for an amendment to this Agreement for any material change in the curriculum of the School that is a significant departure from the curriculum in the plan set forth in the Application as amended in accordance with this Agreement.

2.5 Students with Disabilities. At least thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the School's first academic year, the School Corporation shall notify the Board in writing of its election to act as either a local education agency or a District of Columbia Public School for purposes of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The School Corporation shall notify the Board in writing by April 1 prior to the beginning of any academic year for which the School Corporation shall change such election from the current academic year. The School Corporation shall comply with all federal requirements concerning the education of students with disabilities and shall designate and notify the Board of the individual responsible for case management of the education of the School's students with disabilities.

2.6 Student Policies; Expulsion and Suspension. A. No later than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the School's first academic year, the School Corporation shall deliver to the Board in writing copies of the policies governing students at the School. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the policies regarding the expulsion or suspension of students shall be as set forth in Exhibit C hereto. The School Corporation shall make the policies governing students at the School available in writing to parents and students.

B. The School Corporation shall notify the Board promptly of any expulsion or any suspension of more than five (5) school days of any student enrolled in the School.

SECTION 3. CONTRACTS

3.1 Notice for Contracts. In accordance with the Act, the School Corporation shall submit to the Board the documents required by the Act with respect to any procurement contract awarded by the School Corporation and that has a value equal to or in excess of \$25,000.

3.2 Insurance Coverage. A. The School Corporation shall procure and maintain in full force and effect at all times insurance policies with an independent insurance broker with a license in the District of Columbia providing at least the coverage provisions set forth below wherever applicable:

- (i) Workers' compensation insurance as required by applicable Law. "Law" shall mean any statute, law, constitutional provision, code, regulation, ordinance, rule, judgment, order, decree, permit, concession, grant, franchise, license, agreement, directive, binding guideline or policy or rule of common law, requirement of, or other governmental restriction of or determination by, or any interpretation of any of the foregoing by, any governmental authority, whether now or hereafter in effect;
- (ii) General liability insurance on an occurrence basis against claims for personal injury (including bodily injury and death) and property damage;
- (iii) Automobile liability insurance against claims for personal injury (including bodily injury and death) and property damage covering all owned, lease non-owned, and hired motor vehicles;
- (iv) Excess liability insurance on an occurrence basis covering claims in excess of the underlying insurance described in the foregoing clauses (ii) and (iii);
- (v) Property damage insurance on an "all risk" basis, boiler and machinery insurance on a comprehensive basis and providing coverage for (a) the School Corporation in a minimum aggregate amount equal to the "full insurable value" of the School Property, and (b) attorneys' fees, engineering, and other consulting costs and permit fees directly incurred in order to repair or replace damaged insured property in a minimum amount sufficient to cover 100% of the cost to reconstruct the School Property. For purposes of this clause (v), "full insurable value" shall mean the full replacement value of the School Property, including

any improvements, equipment, fuel, and supplies, without deduction for physical depreciation and/or obsolescence;

(vi) Directors and officers liability insurance and professional liability insurance; and

(vii) Educators legal liability insurance.

B. If the School Corporation has entered into a contract for the management of the School by another entity ("**School Management Contract**"), the School Corporation shall require the Person managing the School pursuant to that School Management Contract (the "**School Manager**") to maintain management professional liability insurance. "**Person**" shall mean and include natural persons, corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, general partnerships, joint stock companies, joint ventures, associations, companies, trusts, banks, trust companies, land trusts, business trusts, or other organizations, whether or not legal entities, governments, and agencies or other administrative or regulatory bodies thereof.

C. The School Corporation may satisfy its obligations under this Section 3.2 by being an additional named insured on insurance policies of an Affiliate of the School Corporation or the School Manager, if any, providing the School Corporation the coverage required pursuant to this Section 4.3 to the same extent as if the School Corporation obtained such required insurance itself. "**Affiliate**" shall mean, as applied to any Person, any other Person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by, or under common control with, that Person and, if such Person is an individual, any member of the immediate family (including parents, spouse, children, and siblings) of such individual and any trust whose principal beneficiary is such individual or one or more members of such immediate family, and any Person who is controlled by any such member or trust; for purposes of the definition of "**Affiliate**," "**control**" (including, with correlative meanings, the terms "**controlling**," "**controlled by**," and "**under common control with**"), as applied to any Person, means the possession, directly or indirectly, of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of that Person, whether through the ownership of voting securities or by contract or otherwise.

D. All policies of insurance required to be maintained pursuant to clause A (except subclauses (vi) and (vii)) shall be endorsed to name the Board and its directors, officers, employees, and agents as additional insureds.

3.3 Insurance Certificates. Upon request by the Board, the School Corporation will promptly furnish the Board with copies of all insurance policies, binders, and cover notes or other evidence of insurance relating to the insurance required to be maintained pursuant to Section 3.2.

3.4 Inventory. The School Corporation shall maintain an inventory of all assets of the School Corporation purchased with District of Columbia public funds or federal funds. The School Corporation shall make such inventory available to the Board from time to time upon the Board's request.

SECTION 4. REPORTS

4.1 Reporting Requirements. The School Corporation shall deliver to the Board:

A. Annual Reports: No later than September 1 of each year, beginning September 1, 2012, an annual report in a format acceptable to the Board which shall set forth the financial status, academic program, and performance of the School Corporation as of the close of the prior academic year including all items required by Section 38-1802.04(c)(11)(B) of the Act, the results of any standardized tests not contained in the prior annual report delivered to the Board pursuant to this clause A (or in the case of the first annual report, any such results obtained prior to the submission of such report), and an assessment of compliance with the performance goals, objectives, standards, indicators, or targets or any other basis for measuring the School's performance as the Board may reasonably request.

B. Audited Financial Statements: As soon as available but no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the end of each Fiscal Year, audited financial statements for such Fiscal Year prepared by an independent certified public accountant or accounting firm who shall be selected from an approved list developed pursuant to the Act in accordance with Government auditing standards for financial audits issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; such audited financial statements shall be made available to the public upon request; "Fiscal Year" shall mean the fiscal year of the School Corporation ending on June 30 of each calendar year.

C. Interim Financial Reports: As soon as available and in any event within thirty (30) days after the end of each Interim Period starting with the Interim Period beginning July 1, 2011, (i) the balance sheet of the School Corporation as at the end of such Interim Period and the related statements of income and cash flows of the School Corporation for such Interim Period and for the period from the beginning of the then current Fiscal Year to the end of such Interim Period, all in reasonable detail and certified by the treasurer or chief financial officer of the School Corporation that they fairly present, in all material respects, the financial condition of the School Corporation as at the dates indicated and the results of their operations and their cash flows for the periods indicated, subject to changes resulting from audit and normal year-end adjustments; and (ii) notes to the balance sheet describing the financial status of the School Corporation including contributions (monetary or in-kind) in excess of \$500 and fundraising efforts for such Interim Period and for the period from the beginning of the then current Fiscal Year to the end of such Interim Period; "Interim Period" shall mean monthly, and from time to time thereafter, upon written notice by the Board to the School Corporation, the period designated by the Board in such notice; the Board may require the School Corporation to submit the financial reports to be delivered pursuant to this Section 5.1C on a computer disk or in another electronic format compatible with software designated by the Board from time to time; notwithstanding the foregoing, the School Corporation may deliver the reports required pursuant to this clause C for July 2011 by August 31, 2011 and for August 2011 by September 30, 2011.

D. Budget; Fiscal Year: No later than June 1 of each year starting June 1, 2012, an annual operating budget, an annual capital budget, and cash flow projections (collectively, a "Budget") for the next succeeding Fiscal Year; the School Corporation's initial

operating budget for the period from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013 is set forth in Exhibit D hereto; the School Corporation shall deliver to the Board no later than October 30, 2011 a revised operating budget for the period from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013; the School Corporation shall consider the comments of the Board, its staff, and its agents with respect to each Budget; if the Board has previously notified the School Corporation in writing that the School Corporation is on probation for fiscal management reasons and such notice has not been rescinded by the Board in writing, the School Corporation may only implement such Budget with the prior written approval of the Board.

E. Enrollment Census: On dates identified by the Board in writing, a report (i) identifying the number of students (including nonresident students and students receiving special education) currently enrolled in the School in each of (a) preschool, (b) prekindergarten, (c) grades kindergarten through 12, (d) adult, community, and vocational programs, and (e) nongrade level programs; (ii) identifying the number of students enrolled in the School and their grade levels who are any of the following: (a) nonresident students, (b) students receiving special education, (c) emergency migrants, (d) new or leaving students, (e) students eligible for free or reduced meals, or (f) students with limited English proficiency; (iii) setting forth the amount of fees and tuition assessed and collected from nonresident students currently enrolled in the School; and (iv) certified by the chair of the Board of Trustees and the principal or other chief administrator of the School that such report is true and correct in all material respects; unless the Board notifies the School Corporation otherwise in writing, such report shall be in the format required by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”) for similar reports from public schools in the District of Columbia, and such count shall be conducted in a manner comparable to that required by OSSE for enrollment counts by District of Columbia Public Schools.

F. Attendance: On dates identified by the Board in writing, attendance data using the attendance management reporting software required by the Board.

G. Key Personnel Changes: Promptly upon the chair of the Board of Trustees or an officer of the School Corporation obtaining knowledge of the departure or anticipated departure of a person from his or her position with the School Corporation who is a member of the Board of Trustees or an officer of the School Corporation or holds a key personnel position identified on Exhibit E hereto (but no later than the time the School Corporation announces such departure publicly), a notice identifying the person, the position such person is leaving, the date of such departure, and the actions the School Corporation has taken or intends to take to replace such person.

H. Events of Default, Etc.: Promptly upon the chair of the Board of Trustees or an officer of the School Corporation obtaining knowledge of any event or circumstance that could reasonably be expected to have a material adverse effect on the operation, properties, assets, condition (financial or otherwise), prospects, or reputation of the School Corporation or the School including (i) any material breach of any covenant or agreement contained in this Agreement; (ii) any notice given to the School Corporation or any other action taken with respect to a claimed default under any financing obtained by the School Corporation; and (iii) the failure of the School Corporation to comply with the terms and conditions of any

Authorizations, a report in reasonable detail of the nature and date, if applicable, of such event or circumstance and the School Corporation's intended actions with respect thereto.

I. Litigation: Promptly upon a member of the Board of Trustees or an officer of the School Corporation obtaining knowledge of (a) the institution of or nonfrivolous threat of any action, suit, proceeding, governmental investigation, or arbitration against or affecting the School Corporation or any property thereof (collectively, "**Proceedings**") not previously disclosed in writing by the School Corporation to the Board, or (b) any material development in Proceedings to which the School Corporation is a party or the School Corporation's property is subject, written notice thereof.

J. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes: At the Board's request, the School Corporation shall submit to the Board copies of all minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees of the School Corporation (including any actions of the Board of Trustees taken by unanimous written consent in lieu of a meeting).

K. Other Information: Such other reports, financial statements, and information as the Board shall reasonably request in accordance with the Act.

4.2 Reports Required by the Act. The School Corporation shall comply with all reporting requirements set forth in the Act and shall provide the Board with a copy of each such report at the time the School Corporation provides such report to the Person required to receive such report under the Act.

SECTION 5. ORGANIZATION

5.1 Organization. A. The School Corporation is and shall remain a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation in accordance with the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act, as now and hereafter in effect, or any successor statute.

B. Copies of the School Corporation's articles of incorporation and bylaws are attached hereto as Exhibit F and Exhibit G, respectively. The School Corporation shall notify the Board in writing of any material change to its articles of incorporation or bylaws at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of such change.

5.2 Powers. The School Corporation shall have the powers set forth in the Act.

5.3 Accreditation. The School Corporation shall comply with the accreditation requirements set forth in the Act.

5.4 Nonsectarian. Pursuant to the Act, the School Corporation and the School are and shall remain nonsectarian and are not and shall not be affiliated with a sectarian school or religious organization.

5.5 Financial Management. The School Corporation shall operate in accordance with generally accepted standards of fiscal management and shall maintain a system

of accounting established and administered in accordance with sound business practices to permit preparation of the audited financial statements described in Section 4.1B.

5.6 Board of Trustees. The School Corporation shall have a Board of Trustees that complies with the requirements set forth in the Act. The Board of Trustees shall be fiduciaries of the School and shall set overall policy for the School.

5.7 Hiring. The School Corporation shall perform an initial background check with respect to each employee and each person who regularly volunteers at the School more than ten (10) hours a week prior to the commencement of such employment or volunteer assignment. The School Corporation shall consider the results of such background checks in its decision to employ or utilize such persons.

5.8 Employee Handbook. The School Corporation shall develop and maintain an employee handbook in compliance with Law.

5.9 Complaint Process. No later than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the School's first academic year, the School Corporation shall deliver to the Board in writing a copy of the complaint resolution process that the School Corporation is required to maintain pursuant to the Act.

SECTION 6. TERMINATION

6.1 Termination. A. This Agreement may be terminated and the charter of the School Corporation revoked:

- (i) by the Board in accordance with Section 38-1802.13 of the Act;
- (ii) by mutual agreement of the parties hereto;
- (iii) by the Board, if the School Corporation fails to secure use of the School Property by August 1, 2011; or
- (iv) by the Board, if the School fails to begin instructing students by October 1, 2011.

B. This Agreement shall be terminated:

- (i) upon invalidation or termination of the statutory authority for the School to exist as a public charter school in the District of Columbia; or
- (ii) upon termination of the Board or the Board's authority to oversee public charter schools in the District of Columbia unless the Board has assigned its rights and obligations under this Agreement pursuant to Section 8.2.

6.2 Actions Upon Expiration or Termination. Upon expiration or termination of this Agreement (the date upon which such charter expires or terminates, the "**Termination Date**"), the School Corporation shall (i) promptly but no later than thirty (30) days after the

Termination Date, deliver all student records, reports, documents, and files to the Board; (ii) promptly dissolve the nonprofit corporation operating the School in accordance with the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act and the Act; and (iii) promptly distribute the School Corporation's assets and discharge the School Corporation's debts in accordance with the provisions of Section 38-1802.13a of the Act.

SECTION 7. COMPLIANCE

7.1 Laws. The School Corporation shall comply with all applicable Laws (including the Act) and Authorizations and shall from time to time and on a timely basis obtain, renew, and comply with all Authorizations as shall now or hereafter be necessary under applicable Laws.

7.2 Cooperation. The School Corporation shall, and shall cause its trustees, officers, employees, and contractors to, cooperate with the Board, its staff, and its agents in connection with the Board's obligations to monitor the School Corporation.

7.3 Access. The School Corporation shall authorize and permit the Board, its staff, and its agents to have access to the extent permitted by Law, upon reasonable notice and in such manner as will not unreasonably interfere with the conduct of the School, to all of the School Corporation's properties, books, records, operating instructions and procedures, curriculum materials, and all other information with respect to the operation of the School and the School Corporation that the Board may from time to time request, and to make copies of such books, records, and other documents and to discuss the operation of the School and the School Corporation with such third persons, including, without limitation, the School Corporation's trustees, officers, employees, students, accountants, counsel, contractors, and creditors, as the Board considers necessary or appropriate for the purposes of evaluating the operation and performance of the School and the School Corporation in accordance with this Agreement and the Act.

SECTION 8. MISCELLANEOUS

8.1 Administrative Fee. The School Corporation shall pay annually to the Board, no later than November 15 of each year, the maximum amount permitted by the Act to cover the administrative responsibilities of the Board. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board shall not seek any remedy against the School Corporation for failure to timely pay such fee if the School Corporation shall not have received the fall allocation of its annual academic year funding from the government of the District of Columbia by such date provided that the School Corporation pays the Board such fee within five (5) business days of the School Corporation's receipt of such funding.

8.2 Assignment. This Agreement shall not be assignable by either party; provided that if the Board shall no longer have authority to charter public schools in the District of the Columbia, the Board may assign this Agreement to any entity authorized to charter or monitor public charter schools in the District of Columbia.

8.3 Definitional Provisions. Words used herein, regardless of the number and gender specifically used, shall be deemed and construed to include any other number, singular or

plural, and any other gender, masculine, feminine, or neuter, as the context indicates is appropriate. When a reference is made in this Agreement to an introduction, recital, section, appendix, exhibit, or schedule, such reference shall be to the introduction, a recital, a section, or a paragraph of, or an appendix, an exhibit, or a schedule to, this Agreement unless otherwise indicated. The words "hereof," "herein," and "hereunder" and words of similar import shall be deemed to refer to this Agreement as a whole and not to any particular provision of this Agreement. The headings contained in this Agreement are for reference purposes only and shall not affect in any way the meaning or interpretation of this Agreement. Whenever the words "include," "includes," or "including" are used in this Agreement, they shall be deemed to be followed by the words "without limitation." Accounting terms not expressly defined in this Agreement shall have the respective meanings given to them under generally accepted accounting principles.

8.4 Entire Agreement; Amendments. This Agreement, together with all the attachments hereto, constitutes the entire agreement of the parties and all prior representations, understandings, and agreements are merged herein and superseded by this Agreement. This Agreement may not be amended or modified other than by a written agreement executed by the Board and the School Corporation in accordance with the Act.

8.5 Notices. Unless otherwise specifically provided herein, any notice or other communication herein required or permitted to be given shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been given when (i) delivered by hand (with written confirmation of receipt); or (ii) when received by the addressee, if sent by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (receipt requested) or certified or registered mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, in each case to the appropriate addresses set forth below (until notice of a change thereof is delivered as provided in this Section 8.5) shall be as follows:

If to the Board:

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
3333 14th St., NW; Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20010
Attention: Executive Director
Telephone: (202) 328-2660

If to the School Corporation:

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School
2616 Georgia Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
Attention: Chair, Board of Trustees

8.6 Failure or Indulgence Not Waiver; Remedies Cumulative. No failure or delay on the part of the Board in the exercise of any power, right, or privilege hereunder shall impair such power, right, or privilege or be construed to be a waiver of any default or acquiescence therein, nor shall any single or partial exercise of any such power, right, or privilege preclude other or further exercise thereof or of any other power, right, or privilege. All

rights and remedies existing under this Agreement are cumulative to, and not exclusive of, any rights or remedies otherwise available.

8.7 Severability. In case any provision in or obligation under this Agreement shall be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions or obligations shall not in any way be affected or impaired thereby.

8.8 Applicable Law. This Agreement and the rights and obligations of the parties hereunder shall be governed by, and shall be construed and enforced in accordance with, the laws of the District of Columbia, without regard to conflicts of laws principles.


8.9 No Third Party Beneficiary. Nothing in this Agreement expressed or implied shall be construed to give any Person other than the parties hereto any legal or equitable rights under this Agreement.

8.10 Counterparts; Effectiveness. This Agreement and any amendments, waivers, consents, or supplements hereto or in connection herewith may be executed in any number of counterparts and by different parties hereto in separate counterparts, each of which when so executed and delivered shall be deemed an original, but all such counterparts together shall constitute but one and the same instrument; signature pages may be detached from multiple separate counterparts and attached to a single counterpart so that all signature pages are physically attached to the same document. This Agreement shall become effective upon the execution of a counterpart hereof by each of the parties hereto and receipt by the School Corporation and the Board of written or telephonic notification of such execution and authorization of delivery thereof.

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed and delivered by their respective officers thereunto duly authorized as of the date first written above.

**SHINING STARS MONTESSORI
ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**


By: MALCOLM H. WOODLAND

Title: Chair

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC
CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD**


By: Brian W. Jones

Title: Chair

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE I – Maximum Enrollment

SCHEDULE I

Maximum Enrollment

Grade	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Fiscal Year 2016
Preschool	20	14	40	42	47
Pre-K	19	16	12	35	37
Kindergarten	15	16	14	11	32
1		12	14	13	10
2			11	13	11
3				10	11
4					9
Total	54	58	91	124	157

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT A -- Application
EXHIBIT B -- Random Selection Process
EXHIBIT C -- Expulsion/Suspension Policies
EXHIBIT D -- Initial Budget
EXHIBIT E -- Key Personnel
EXHIBIT F -- Articles of Incorporation
EXHIBIT G -- Bylaws

Section A: Educational Plan**1. Mission and Purposes of the Proposed Public Charter School****a. Educational needs of Target Student Population**

The children in our target population are in need of an empowering and effective educational environment; one where attention will be given to the development of the *whole child as well as their academic successes*. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be filling a void, particularly for the low-income, African-American children living in the District of Columbia, who need something more than just a shift in academic instruction in order to set them on the path to success. The Academy will provide a place where the environment is specifically prepared to meet these children's developmental needs and will give them the freedom to move and explore according to their own level of development.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will ultimately serve children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through sixth, using a phase-in enrollment plan. Phase I will include two Primary classes, each consisting of 29 Pre-School, Pre-K, and Kindergarten (ages 3-6). Phase II will expand to accommodate an Elementary classroom, which will be set up for first through sixth grades (ages 6-12).¹ ** Please see Growth table to follow **

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Proposed Growth Schedule

PHASE	I	I	II	II	II
Age	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Three	20	(+14)=14	(+40)=40	(+42)=42	(+47)=47
Four	19	(20-4)=16	(14-2)=12	(40-5)=35	(42-5)=37
Five	15	(19-3)=16	(16-2)=14	(12-1)=11	(35-3)=32
Six		(15-3)=12	(16-2)=14	(14-1)=13	(11-1)=10
Seven			(12-1)=11	(14-1)=13	(13-2)=11
Eight				(11-1)=10	(13-2)=11
Nine					(10-1)=9
Totals	54	(+14-10)=58	(+40-7)=91	(+42-9)=124	(+47-14)=157

¹ Please see the later section regarding plans for developing the school to full enrollment (up to Sixth grade); where we outline in more detail the proposed growth of Shining Stars Montessori Academy. Additionally, the (+#) symbolizes the number of children enrolled & the (-#) symbolizes the attrition for that age and the bolded number symbolizes the overall expected number of children for that age & year.

English Language Learners

Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to open in Ward 1, which has one of the highest populations of Limited English Proficient students of color in Washington, D.C. Therefore, we estimate that a significant percentage of students will be English Language Learners and will qualify for language support services. The Academy has a comprehensive plan for identifying and providing for ELL students as outlined in sub-section c of the Curriculum portion of our Application.

Special Needs Students

It is likely that Shining Stars Montessori Academy will receive a number of Special Needs students as well. The District of Columbia estimates that nearly 17% of its students qualify for Special Education, while the current percentage represented in charter schools is 10-12%. The Academy will implement an early intervention process and rely heavily on teacher observation (as supported through extensive teacher training and professional development in identification) in order to identify students who may need to be evaluated for Special Services.

Low-Income Students

The Founding Group is familiar with recent research that identifies several potential threats facing children who live in poverty in urban centers such as Washington D.C. One such report was published by the Children's Defense Fund and describes an institutional phenomenon Marian Wright Edelman has coined the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline", or the "School to Prison Pipeline". This devastating phenomenon occurs disproportionately in communities of color and can be attributed to, among other things, a lack of cultural competence in the educational institutions that serve students of color. For students of color born into poverty who do not receive the interventions they need from an early age, the effects of the Pipeline are traumatic.²

We anticipate that the target population of Shining Stars Montessori Academy will include children of color, many of whom will come from low socio-economic and/or single parent households. An overwhelming 62% of children living in Ward 1 come from low-income families,³ and black youth make up 63.5% of the child population in the District of Columbia. These same children are also more likely to come from single-parent homes (77%) and/or have parents who do not have a high school degree (86%).⁴ Thus, the target population for the Shining Stars Montessori Academy consists of children of color who may not have the same

² "America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline: A Report by the Children's Defense Fund," 2007

³ DCBOE, "Birth to Three in the District of Columbia: A Needs Assessment", October 2008

⁴ http://www.nccp.org/profiles/DC_profile_6.html

financial means or family support systems that some of their more economically advantaged peers may have.

In the high school years, the danger of teenagers dropping out of school is a constant threat. The 2007 data⁵ for D.C. shows that the number of teens that are high school dropouts is increasing, up from 1,000 in 2005 to 3,000 in 2007. Of those 3,000 drop outs, 2,000 are black. Test scores of eighth graders in the past five years show that 66% scored below basic math levels and 52% scored below basic reading levels. Additionally, according to the 2007 No Child Left Behind AYP* State Report for Elementary Schools⁶, 69% of D.C. schools failed to meet the AYP standards in Reading and 69.2% failed in Math. In terms of school proficiency, 72% of DC schools scored below standard. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be dedicated to reversing this trend by providing holistic support to students and their families to allow children's natural abilities to take hold and thrive.

We seek to open a school in the Ward 1, Pleasant Plains/Howard University neighborhood because of many of the founding group members have long worked in the neighborhood. Shining Stars Montessori Academy is devoted to improving the educational success rates of students in that area. The Academy is designed to be a model urban Montessori school for under-served children of color from 3 to 12 years of age in Ward 1 in the Shaw/Howard University area. Many area professionals from Howard University and the hospital are also searching for viable child development options for their children.

There are an estimated 5-10 privately owned Montessori schools within the District of Columbia proper, most of which are situated in the upper Northwest quadrant of the city. There are at least two Public Montessori Programs housed within a DC Public or public charter school that provide Montessori education for children up to age 9; and there is at least one bi-lingual public charter Montessori school that serves children at the Primary and Elementary levels, ages 3-12. The schools that exist in Ward 1, including Bruce Monroe at Parkview, Capital City public charter school and LAYC's PCS, serve a different student population, and thus we believe that The Academy will minimally impact their operations.

The combination of factors present in the life of a child living in a low-income household implies various unique educational and socio-emotional needs. Further, socio-economic status and race are inextricably intertwined, especially in urban centers such as D.C. As such, serving our target population of low-income students of color will require a host of tools and services different from what might be

⁵ "Profile for District of Columbia: National KIDS COUNT Program; Annie B. Casey Foundation; 2009;
<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

⁶ see <http://webb.k12.dc.us.NCLB/>

*AYP=Adequate Yearly Progress

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utilized in a traditional public school setting. The education that The Academy will provide must do more than provide typical rote lessons in a culturally sensitive environment; instead, we must affirmatively combat messages of inferiority with which our children are bombarded on a daily basis to create self-confident leaders. The Academy will implement a fully supportive curriculum and provide an educational atmosphere in which every child is safe, comfortable, valued, and respected. We will do this by providing stellar academic opportunities through the Montessori model and by impressing upon our students their own dynamic history so that they may envision the impact they are capable of creating in the world.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will utilize necessary interventions for the target population of young children of color who live in low-income families to address the vicious cycle of continued poverty that leads too many students to failure. Specifically, The Academy will establish support structures to provide children with any academic or social interventions that may be needed on an individual basis. Additionally, the Founding Group has contacts within the D.C. Special Education Cooperative and other organizations that will be integral in establishing on-site support services for children with special needs. The Academy will also create professional development opportunities for staff to identify and intervene in situations of concern (see Professional Development section). One example of early interventions that The Academy will implement is the Student Support Team process as developed by Student Support Services at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education in D.C. This is a six-week intervention that involves communication between the teacher, family, and an administrator, in developing strategies to assist the child in a particular area of need or concern. The Student Support Team (SST) can be established to address concerns regarding attendance, behavior, academic progress, and more. The Programs Coordinator will serve as the SST coordinator.

The Academy Model

Shining Stars Montessori Academy is unique in its design as a free and open to the public Montessori school with a cultural empowerment curriculum. Using this two-pronged approach – Montessori education plus cultural empowerment – to educate its target population, The Academy will ensure high academic performance and build children's confidence.

The Academy will create an environment for children in which the basic needs of the child are met through six core areas of learning.⁷ The Montessori classroom will be designed for children's use so that they may navigate through their studies at a pace with which they are comfortable. Allowing children to build

⁷ The Montessori Method outlines six core curricular areas to include: *Practical Life, Language, Sensorial, Mathematics, Cultural Activities and Creative Activities*. You can find more information regarding this structure in section A.1.c "Educational Focus".

confidence in their work and achievements, and to have continuous opportunities for success in the classroom, will establish a strong foundation for their future. Every discovery they make and every task they complete will provide an exciting demonstration of their capabilities and potential. The Montessori teacher's role is to guide children through this process, ensuring that their most basic needs are met and that their continued development is productive and positive.

In addition, the Shining Stars Montessori Academy will follow the lead of MOMLE's TLC by providing students with cultural education about the African Diaspora (beginning well before the African slave trade and continuing to the present) and other areas that reflect the diverse global community in which we live. The cultural empowerment curriculum will offer a holistic approach to instruction that infuses the values of people of color throughout the world in the daily lessons that students will receive. These lessons will be reinforced through the Montessori hands-on approach to encourage intellectual curiosity. Students will be fully educated in the extent to which people of color have contributed to our society. Through this cultural education, The Academy will provide students with more exposure to positive images of people of color, leadership opportunities for all students (regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, gender, or Primary language), and support for children and their families. This cultural empowerment curriculum will promote family and community governance, highlighting the interconnectedness of all things and the spiritual nature of human beings. The empowering educational experience at Shining Stars Montessori Academy will instill in our students a strong sense of personal identity, independence, respect for self and others, confidence, and an understanding of social justice and responsibility.

Growth

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be a continually growing community of learners. School growth will follow that of the students, in order to accommodate the needs and demands of students in higher grades. We will achieve this in two phases of development (see Growth Table at the beginning of this section).

Phase I comprises the initial enrollment year of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, and the following year (two years in duration). Because of the unique quality of having multi-age classrooms, it is essential that we build our program mindfully and strategically. In Phase I, the majority of the children will be accepted at age 3 with some 4 and 5 year olds (following the DC guidelines of completing the required age by September 30th of the year of enrollment) into the Primary Program. Three year-olds will spend three years in this classroom and four and five year-olds will spend a minimum of two years here, and possibly three, depending on the child's needs, before transitioning into the Elementary program. The Academy will open with two Primary Classrooms both with the capacity for 29 students (space will be reserved for a majority of three-year-olds, leaving 10-15 spaces total for entering four year-olds).

Phase II begins in year three of The Academy's establishment, and includes the opening of one Elementary classroom. Children who have finished their kindergarten year in the Primary classes will graduate to the Elementary class. This class will be comprised of 10-15 six year-olds in its first year (depending on retention rates), and will expand to include rising first-graders each year thereafter.

Children will be in the Elementary classroom for a period of 6 years. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will accept a new class of three-year-olds every year (and four year-olds will be accepted through the third year of operation). The number of slots available will be dependent on pre-existing class sizes, but will be no lower than 12 new slots per year. At full capacity, The Academy hopes to enroll a total of 150 children. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will accept a new class of three-year-olds every year. The number of slots available will be dependent on pre-existing class sizes, but will be no lower than 12 new slots per year.

b. Mission and Philosophy

Shining Stars Montessori Academy's mission is to offer a quality Montessori education infused with culturally inclusive principles to guide children to develop to their fullest potential.

The Academy's philosophy also includes the following goals:

- 1. Stimulate the growth of the whole child by following the natural developmental cycles of human beings.**

Montessori theory outlines human development as occurring in four distinct stages. The first two planes of development cover the years from birth to age six. During each of these stages, the human being exhibits certain characteristics and has certain needs that are unique to each plane of development. Each plane of development lasts for six years and is characterized by two sub-planes. The first goal of Shining Stars Montessori Academy will provide an environment in which these needs are met and an opportunity for the child to experience and express the characteristics unique to each plane of development. Through observations, the teacher will be on the lookout for the expression of the characteristics and will be adjusting classroom instruction and activities accordingly.

- 2. Encourage the child to follow their own individual interests as they learn at their own pace.**

The second goal of Shining Stars Montessori Academy will seek to build on the first as we make available to the child the materials necessary for him to engage in the learning process, always moving from the child's physical exploration with a concrete representation of the concept to the abstraction of the concept. The child is introduced to the concept by the teacher and is then allowed to explore with the materials, all aspects, until the process is

abstracted. This process of abstraction occurs on an individual basis and instruction is given on an individual basis as well.

3. Provide multi-age classrooms to facilitate and encourage individualized learning.

Following the guidelines outlined by Maria Montessori, all classrooms in the school will comprise children of mixed ages. In this way, the children are able to learn from watching what the other children in the room are doing and the older children act as role models for the younger ones.

4. Provide an uninterrupted work cycle in which learning can occur.

Concentration is the foundation for academic learning and an uninterrupted work cycle will provide the opportunity for the child to work with the materials for as long as is desired in order to develop concentration. Each work cycle will last for three hours.

5. Encourage collaboration between the teacher and the child.

Montessori views the process of learning as a collaboration between the teacher and the child—the teacher demonstrates to the child how to use the materials, how to walk and speak in the classroom and the child collaborates in the process of learning through working with the materials and repeating the process as often as necessary.

6. Organize the child's activities and learning according to their social development.

The presentations given to the child are graded to meet their age and level of social development. As the child grows older, the level of responsibility increases as well and the teacher gradually does less as the child's abilities allow him to do more.

7. Encourage the child to be motivated and rewarded by his own individual achievement.

The Montessori environment discourages the use of external rewards and punishment. Rather, we encourage the child to view his own effort and achievement as the reward for expending the effort and the motivation to continue on with the effort or to change if needed to achieve the desired result.

8. Promote the child's ability to find out and do things for him/herself through manipulation of the materials (auto-education), leading to his/her functional independence.

The idea of functional independence is something that the Montessori environment encourages and promotes. The furnishings and equipment used in the classroom are all child-sized and functional to encourage the

child's success in maneuvering through the classroom. We teach the child the mechanics of how to use the equipment in the care of the self and of the environment. In this way, the child becomes independent of the adult. In addition, the materials themselves encourage discovery, and as the child manipulates them repeatedly, they find out for themselves, what the concept is without the adult having to tell them.

9. Encourage the development of positive self-image through specialized culture-based learning activities and materials.

Children develop positive self-images when they see positive cultural images reflected in their everyday lives and activities. Shining Stars Montessori Academy understands that this is a vital part of a child's development and our goal is to provide activities and materials that allow the exploration of the child's culture and history with the aim of aiding the development of a positive self-image.

10. Promote and encourage parental development and involvement.

The success of the Montessori approach depends, in large part, on the commitment of the parents to the philosophy. We will encourage parents to utilize Montessori techniques in the home environment and will strongly urge them to attend parent education sessions and activities to broaden their knowledge of what Montessori is and how they can better assist their child in their process of self-construction.

11. Provide a loving, secure, and ordered place for every child.

In her book, *The Normalized Child*, Katherine Futrell outlines six basic needs that all children have, including the need for order, love and security. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will seek to meet these needs by providing classroom environments in which the child feels loved by the adults and is able to develop a sense of trust in himself, and in the world. The child's need for order will be reflected in the arrangement of the materials and furniture in the classroom in addition to the daily activities and presentations given by the teacher.

12. Provide adequately trained and responsive staff.

Our goal will be to provide Montessori trained teachers and aides who will be responsible for daily observations, classroom instruction and maintenance and responding to the needs of the children and parents as appropriate.

13. Promote and encourage self-discipline and conflict resolution strategies.

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy that encourages freedom of movement, choice of work, self-discipline and self-regulation, we will encourage children to practice strategies and techniques of resolving

conflicts throughout the day as they operate with freedom of movement and choices of activities within limitations the classroom environment.

14. Provide the opportunities for and encourage, purposeful movement, leading to the refining of fine and gross motor skills.

Freedom of movement is one of the pillars of the Montessori classroom and children should be given this freedom from birth. The goal of Shining Stars Montessori Academy would be to provide further opportunities for purposeful movement; utilizing both the gross motor and fine motor apparatus that further refines the children's fine motor and gross motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy follows the Montessori belief in the education of the *whole* child. We maintain that education begins at birth and continues through four subsequent stages⁸, each distinct in terms of characteristics and needs. From birth, the human being is in the process of adaptation to his/her surroundings and is engaged in a unique self-construction of personality. The first two planes of development are encompassed in childhood (birth to 12), during which the child undergoes this process of self-construction through work. The work of the child is done in a scientifically designed and carefully prepared environment. The teacher in the environment (or classroom) works as a guide, linking the child to the materials in the environment. All of the materials used by the child are specifically designed to facilitate this process of self-construction. The teacher will observe the child's work and make any necessary interventions or adjustments to ensure the child's continuous development and active education.

Each Primary classroom will contain materials in six curricular areas: Practical Life, Language, Sensorial, Mathematics, Cultural Activities, and Creative Activities. The child spends three years in the same classroom, navigating through the various areas, and developing a strong personal foundation of knowledge and confidence, necessary for a lifetime love of learning. The Elementary classroom continues to build upon the core areas from the Primary with the addition of Geography, History, Geometry, Music, Art, and Biology. In the Elementary classroom, the materials are based on the concept of *Cosmic Education*⁹ as outlined by Maria Montessori. The children are in a multi-age classroom, 6-12 years old, are in the Second Plane of Development and have different needs and exhibit different characteristics. The Second Plane child is now using his developing imagination and

⁸ First Plane: Birth to 6; Second Plane 6-12; Third Plane 12-18; Fourth Plane 18-24;

⁹ Cosmic Education is the curriculum for the Elementary classroom (6-12 year olds) as outlined by Maria Montessori in 1936. In this approach, the whole universe is presented to the child. The content that is presented has been carefully chosen. They are "*keys to the universe*": some carefully selected details that make it possible for the children to explore the universe much more freely. The nature of the Second Plane child now allows for further exploration into the reason behind things and the child is encouraged to consider the idea of every living thing as having a "cosmic task" and to develop a sense of what his cosmic task will be.

powers of reasoning to figure out the how and why and of things. The child's emerging sense of morality is given the opportunity to develop through practical application in the classroom and his tendency to hero worship can be satisfied through his interactions with the older children in the classroom, who get the opportunity to act as role models for the younger ones. The great benefit doing the classroom like this is that the child has a period of 6 years to explore the concepts and work with the materials. The child spends six years in this environment and is given the unique opportunity of moving from a novice in the room (when they enter in the First Grade) to a master (by the end of the six years), gradually developing their leadership skills. The thrust of the Montessori approach is moving from the concrete to the abstract and in the Elementary classroom, this process is out pictured in the child's passage to abstraction--moving from using the materials, in the beginning, to abstracting concepts and working with algorithms on paper. The child gradually weans herself off the materials with each successive year.

In addition to placing an emphasis on the Montessori philosophy, The Academy will utilize the MOMIE's TLC strategy for providing historical and contemporary role models for its students of color. As mentioned in our discussion of the target population in section A.1.a of this application, The Academy estimates that the majority of its student population will be black students. As we plan on working with a historically underserved student population, we find it of the utmost importance that we ensure the education of the *whole child*. Importance will be given to the socio-emotional development of every child, along with his/her academic advancements.¹⁰ The Montessori education model coincides well with several critical components of the cultural empowerment curriculum, including community learning and support. Additionally, Montessori education permits flexibility in tailoring academic instruction to meet the needs of the student so that we can incorporate lessons through language arts, math, social studies, science, music, art and physical education.

c. Educational Focus

Over the last 100 years, The Montessori approach to education has been quietly revolutionizing children's learning. Started by Maria Montessori, in 1907 in Rome, the Montessori Method has since then educated children the world over. Dr. Montessori had a vision that world peace and an eradication of war should be the ultimate aim of human endeavors and she believed wholeheartedly that every child could be an agent of change for peace in the world. She believed that all living things had a role to play, a "cosmic task", so to speak, and that by nurturing the spirits and intellects of children, we could unlock this potential hidden deep within them, and thereby positively affecting our collective future.

¹⁰ Please refer to subsection 4.c, regarding school culture.

Dr. Montessori made several discoveries about children in her work with them, and these formed the basis of the development of her philosophy and methods. Many of her discoveries are being confirmed today by research being done on brain development. According to *Dr. Steven Hughes*, a pediatric neuropsychologist and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School,

"Montessori education is a brain-based, developmental method that allows children to make creative choices in discovering people, places and knowledge of the world. It is hands-on learning, self-expression, and collaborative play in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace and joy...and it is...the best brain-based model of education." ¹¹

All Montessori classrooms, called environments, are equipped with materials that are designed for the child to manipulate and thus discover certain key concepts and ideas about the world. Repetition of activities and use of materials, which have a built in control of error, lead to mastery and are integral to the development and work of the child in the classroom. Children are grouped in multi-age classrooms based on Montessori's theory of human development which she says occurs in four stages: birth to six years old; six to twelve years old; twelve to eighteen years old; and eighteen to twenty-four years old. Montessori developed a plan of education, which she saw as "an aid to life", for the first three planes of development. Today, there are Montessori schools throughout the world offering educational programs for children beginning at birth (Infant/Toddler) and going to three years; from 3-6 years old (Primary); for 6-12 years old (Elementary); and for 12-18 years old (Adolescent). According to some surveys, there are about 5,000 Montessori schools in the United States and more than 20,000 in over 100 countries worldwide.¹²

The genius of the Montessori approach to education has been largely unknown to a majority of the population in America. It was not until about fifty years ago, when the idea of social justice as being a necessary part of education began to emerge, that the Montessori Method once more came into the public eye. For the most part, the Montessori approach has been implemented by private schools catering almost exclusively to middle and upper-class Caucasian families with much success. It was not until recently, within the past twenty years, that Montessori education gained a foothold in the public sector. In the District of Columbia, and throughout the nation, the merger of the two approaches seems to be meeting with some level of success, and the benefits of the Montessori approach are becoming more and more apparent.

In a study done in 2006 and reported in *Science*, one of the most prestigious journals in the world, *Dr. Angeline Lillard* examined the social, academic and

¹¹ See: AMI/USA News: Parenting for a New World, January 2009; Vol. XVIII, No. 1

¹² AMI/USA Bulletin 2009

intellectual outcomes of children educated in a Montessori environment.¹³ The study looked at students in both Primary (3-6) and Elementary (6-12) classrooms in the Milwaukee Public School system. The participants in the study were students who were accepted into the public Montessori schools based on a lottery system and students who were not accepted and ended up attending traditional schools. *Dr. Lillard* found that the Montessori students demonstrated significantly stronger social cognition skills. The study also found that the Montessori students performed better in academics in terms of executive functioning, decoding and early math. They outperformed their counterparts in being empathetic, understanding of the mind, and appeals to social justice by the end of kindergarten. These abilities continued on and remained at the 6th grade level. In addition, the study found that students in the Montessori Elementary program wrote more sophisticated and creative stories and showed a more developed sense of community and social skills. *Dr. Lillard's* conclusions were that:

"Montessori education has a fundamentally different structure from traditional education. At least when strictly implemented, Montessori education fosters social and academic skills that are equal or superior to those fostered by a pool of other types of schools."¹⁴

Another study of Montessori in the public school setting, in Milwaukee, conducted by *Alan Gartner, PhD*, and *Dorothy Kerzner Lipsky, PhD*, of NCERI (the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York), and by *Kathryn Rindskopf Dohrmann, PhD, MPH*, Department of Psychology, Lake Forest College, looked at the outcomes of students who have transitioned out of the Montessori environment into traditional education settings. The researchers assessed students five or more years out of the Montessori setting and found that they significantly outperformed their peers in Math and Science and were more or less the same in Language and Social Studies. The study also reflected much better outcomes for non-minority Montessori students, who outperformed their minority Montessori student peers.

Both of these studies were done with students in the Milwaukee Public School system, which at this time has a large majority of the public Montessori schools in the country. Inner-city, minority children were included in these studies, and while the *Lillard* study did not do comparisons of minority students versus non-minority students, the latter study did. This latter study also highlighted the fact that even within the Montessori setting, which proves beneficial to all children regardless of race, the minority students were still at a disadvantage. At this point, we must take into account the negative effects that growing up in poor or low-income, inner-city households could have on student performance.

¹³ *Education Forum, The Early Years: Evaluating Montessori Education* in www.sciencemag.org

¹⁴ *Education Forum, The Early Years: Evaluating Montessori Education* in www.sciencemag.org

The founding group of Shining Stars Montessori Academy believes that the addition of our cultural empowerment curriculum along with a high quality Montessori approach would have a tremendously positive impact on the performance outcomes of our students. The *Lillard* study stressed the importance of the strict implementation of the Montessori methods. With this in mind, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will seek to implement the curriculum and approach based on the standards outlined by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).¹⁵ The Association Montessori Internationale was founded by Maria Montessori and is headquartered in The Netherlands. This organization conducts teacher trainings and gives certification and accreditation to Montessori schools.

The teachers trained by AMI graduate with the complete curriculum that they have compiled over the course of the training. The training occurs over one year and includes practice teaching in actual schools. The curriculum follows strict guidelines outlined by Dr. Montessori and for each classroom level, contains all lessons that will be given from the time the child enters the environment to the time the child leaves. Guidelines for creating new lessons are also presented and the albums coincide with the materials that are present in the classrooms. Teachers are certified to teach three different levels: birth – 3 years old (Assistants to Infancy); ages 3-6 (Primary/Preschool); and ages 6-12 (Elementary). AMI accredits schools based on certain criteria and there are different levels of accreditation. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will seek accreditation by AMI according to their timeline for new schools and will employ AMI certified teachers. The Academic Principal will also be AMI certified.

The vision of the founders of Shining Stars Montessori Academy is one that seeks to alter the educational outcomes of children living in Washington, DC, thereby positioning them for future success. In keeping with our mission, we will strive to nurture the genius of all the children who come through our doors, guiding them in the principles of the Montessori approach, infused with our cultural empowerment program, towards developing their full potential. We are committed to improving the lives of inner city children and we believe that making Montessori accessible to these children and their families will do much towards positively impacting their lives.

In addition, we believe that the best way to achieve this is through the public charter model as opposed to a private school model. While the latter approach would have been easier to implement, we feel implementing the Montessori approach in the public school setting would allow us to demonstrate this unique model and impact greater numbers of children. Based on the numerous studies which demonstrate the impact of this learning method, we believe that the Montessori approach is one that would greatly advance the cause of minority children living in Washington, DC and we are committed to erecting a world class school to see that they are provided that opportunity. Given the success of the

¹⁵ See: www.montessori-ami.org

Milwaukee public Montessori model in achieving this academic success for inner-city children, we are optimistic about our success.

The educational focus derives from the Montessori Method of instruction. Montessori education has been in practice for 100 years and is characterized by multi-age classrooms, special materials used for instruction, work periods that span long time blocks, student choice of work, individual and small group instruction, and collaborative work. There are six core areas of learning in the Primary classroom:

(1) Practical Life

Through the use of uniquely designed materials, the child learns to perform the basic actions that lead to functional independence through activities that involve care of the self, care of the environment and health and nutrition. The goal is for the child to develop concentration through repetition of these activities in addition to developing independence, coordinated movement, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and a sense of order. This area is the foundation for all the other areas.

(2) Language

The materials and activities in this area are designed to give the child a working knowledge of syntax and grammar and enrich his/her vocabulary, as well as practice in public speaking. The idea is always to move from the concrete to the abstract, each activity building upon the next until the child demonstrates through speech and other activities, his mastery of the language.

(3) Sensorial

The child's use of the sensorial materials will facilitate a refinement of the child's senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste); assist the child in classification, gradually developing finer and finer distinctions; and lead to abstract thought, always moving from the tangible and concrete to the abstract as the child learns to record sensory impressions accurately. This area includes music and biology.

(4) Mathematics

The materials in this area are physical representations of mathematical concepts—this includes geometry. It is important for the child to have access to mathematical experiences through sensorial manipulation. Qualities of the other five core areas can be found in the approach to mathematics and the idea is to give the whole concept first and then move on to the details. There are six basic groups of mathematics instruction and each one is presented in a three-step pattern: a concrete experience of the concept, followed by isolation of the concept and finally, a combination of the concrete with the abstract.

(5) Cultural Activities

This area encompasses history and geography and social justice issues. Again, the approach is to give the child a sense of the whole history of humanity and then move into the finer details, utilizing storytelling, experiments and field trips, with the child taking on more and more the burden of exploration as her abilities increase. The world is presented as a whole and then the child is encouraged to explore the details individually. This area provides the perfect entrée for the cultural empowerment curriculum. The learning materials used and subject areas covered with the cultural activities will be inclusive of all people and will specifically highlight the accomplishments of people of color.

(6) Creative Activities

This includes art, music, drama and poetry, in addition to writing. Elements of each of these are interwoven with the other core areas whenever possible and the child is encouraged to engage the imagination in trying to figure out solutions to classroom problems as well as societal problems. As their awareness of these issues increases, the burden of responsibility gradually increases as well.

In the Elementary classroom the materials are based on the concept of *Cosmic Education*¹⁶ as outlined by Maria Montessori. The children are in a multi-age classroom following the guidelines of the Montessori Planes of Development for 6 years. These children are in the Second Plane of Development and have different needs and exhibit different characteristics than children in the First Plane of Development. The child in the Second Plane is now using his developing imagination and powers of reasoning to figure out the *how* and *why* of things. The child's emerging sense of morality is given the opportunity to develop through practical application in the classroom and his tendency toward "hero worship" (another typical aspect of development at this age) can be satisfied through his interactions with the older children in the classroom.

In this model, where children from 6-12 years old are in the same classroom, the older children are now given the opportunity to act as role models for the younger ones. The great benefit doing the classroom like this is that the child has a period of 6 years to explore the concepts and work with the materials. The child spends six years in this environment and is given the unique opportunity of moving

¹⁶ Cosmic Education is the curriculum for the Elementary classroom (6-12 year olds) as outlined by Maria Montessori in 1936. In this approach, the whole universe is presented to the child. The content that is presented has been carefully chosen. They are "*keys to the universe*": some carefully selected details that make it possible for the children to explore the universe much more freely. The nature of the Second Plane child now allows for further exploration into the reason behind things and the child is encouraged to consider the idea of every living thing as having a "cosmic task" and to develop a sense of what his cosmic task will be.

from a novice in the room (when they enter in the First Grade) to a master (by the end of the six years), gradually developing their leadership skills.

The genius of the Montessori approach to education is moving from the concrete to the abstract and in the Elementary classroom, this process is out pictured in the child's passage to abstraction--moving from using the materials, in the beginning, to abstracting concepts and working with algorithms on paper. The child gradually weans herself off the materials with each successive year. The core areas of study in the Elementary classroom are: Language, Mathematics, Music, Art, History, Biology, Geography, and Geometry¹⁷. As the child explores and is instructed in these areas, he builds upon the knowledge base that he has constructed in his Primary years. The content areas involve work from concrete materials, and build to increasingly abstract ideas as the child progresses.

d. Goals

Shining Stars Montessori Academy expects high academic performance from its students and consistent development of positive social skills. The Academy works with the ultimate goal that each child will reach his/her fullest potential. Teachers and Assistants will record daily student progress toward this goal, and weekly progress charts¹⁸ will maintain the frequency with which students observe lessons, practice with materials, and make advancements toward mastery. Student work will be "graded" using the following rubric:

Presented	This score will be given when a child has received or observed the initial presentation for a material/concept. The child may repeat the activity once after the initial presentation, and will remain at this level until he/she has independently chosen to practice it again.
Practicing	<p>This score will be given once a child has independently chosen to repeat an activity/lesson after his/her initial exposure. A child is "practicing" with every use of the material, as he/she refines the skills needed to complete the work masterfully and knowledgeably.</p> <p>Using the Montessori Records Express (MRX) data system, the teacher can enter the frequency with which a child uses each material. This will help to distinguish between a child who has chosen to repeat a lesson just a few times, and one who practices daily with the same task until it is mastered. This information can help the teacher recognize Sensitive Periods for each child, as well as identify potential areas of strength and weakness for her students.</p>

¹⁷ Specifics regarding these content areas are provided in section A.2.b of this application, *Resources and Instructional Materials*.

¹⁸ As outlined in the previous section on *assessments*.

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Mastered	This score is given only after a child has demonstrated a solid knowledge of the underlying concept of a work and skillful completion of the task. A child who has "mastered" a lesson should be capable of presenting the concept to a peer.
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The above rubric will be used for entering student progress data into Montessori Records Express (MRX). The following charts outline specific academic and non-academic goals for Primary and Elementary students.

Academic Goals: Primary Classroom (Three to six year olds)

GOALS	MEASUREMENT
<u>The general goals for a child in the Montessori environment are concentration, coordination, independence and order. Specifically, children will be expected to master the following academic skills by the end of their third year.</u>	<u>Student achievement will be recorded in teachers' observations and MRX. Mastery of a skill or concept is demonstrated by the correct and completed use of a given material.</u>
Children will demonstrate proficiency in manipulation of the Montessori materials; this will include following the proper sequence, completion of work, and ability to perform the task as it was presented.	Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented, practicing, or mastered</i> , as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.
Children will demonstrate an understanding of the following Mathematical concepts (based on Montessori and D.C. Standards): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numeration, sequence and matching quantities for numbers 1-10 - The Decimal System, including the formation of numbers - Addition and subtraction with regrouping - Multiplication and division - Teen and Tens numbers, including linear counting to 1,000 and skip counting - Memorization of basic facts - Introductory knowledge of geometry and fractions. - Introduction to graphing/charts - Monetary values (U.S. coins) 	Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented, practicing, or mastered</i> , as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry. <p>Additionally, children will begin standardized math assessment tests in their Kindergarten year (such as GMADE).</p>

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<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in the following areas of Language acquisition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phonetics - The application of pre-reading and reading skills - Beginning grammar - Reading analysis. 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p> <p>Additionally, children will begin standardized language assessment tests in their Kindergarten year (such as DIBELs).</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate a general basic understanding of Geography and related concepts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child will be able to identify N, E, S, W on a map/globe - The child will demonstrate an understanding of the concept of a map. - The child will develop a curiosity and appreciation for other worldly cultures. 	<p>Similar to Science, Geography and Cultural studies are presented as enrichment areas.</p> <p>Teachers will present basic concepts and will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p>
<p>Children will frequently and actively use a variety of <i>Sensorial</i> materials in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refine eye-hand coordination - Train fine discrimination of all five senses - Work for extended periods of time, exercising increased concentration skills 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p> <p>As the child's use of materials increases, teachers will notice an increased confidence and success in future works.</p>

Academic Goals: Elementary Classroom (Six to twelve year olds)

GOALS	MEASUREMENT
Children will demonstrate proficiency in manipulation of the materials based on teacher observation and record keeping.	Teacher observation and records will show child's frequency of use of materials and progress levels.

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<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in Elementary Math, moving from concrete to abstract. To include – but it not limited to – the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Decimal System, categories and numeration, addition and subtraction with regrouping - Long multiplication and multiplication algorithm - Long division - Multiples and factors - Operations with fractions and equivalency - The metric system and measurement - Monetary systems - Squares and cubes of numbers; powers of numbers - Word problems - Graphing - Introduction to algebra 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p> <p>In addition, standardized testing tools such as GMADE (for all ages) and DC-CAS (beginning in 3rd grade) will be utilized to further assess the students' understanding, proficiency with, and abstraction of mathematical concepts.</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in the acquisition and the application of reading and writing skills, grammar analysis, and reading comprehension.</p> <p>In addition, children will demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for Language and Literature in terms of the history of its development.</p>	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p> <p>Standardized testing tools such as DIBELS (for all ages) and DC-CAS (beginning in 3rd grade) will be utilized to further assess the students' understanding, proficiency with, and abstraction of language concepts.</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency within the Montessori History framework, beginning with the Timeline of Life and including (and always from the concrete to the abstract):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The coming of human beings - The history of the U.S. - The three phases of history: civilizations, migrations of people, the telling of time - Universal and fundamental needs of human beings 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p>

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<p>- Cultural awareness and minority history studies</p>	
<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in Geography concepts, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study of the Universe with its matter and laws - The composition of the earth, different ways of combining compounds, states of matter - The Solar System and the effects of Earth's rotation and revolution - The work of water, and the work of air - Physical geography (including maps, land and water forms, and economic geography) - The interdependencies of human beings in society. 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in Biology concepts, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study of the needs of plants, the vegetative parts of plants, plant reproductive parts, simple classification of plants and Vegetable Kingdom hierarchy - Specimen dissection and classification - Experiments - Botany - Classified nomenclature - Simple classification for animals, body functions of vertebrates, and Animal Kingdom hierarchy - The human body systems - Ecological relationships 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate proficiency in Geometry concepts, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The history of Geometry - Congruency, similarity and equivalence, 	<p>Teachers will assess proficiency using the grades of <i>presented</i>, <i>practicing</i>, or <i>mastered</i>, as determined by the rubric used for MRX data entry.</p> <p>Additionally, we will utilize standardized</p>

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<p>lines, angles, and measuring angles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geometric figures, geometric solids - Area and volume - Use of a compass and protractor - Geometric designs and constructions. 	<p>testing tools such as GMADE (for all ages) and DC-CAS (beginning in 3rd grade) to further assess the students' understanding, proficiency with, and abstraction of mathematical concepts.</p>
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Non-Academic Goals

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GOALS	MEASUREMENT
<p>Students will demonstrate mastery in the use of Practical life exercises.</p> <p>(Mastery will include completing the sequence of work, self-correcting, and refinement of fine motor skills.)</p>	<p>As children accomplish specific tasks (or "works"), their confidence will be observably higher and they will advance to more challenging activities.</p> <p>Teacher observation records will reflect a child's progress in this area.</p>
<p>Children will demonstrate a curiosity for and use of materials in the Science area.</p>	<p>These subjects are available for individual observation and "study" by the students, and are presented as enrichment. Students' response is not measured, although it is observed and recorded.</p>
<p>Children will explore the Art area and demonstrate a curiosity for various techniques and their relationship to larger unit studies.</p> <p>(E.g. If interested, children may explore wide brush strokes in relation to a cultural study of Japan.)</p>	<p>Note: These materials are available to students for their interest. Students' response is not measured although it is observed and recorded.</p>
<p>Children will exercise independence and self-direction in an atmosphere of free choice.</p>	<p>Teachers' observations will show that children choose materials freely and explore their individual interests.</p> <p>(Demonstrated through the smooth functioning of the Montessori classroom environment.)</p>

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Students will demonstrate an appreciation of learning and an inner motivation to succeed.	Based on teacher observation and recordings. (Children will work independently and be excited to start new projects.)
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2. Charter School Curriculum**a. Student Learning Standards**

After reviewing local District Standards, The Academy has chosen to align our program with the District of Columbia content standards for academic areas of study. We find these standards to be comprehensive and inclusive of essential criteria needed for a successful Education plan.

During the initial planning year, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will follow the alignment timetable below, to ensure that each curricular area is addressed before school opens in the Fall of 2011. We will review the content standards and ensure that each is met by use of the hands-on materials provided within the Montessori classroom. Within each alignment planning period, attention will be given to four key areas in developing the alignment tables: (1) DCPS Standards, (2) related Montessori concepts and lessons, (3) Montessori presentations and materials to be implemented, and (4) Assessments. Additionally, the scope and sequence of each curricular area will be reviewed to ensure a comprehensive curriculum is presented at each grade level. Where gaps occur between the DC Standards and the Montessori curriculum, they will be addressed by the development of supplemental materials and lessons. The Curriculum Coordinator/Mentor Teacher will be responsible for organizing teaching staff in material-making and lesson-design sessions in order to complete this alignment. Supplemental lessons and materials will be completed by July 2011. Finally, the pacing of lessons will be determined and outlined with teaching staff in August 2011 as part of the Professional Development and Planning period to take place before the beginning of the Academic School Year.

Primary Alignment Timetable

Date to be completed	August 2, 2010	August 30, 2010	September 6, 2010	September 20, 2010	September 27, 2010
Subject Area	Language	Mathematics	Practical Life & Sensorial	Cultural Studies & Science	Creative
Point Person	Katherine Avery	Katherine Avery	Katherine Avery	Katherine Avery	Katherine Avery

Elementary Alignment Timetable

(For ages 6 through 9; 9 - 12 year old curriculum alignment to be completed on a later timetable)

Date to be Completed	October 25, 2010	August 2, 2010	October 4, 2010	November 15, 2010	December 20, 2010
Subject Area	Language	Mathematics	Science	History, Geography & Cultural Studies	Creative

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Point Person	Katherine Avery	Rhonda Sabater	Rhonda Sabater	Rhonda Sabater	Rhonda Sabater
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The Academy has developed an alignment format to track and assess the implementation of our curricular philosophy and to ensure effective instruction of the required standards. Please see the example below of the Language Arts alignment for a portion of the Pre-Kindergarten scope and sequence.

DC STANDARD	MONTESSORI CONCEPT & LESSON	MATERIALS/PRESENTATION & ASSESSMENT
PKLD-D.1. Engage in oral exchanges about a topic with peers and adults.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>Sharing an Object/Experience Objects in the classroom environment or something the child brings from home are used to initiate dialogue and provide the child an opportunity for presenting something of interest to the teacher, small group, or class.</p> <p><i>* NOTE: Ability to engage in meaningful conversation is also assessed as part of the child's socio-emotional development and is addressed in that section of their cumulative report.</i></p>
PKLD-D.2. Initiate and/or extend conversations with peers and adults, using multiple exchanges.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>Modeling Conversations Teacher models appropriate modes of communication with children and other adults in the classroom. (May also provide individual children with specific language suggestions if additional support is indicated.) Individual lessons may include <i>How to Greet a Visitor at the Door, How to Invite a Guest to the Snack Table, How to Bid Farewell to a Visitor</i>, and more.</p> <p>Teacher monitors and observes dialogue between students for use of vocabulary, proper manners, and logical exchanges.</p>
PKLD-Q.3. Demonstrate understanding of explanations.	<p>Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Grace and Courtesy: Social Graces</p>	<p>Modeling Conversations <i>Child-initiated</i> Older children in the classroom may demonstrate understanding of explanations by repeating or rephrasing them to younger children.</p> <p>Modeling: Social Graces Similar to <i>Modeling Conversations</i>, Teacher model socially acceptable and appropriate behavior and conversation throughout the day. Children are observed throughout their daily actions and interactions and</p>

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		assessed depending on their ability to mimic social graces, follow directions and reason.
PK.LD-Q.4. Listen to stories attentively.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Oral Stories	Objects in the Environment and/or Special Objects of Art Both of these presentations by the teacher involve a multi-step introduction of the object. The initial step would be simply to name the object. Once the child can recall the name on his own, the Teacher presents a story or explanation of the objects use/history. During this presentation, the Teacher is continuously aware of the child's attentiveness and listening cues.
PK.LD-Q.5. Ask questions to get information, ask for help, clarify something that is not understood.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	The Question Game Children are assessed as to their participation in and demonstrated understanding of this type of dialogue.
PK.LD-Q.6. Answer questions with increasing complexity.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	The Question Game Children are assessed as to their participation in and demonstrated understanding of this type of dialogue.
PK.LD-Q.7. Follow directions of two or more steps.	Practical Life - Order - Logical Sequencing of Steps	Practical Life Exercises Ex.) Table Washing Teacher presents a defined series of steps to the child, with the desired outcome of cleaning a tabletop. To master the lesson, the child must demonstrate that he can lay out the necessary materials in a logical order, follow the sequence of steps needed to clean and dry the table, and put away the materials in the orderly manner in which they were found. *Note: All AMI certified teachers receive identical training in presenting <i>Practical Life</i> lessons. Each child would be presented <i>Table Washing</i> with the similar materials and the same sequence of steps. This ensures fidelity of implementation and validity of assessments.
PK.LD-Q.8. Retell story events in sequence.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Oral Stories	Sequencing Cards Teacher presents a series of cards depicting a series of sequential events to the child.

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		<p>Children are assessed as to whether they can reconstruct the logical sequence of the visual "story". (<i>The first demonstration and retell is done in silence. Once the child has mastered the sequence, language is introduced and the child may verbally retell the sequence.</i>)</p> <p>Objects in the Environment Special Objects of Art <i>*Please see above explanations.</i></p>
PK.LD-V.9. Use words to describe concrete objects, actions, and feelings.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>Modeling Teachers may provide supplemental lessons on empathy to children – individually or in small groups – in order to provide necessary vocabulary for self-expression.</p> <p>Teacher continually observes and assesses child's ability to communicate with others using increased vocabulary.</p>
PK.LD-V.10. Integrate new vocabulary into conversations with peers and adults	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>Enrichment of the Vocabulary: Classified Cards Teacher presents classified collections of pictures dealing with the social environment (i.e. city, transportation, home, farm), illustrations of geological (i.e. river, peninsula, mountain, lake, etc.) and biological terms (i.e. mammals, birds, reptiles, etc.).</p> <p>Children are assessed on their ability to incorporate new vocabulary into their dialogue, and have mastered the materials when they can present the cards to another classmate with the appropriate terminology.</p>
PK.LD-V.11. Add descriptive words to basic subject-verb-object sentences.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>The Adjective <i>Materials: miniature social setting with a group of objects that are in some way related to each other (a farm, a city, etc)</i></p>
PK.LD-V.12. Ask questions to acquire new vocabulary.	Vocabulary Enrichment: Conversations	<p>Enrichment of the Vocabulary: Conversations: The Question Game <i>Materials: no materials, just the teacher and classmates</i></p>
PK.BR-PC.1. Treat books with care.	Pre-Literacy: Care of Books	<p>Modeling: Care of Books Teacher is aware of her own handling of books when presenting story time,</p>

		<p>introducing a child to the in-class library, or reading one-on-one with a child.</p> <p>Children are observed and assessed on their own treatment of books and the condition in which they return them once finished.</p>
PK.BR-PC.2. Hold books right side up and know that books are read from front to back, top to bottom.	Pre-Literacy: Care of Books	<p>Turning the Page Teacher presents to the child how to properly handle a book, including turning the page delicately from one to the next.</p> <p>In addition to being observed and assessed on their own treatment of books and the condition in which they return them once finished, children are observed as they read to ensure they are exploring the text from top to bottom, left to right, and front to back.</p>
PK.BR-PC.3. Understand the concept of title, author, and illustrator.	<p>Vocabulary Enrichment: Books</p> <p>Literary Appreciation</p>	<p>Parts of the Book Once a child has demonstrated a general curiosity for reading and books, the Teacher will present the various parts of the book to the child (i.e. cover, spine, title page, dedication page, etc.).</p> <p>Key Makers of a Book Once a child has demonstrated a general curiosity for reading and books, the Teacher will present the key persons involved in making a book (i.e. author and illustrator).</p> <p>Children are assessed as to their ability to repeat the terminology when asked by the teacher or when sharing a book with another child.</p>
PK.BR-PC.4. Know that spoken words can be written and read and written words can be spoken aloud.	<p>Literary Appreciation</p> <p>Pre-Literacy: Books</p>	<p>Literary Appreciation: Concept of Books Children are given indirect cues during literary presentations so as to convey the notion that spoken and written words can be "translated" from one to the other.</p> <p>A child demonstrates understanding of this concept when he is observed "writing" in a journal (Montessori students are given the freedom to express themselves on paper even before they are able to form actual words), or when he demonstrates a readiness for or curiosity towards the <i>Moveable Alphabet</i> (see below explanation).</p>

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		Conversely, a child also demonstrated this understanding when he reads aloud from a book, or reconstructs a story from printed materials.
PK.BR-PC.5. Know that print is read from left to right in English and many other languages.	<i>* Note: Children receive Pre-Literacy visual training from the beginning of their studies in Practical Life and Sensorial areas. This includes training the eyes to scan from left to right, and top to bottom, and is done so in an indirect manner so that it becomes a natural habit.</i>	
PK.BR-PC.6. Use pictures as clues to the text. Understand concept of term "The End."	Literary Appreciation	
PK.BR-PC.7. Initiate reading behaviors.	Classroom Library	The teacher presents the in-class library as available to all students. When a child demonstrates a strong curiosity in the materials available, or frequently selects books to explore from the library, he has "initiated reading behaviors".
PK.BR-PA.8. Identify words that rhyme in songs, nursery rhymes, poems, and stories.	Spoken Language: Rhyming	Songs Story-time Children are assessed on their ability to repeat songs with rhyming words, as well as their ability to predict rhyming text.
PK.BR-PA.9. Produce (make up) rhymes.	Spoken Language: Rhyming	Pre-Literacy: Rhyming Cards Teacher presents a series of picture cards to the child, who is then asked to match the ones that rhyme. As a follow-up activity and to assess the child's understanding, he may be asked to make up additional rhyming words and recite them to the teacher.
PK.BR-PA.10. Hear syllables in words.	Beginning Language: Sound Games	Sound Games I Teacher and child clap out the various syllables in words, or perform other gross motor actions to symbolize/identify the various syllables.
PK.BR-PA.11. Discriminate sounds as being the same or different. Manipulate sounds. Blend individual phonemes to	Beginning Language: Initial, Middle and Ending Sounds	Sound Games II Teacher presents child a variety of objects with varying initial sounds.

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form words		The child is assessed on his/her ability to correctly identify the object by its initial sound.
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Additionally, Teachers will develop monthly planning tracks during the professional development period in August 2011 in order to guide their instruction and ensure proper pacing of lessons. For example, at the beginning of the year lessons for the month may include community safety, classroom guidelines, grace and courtesy, and reminders of the daily schedule. These lessons may be presented to the class during circle time or to small groups and/or individual students during the work period. Below is a sample format, which outlines how the standards will be included in monthly planning. At the end of each planning unit, teachers will assess the effectiveness of instruction based on the percentage of students that have mastered the given lessons. Since The Academy will have multi-age classrooms, children will not be expected to achieve 100% mastery all at the same time. Rather, achievement expectations will be based on age-groupings, developmental readiness and other key factors.

SAMPLE Monthly Planning Format:

DCPS Power Standards	<p>PK.2. Children develop an understanding of self within the context of community.</p> <p>K.3. Students place familiar events in order of occurrence.</p> <p>K.6. Students retell stories that illustrate honesty, courage, friendship, respect, responsibility, and the wise judicious exercise of authority, and they explain how the stories show these qualities.</p> <p>PK.M.3. Show awareness of time concepts and sequence (e.g., says, "After lunch we have read-aloud time.")</p> <p>K.M.4. Order events in a day.</p> <p>PK.LD-Q.4. Listen to stories attentively.</p> <p>K.LD-D.1. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including raising one's hand, listening politely to the ideas of others, waiting one's turn, and speaking one at a time.</p>
DCPS Connecting Standards	<p>PK.2.1. Begin to demonstrate respect for others, cooperation, and fairness.</p> <p>PK.2.3. Participate in group goals and planning.</p> <p>K.3.1. Identify days of the week and months of the year.</p> <p>PK.PRA.2. Recognize, describe, and copy simple patterns (e.g., joins the teacher in a clapping pattern; Simon Says)</p>
Montessori Goals and Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To create a sense of community by learning about yourself and others. 2. To introduce an understanding of space and time. (Days of the week; Daily Routine) 3. To construct classroom rules based on safety and kind action.

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Vocabulary	Kindness; kind action; teachers' names; school name; community name; thank you; excuse me; please; nice to meet you; classroom areas (practical life, sensorial, art, etc.); rules; classmates' names
Skills/Concepts	Grace and Courtesy; Safety; Kindness; Peace; Respect; Care of the Environment; Community; Time/Sequence (days of the week; daily routine); Surrounding/Classroom Environment; Body Parts; Quiet use of the body; Rules
Essential Questions	1. What is the name of your school? Teacher(s)? Classroom community? 2. What are the rules of the classroom? 3. What are the names of the areas in the classroom? 4. How do you get the teacher's attention? 5. What does kindness look like in the classroom? 6. What is the daily schedule?
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children will be able to create and name three rules for the classroom.- Children will be able to use at least five rules of courtesy, such as saying thank you, excuse me, please, raising their hand before speaking, and waiting for the teacher.- Children will know the name of their school, teacher(s), classroom community, and at least five classmates.- Children will be able to name and identify the main five areas of the classroom.- Children will be able to name the five days of the week, in sequence.- Children will be able to anticipate and follow the daily routine of the classroom.

b. Resources and Instructional Materials

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will incorporate scientifically designed, hands-on materials in the classrooms, consistent with the Montessori model. Students will have the opportunity to explore a variety of activities throughout the different curricular areas and will have access to these materials all day long. As The Academy works to align its model with the District of Columbia Learning Standards, supplemental materials may occasionally be provided in order to meet District requirements. Below is an explanation of the Montessori approach and recommended resources within the Primary and Elementary levels.

Primary (3-6 years old) Subject Areas:

The children in the Primary classroom will be exposed to the following six subject areas: ***Practical Life, Language, Mathematics, Sensorial, Cultural Activities, and Creative Activities***. Each area begins with the most basic and fundamental concepts and gradually increases in skill level and difficulty. The classroom will be equipped with materials specifically designed and approved for Montessori classroom instruction. In

addition to the physical materials being used, the role of the teacher in maintaining the materials and activities in a manner that will allow for success when the child manipulates it is vital to the functioning of the classroom environment. All the materials placed on the shelf need to be complete and ready for use and any missing or broken parts need to be replaced before being placed on the shelf. Primary areas of study include:

(1) PRACTICAL LIFE

The Practical Life area can be divided into activities for the *Care of the Self*, *Care of the Environment*, *Coordination of Movement* and *Grace and Courtesy*. Some of the activities the child will be exposed to include: dusting, opening and closing containers, opening and closing doors, rolling and unrolling rugs, taking care of plants, sweeping and mopping and how to carry a chair in the classroom. The Association Montessori International (AMI) outlines the following criteria when selecting materials and activities for the Practical Life area. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will adhere to these standards as best possible. The materials should be:

- **Familiar** to the child—he has seen them being used by someone or might have used some of them himself. The child may be predisposed to doing the activities. It serves as a link between home and school. In a Primary classroom, this may be as simple as a dustpan, in Elementary an example may be a vacuum cleaner.
- **Culturally specific** – The activities should reflect the culture in which we live. The things on the shelf should aid the child's process of adaptation. For example, in learning how to open and close containers, the materials may include spice jars, tea boxes and/or other objects relevant to the child's culture.
- **Real** – The activities, the tools and the materials are real. This assures purposefulness in the activity. When real tools are provided, it is an indication that we are respecting the child's activity and valuing his/her time and work. Real materials result in a real goal, thus the child works to achieving this goal. The real tools allow the child to be satisfied through his/her efforts. For example, in caring for plants, if the child takes proper care of the plant (polishes the leaves, waters it, etc.) it will grow and thrive.
- **Physically proportioned** – The tools need to fit the child's hand. The child is perfecting movement and needs to get appropriate feedback about her movements—this she can get from the tools. The

cleaning instruments, for example—brooms, mops, sponges, cloths, bottles, and towels are all child sized.

- **Breakable** – There should be many breakable materials, as things made out of glass and ceramic are often more aesthetically pleasing and often more authentic (i.e. small flower vases). More importantly, delicate objects offer the opportunity for the child to perfect movement (so as to avoid breakage). The teacher should be very matter-of-fact in taking care any accidents and cleaning up with the child's help.
- **Attractive** – This is tied into the spiritual awareness and development of the child. The outer beauty calls to the inner beauty and leads to an appreciation of the beauty within.
- **Color-coded** – The Practical Life materials are color coded to encourage further independence. The material is kept together on the shelf where the child must replace some elements after use, and the colors help them identify the things they need. For example, once the child has finished a wood-polishing work, he will need to replace the dirty cloth with a clean one and add more polishing solution to the tray's dish. If the wood-polishing work is on a red tray, the child will look for a red cloth and red bottle of solution to replace the materials that he used. All replacement materials are available to the children on the same shelf where the work is housed.
- **Orderly** – Order in sequence if applicable. For example, in Primary, children practice pouring dry rice from one vessel to another before they learn to pour water. In Elementary, the child would learn how to wash and dry vegetables before slicing them. The consistent way in presenting, particularly the movement, is important because the movement is what we want the child to perfect. The consistency in presentation is essential. The teacher must show the same thing to each child in the same way.
- **Limited** – They are limited in number so as not to overwhelm the child with too many choices. Limiting is also needed so as to make the activities unique, which the children will notice and perhaps develop a deeper relationship with the items. It is also good for the child to find that the work they want to do is unavailable, as the child will learn this fact of community living that we have to share our resources. Waiting is not an option as this is something very difficult for them to do, and the child is encouraged to choose some other activity in the meantime.

(2) LANGUAGE

The materials and activities in this area are designed to give the child a working knowledge of syntax and grammar and enrich his/her vocabulary, as well as practice in public speaking, writing, and reading. The materials in this area are comprised of nomenclature cards and booklets, conversations with the teacher, objects in the environment (including replicas of objects), small wooden letters (the “moveable alphabet”) used for constructing words, and other manipulatives. The idea is always to move from the concrete to the abstract, each activity building upon the next until the child demonstrates through speech and other activities, his understanding of the language.

When the child enters the Montessori environment he/she has already mastered his/her maternal language, though some children may not express much at this age. We must keep in mind that language is communication; the language experiences we offer the child always need to be linked to communication so that they are meaningful. Saying to a child: “Let’s learn these new words today” is not meaningful. On the other hand, if the child approaches the teacher with a picture they are interested in, and she gives them the language to describe what is in the image, then this is meaningful. The most important area of language in the environment is going to be spoken language. It is by far more important than reading or writing, as the foundation for both of these is spoken language.

In order to get from spoken language to written language and then reading, a few things need to happen. First, the child’s **self-confidence** needs to be at a level that allows her to freely express herself. Indirect preparation for this development of self-confidence begins with the *Practical Life* area as the child learns to trust himself and his abilities and continues as the teacher engages the child in conversations. The teacher also needs to provide **enriching experiences** that give the child something to talk about. Again, the *Practical Life* area provides great opportunity for this aspect of the language area.

Once the child’s spoken language abilities are enhanced, then the activities to develop the written language are introduced.

- **Self-expression**

The first thing the child needs to know is that words are made up of different sounds—**sound analysis**. The challenge is to analyze what we do when we talk to make it visible to the child. This is introduced through the Sound Games. Sound Games may be used in conjunction with classified small objects, where children are asked to

identify the object by its initial sound. For example, if the child is presented a basket of farm animals, he would be asked to draw out the animal that starts with the sound “c” – the child would draw the cow – and so on. These are oral activities and emphasize the initial sounds first, then ending sounds, then middle sounds. Eventually, the child will be able to analyze all the sounds in a given word. Sound analysis in a Montessori classroom is very similar to *phonemic awareness* activities done in a “traditional” classroom.

Once this is mastered, we introduce the symbols of the sounds or the alphabet using the **Sandpaper Letters** – a material designed by Dr. Montessori. This is done through the Three Period Lesson¹⁹ and is to aid the child in associating the symbol with a sound they already know. The child traces the letter to prepare the hand for writing. This material is introduced over the course of four to six weeks and encompasses all the letters; initial presentations include only the phonetic sound of each letter (not soft or long sounds).

Since the mind is prepared for writing before the hand is capable, Dr. Maria Montessori developed the **Moveable Alphabet** so that the child can begin self-expressive writing before the hand is ready for writing. Writing in this manner is presented at this time because the child is in the sensitive period²⁰ for Language. This approach ensures that writing becomes part of the child’s personality. In the beginning, simple, short words are written. Then we move on to phrases, sentences and so on. In the meantime, work is being done with **Metal Insets** and other tracing materials, so as to prepare the hand for writing.

• **Mechanical**

We need to prepare the hand to be used as a tool in the service of the mind. The child is in a sensitive period for the perfection of movement of the hand and the method to this is definite. We begin writing in cursive because children naturally make curved, flowing

¹⁹ The “Three Period Lesson” is performed in three steps. A common example of these steps is in the presentation of letter sounds. Suppose a Teacher is to present the sounds /m/, /s/, and /t/ to a child. The Teacher will proceed with the following three steps:

1. Pronounce the sounds for each three letters and ask the child to repeat. Say, “this is mmmm, please repeat the sound mmmm.”
2. With all three letters on the table ask the child to identify them. Say, “Which one is m?”
3. One letter at a time, ask the child to name the sound. Say, “What sound is this?” while pointing to the ‘m’.

²⁰ Dr. Maria Montessori discovered that the child goes through a number of *sensitive periods* throughout his development. Each period is marked by the child’s unique and organic interest in a particular subject, concept, or skill. Montessori observed a number of such periods in children aged 3-6 including interest in language, small objects, order, numbers, and tactile exploration. The Montessori classroom is specifically designed in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities to the children as they experience these sensitive periods.

lines in their early drawings; it is difficult for children to draw straight lines and circles. The transition from writing cursive to writing print is easier than going from print to cursive.

The Practical Life and Sensorial areas have *indirect preparation* of the hand for writing. Movements from left to right train the necessary hand-eye coordination needed for writing on a line. In addition, many activities utilize the pincer grip, which trains the muscles of the hand for pencil use. Other activities strengthen the child's hand and wrist—carrying a bucket of water, scrubbing, carrying the largest cube of the Pink Tower or the largest prism of the Brown Stair, spooning and painting. All of this work comes together as the child begins working with the **Metal Insets**. Dr. Montessori developed the **Metal Insets** specifically to prepare the hand for writing. In addition, some Montessori teachers will introduce various occupational therapy tools, such as large rubber pencil grips or stress balls, in order to address the different motor needs of the children.

(3) SENSORIAL

The materials in this area are designed to facilitate refinement of the child's sense of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. An example of the materials in this area would be the **Sound Cylinders** – two sets of six identical cylinders, each with varying sounds. With this activity, the child is shown how to listen to the cylinders by shaking them and then must find the matching cylinder. In the next level of the activity, the child has to grade the cylinders from loudest to softest. Gradually, as the child works with the materials, he/she develops finer and finer distinctions.

Another outcome of work in the Sensorial area is that the child's work with the materials leads to the development of abstract thought as he/she works with materials moving from the tangible and concrete to the abstract. In this process, the child is learning to record sensory impressions accurately. The materials are designed to address every sense: the materials for the sense of sight involve activities with color (matching, grading), dimension, size and form; the tactile sense is addressed with materials that explore texture, temperature and weight; the materials for refinement of the olfactory sense include smelling bottles; the gustatory sense just has one piece of material; and the auditory sense materials include activities that address sound in terms of volume and pitch in music. There are other aspects of sound, but in the classroom, the focus is only on music. The materials in the Sensorial area have certain characteristics:

- **The Isolation of Quality** - Each piece of material isolates a quality so that the child can clearly perceive it. The child thus gets to know it intimately and uses this perception as the basis of classification. The hope is that the child can have some experience with the concept but in isolation, therefore getting deeper understanding, appreciation or perception. Occasionally, a blindfold

may be needed in order to isolate the concept, e.g. the baric tablets which are sorted by weight.

- **Aesthetically pleasing** - The materials are beautiful because beauty attracts children. They are inherently beautiful. The materials need to be clean and well-cared for. Beauty alone is not enough motivation to get the child working, however, but it gives enough stimulation to get the child started on an activity.
- **Offer the possibility of manipulation/activity** - The materials respond to the child's tendency towards activity and give them the opportunity to sustain their interest through manipulation. Some of the manipulation is purely exploration based on the nature of the material itself.
- **Mathematically correct** - They are scientifically designed and mathematically correct when appropriate. The precision draws the child's attention to the exact differences in some of them.
- **Offer indirect preparation** - This is true for all the materials in the classroom. Some materials help prepare the hand for writing. The geometric cabinet has materials that give the experience with form but the act of tracing the shape is also an indirect preparation for writing.
- **Are limited in quantity** - There are built in controls of error that can be discovered by the child and used to correct mistakes. Some of the controls are mechanical—material not fitting into a spot, etc. Some of them are also developmental—something does not look right or harmonious. Just as in the Practical Life and other areas, the materials are limited—there is only one piece. The idea is for the child to perfect one thing at a time—the teacher just offers the keys of the concepts. The child has the ability to generalize and so does not need every piece of material associated with the concept.

Sequence of Sensorial Presentations:

1. Matching

This is the first activity that is offered. With the **Color Tablets** (a set of wooden tablets – produced by Nienhaus – painted in the Primary, secondary and tertiary colors), the child's first presentation involves learning how to match the colors. The activity draws attention to the isolated experience and serves to strengthen the intellect. Then the child is left alone so that he/she can spend some time with the material.

2. Grading

This is the second activity and is a little more difficult than matching. It requires that the child refine the concept in order to be successful. This step also allows time for the child to work independently with the material. In the example of the **Color Tablets**, the child is presented the third box, which contains a graded series of tablets for

each color. The child must place the tablets in order, from light to dark.

3. Language

Explanations and definitions are not given until the child has had much sensorial experience with the materials. Even then, the language used is very precise and specific and as scientific as possible. With geometry cabinet, for instance, the child is matching and grading long before the names of the shapes are given. The language is taught in a precise way called the "three period lesson" (see previous explanation in footnote 11).

4. Games

The purpose of the games is to develop memory. They are always done at a distance. One of the benefits/delights of the game is that the children become conscious of what they know and this is exciting to them. The last game is environmental matching in which the child is asked to find something in the classroom that matches the material. This is asking the child to generalize the concept or recognize it outside of the material.

(4) MATHEMATICS:

The materials in this area are physical representations of mathematical concepts, including geometry. It is important for the child to have access to mathematical experiences through sensorial manipulation. Qualities of the other five core areas can be found in the approach to mathematics and the idea is to give the whole concept first and then move on to the details. There are six basic groups of mathematics instruction and each one is presented in a three-step pattern: a concrete experience of the concept, followed by isolation of the concept and finally, a combination of the concrete with the abstract.

Just like in the Sensorial area, the child is allowed to work with materials that have been presented. There is time for limited exploration with the materials before moving on. The sensorial principle of giving the whole first and then the details is adhered to in this area as well and presentations always move from simple to complex, and general to specific.

There are six groups of math materials, the first three of which follow this basic 3-step pattern: **Step one** - give a concrete experience of the quantity which the child can manipulate and count orally; **Step two** - in isolation, the symbol is attached to the language (numerical); and **Step three** - combine the material with the symbol. In addition, there is definite sequence to the presentation with some parallel activities. The six groups of Mathematics presentations are as follows:

GROUP I:

The materials used in this group are designed to introduce the language of quantity. For example, the child is already familiar with the **Red Rods** (a *Sensorial* material that introduces length). In the *Math* area, he will find the **Number Rods** – similar to the red rods in that they are a set of ten wooden rods, graded in length, but now are colored red-blue-red-etc. so as to differentiate the quantities 1 through ten. This work gives a strong impression of individual quantities and how they compare to each other. Additionally, children are introduced to the **sandpaper numbers** (a similar material to the **sandpaper letters** from the language area). This material will prepare the child's hand for writing numerical symbols in the same way the **sandpaper letters** prepare the child's hand for writing letters. The symbol is introduced after the child has worked extensively with the quantity. Then the child works with the quantities and symbols in a series of exercises that help the child connect the symbols to the quantity. One such work may include the **Spindle Boxes** – a material developed by Dr. Montessori, in which children must place the appropriate number of spindles in the corresponding numbered slots of the box. The final activities make use of everything the child has learned so far and trains the child's memory by giving the opportunity for the child to keep the impressions of the numbers in the mind for as long as possible.

GROUP II: The Decimal System with Operations

At this point, the child has an understanding of the quantities of numbers, and is now introduced to the concept of the decimal system, as a whole, so as to clarify the concept. The child is introduced to the concept with sensorial materials, such as the **Golden Beads**, before the symbol is introduced. The **Golden Beads** consist of individual unit beads, ten bars, hundred squares, and thousand cubes – each of which is made out of the same golden bead (as the unit), thus providing a proportionate and concrete representation of quantity. The child is introduced to four-digit numbers because it is more dramatic and gives a deeper impression. Children are about five years old at this time and working together with friends makes the activity more intriguing and their appreciation more dynamic. The focus is not on accuracy but on the process. The four operations are done quite close to each other so the contrast between them clarifies each operation.

GROUP III: Introduction to the Teens and Tens

In this group, the child will focus on the quantity of the symbols of numbers in the categories of teens and tens. The symbols will be introduced after the child has worked with the materials. The child will then incorporate this new language in the reading of numbers. There will also be materials that give the opportunity to count large groups of numbers, such as the **Ten Boards** – a material that consists of a long tablet containing the numbers 10, 20, 30 ... 90, and sufficient ten bars (of the **Golden Beads** material) to represent the corresponding quantities.

GROUP IV: Memorization

Memorization is the last thing the children do in the process of work with the operations. The idea of memorizing is suitable to children in the First Plane of development because of the Absorbent Mind. Before this work is introduced, the child has repeatedly encountered these facts in the previous groups. There is a pattern to the activities for each operation:

- i. The first step involves a presentation that allows for the sensorial exploration of the essential math facts. There is no recording.
- ii. The second step involves the child having an activity in which the facts are recorded in an orderly way. The fact that it is pre-printed and orderly gives the child the sense of the whole of what needs to be memorized. There is a control chart to check for accuracy as this is the first time the child is encountering the idea that the answer has to be right.
- iii. In the third step, the child works with Practice charts. The answers are encountered randomly and the child records the entire equation, both of which aid the process of memorization. In addition, there is a blank chart on which the child can fill in all the memorized answers. There are control charts to check the answers.

GROUP V: Passage to Abstraction

The child will know the essential math facts before the passage to abstraction begins in any area. These materials help the child pass to the abstraction of the arithmetic algorithms (paper and pencil) with a true understanding of the particular quantities being operated upon. Here the child will go back to working with larger numbers that were excluded in the memorization group. The materials are designed to help the child now integrate the concepts of the quantities and the operations with knowledge of the materials.

GROUP VI: Fractions

The child needs a really good grounding in whole numbers before the introduction of the concept and operations of fractions. The fraction material goes up to the tenths that is enough for the child to see a pattern and be able to imagine other fractions. Through working with the material, the children will discover the rules of fractions on their own.

(5) CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

This area encompasses biology, history and geography and social justice issues. Again, the approach is to give the child a sense of the whole history of humanity and then move into the finer details, utilizing storytelling, experiments and field trips, with the child taking on the more and more the burden of exploration as her abilities increase. The world is presented as a whole and then the child is encouraged to explore the details individually. In addition, history will be brought to life for the child in a manner designed to empower the child with a sense of self worth and identity as the child experiences history on a personal level.

The world is introduced to the child as a whole that is made up of land and water forms. The child should have as much sensorial experience as possible—playing outside in the mud or sand with water are ideal methods of sensorial exploration for the child, as they are natural and familiar elements. Attention is paid to the fundamentals—land and water are in relationship with each other and actually define each other. The child is introduced to the idea of the Earth being made up living and non-living things because these concepts are understandable to the young child.

Any books read by the teacher to the children are factual. Oral stories are a lot better than books for the most part because they are more immediate; they can be customized for each child; they serve to strengthen our connection with the child and the child is more likely to repeat a story that you told rather than something you read out of a book.

The Science curriculum includes *Botany* and *Zoology*. The environment and thus the teacher must offer enriching experiences that are classified. For example, flowers and leaves are classified by their parts, and then are further explored. Children explore the parts of flowers and leaf shapes before looking into leaf parts, because the shapes of the leaves are most obvious and appealing to the young child. Children at this stage of development have a great need for sensorial experiences—the class will go on walks outside and children will have the opportunity to experience living plants. Inside, there may be a variety of plants around the classroom that the children can care for and an indoor garden, if possible. Without being too obvious, the teacher can create an environment of reverence for nature, demonstrating that we take care of things.

The sensorial experiences can then be followed up with spoken language cards which extend the child's experience. The teacher has

conversations with the child with the focus being on use of the language and nomenclature and not so much on the child being able to identify each part. The spoken language cards are used after the child has had live experience of the parts. Factual books that the Teacher reads to children can also be used along with storybooks.

Real leaves can be gathered at some point and classified according to the botany cabinet shapes. The leaf-washing activity in the Practical Life gives the child a chance to care and get to know leaves. Leaf rubbings can be done and the child can also trace the leaves.

(6) CREATIVE ACTIVITIES:

This includes art, drama and poetry, in addition to writing. Elements of each of these are interwoven with the other core areas whenever possible and the child is encouraged to engage the imagination in trying to figure out solutions to classroom problems and societal problems as well. As their awareness of these issues increases, the burden of responsibility gradually increases as well.

The following areas of art are explored with the child:

Visual: Painting, coloring, rubbings, and more

Performance: Music/Movement

Literature: Fiction and Poetry

Fine Arts: Painting and Music

Elementary (6-12) Subject Areas

Cosmic Education is based on the premise that the Elementary child wants to know the "how" and "why" behind things. . In alignment with the standards outlined by the Association Montessori International (AMI), the Elementary program offers a continuum built on the preschool experience as the child's work in the Primary has laid the foundation of certain information and a certain expertise with the use of the materials. Each subject area begins with the most basic and fundamental concepts and gradually increases in skill level and difficulty. The classroom will be equipped with materials specifically designed and approved for Montessori classroom instruction. Ultimately, the child will wean herself off the materials and onto more abstract activities as she progresses through each level from 1st to 6th grade.

As in the Primary, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. The goal of Cosmic Education is to provide a philosophical framework in which the child can work. The materials used in the Elementary classroom are intended to evoke the child's imagination, to aid abstraction, to generate a world-view about the human task and purpose. The teacher guides the child in his/her research and encourages him/her to ask questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences and ultimately, what is their cosmic task. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science

in the study of natural history and world ecology. The Elementary environment now reflects a new stage of the child's development and offers the following:

- An integrated approach to the study of *Language, Mathematics, Biology, History, Art, Music, Geography* and *Geometry* that utilizes the child's imagination.
- Introductory lessons presented in a way that gives the first principles of each subject area utilizing timelines, pictures, charts and other visual aids
- The child is encouraged to do open-ended research projects and in-depth studies of topics using reference books, people and other resources (no textbooks or worksheets are used)
- Concrete materials used for Mathematics instruction that shows the correlations with geometry
- "Great Stories" that are presented to the child in the beginning of the Elementary program and for the basis for all other work in the classroom
- "Going Out" to conduct research in the field
- The presentation of the concept of "Supernatural" or the connectedness of all living things and the importance of those interrelationships in ensuring the survival of the planet

(1) LANGUAGE

The Language program in the Elementary builds on what was done in the Primary to a certain extent. The idea of spoken language being an area of great importance is carried over into the Elementary and the teacher now has to work with language to help the child express and communicate thoughts and feelings. This is done through stories that talk about the history of language--spoken and written, and how it was developed. There is opportunity to explore different types of written languages as well. The teacher works with the child so he can gain some facility with language. The child is presented with certain opportunities for him to use and develop spoken language through the Grace and Courtesy lessons, a study of the etymology of words, word study, oral presentations of written reports to an audience, and one-on-one conferences with the teacher.

In terms of written language, the child is given the opportunity for making written language more effective. This began with moveable alphabet in the Primary. The work with Parts of Speech begins with word study and continues through to homonyms and antonyms, etc. The materials used to do this work are the Grammar boxes, which include a study of the functions of words, transposition, conjugation of verbs, classification of nouns and adjectives. Language Arts includes handwriting and spelling and the children are taught spelling rules and strategies. Sentence Analysis presentations include the analysis of simple sentences, sentences with adverbial modifiers, sentences with linking verbs, compound sentences, complex sentences and clauses. The teacher presents all of these lessons with manipulative materials that the child uses to explore the concepts. The teacher will also be giving

lessons on writing skills and techniques, oral presentation skills, drama, interpretive reading, literature and style.

(2) GEOGRAPHY

Following the approach of Cosmic Education, the children are introduced to geography concepts through stories. Since they want to know everything, the natural starting point is an exploration of the universe because nothing is larger. Everything is contained in it. The presentation of the whole universe is intended to give an overview. It serves as an organizing principle that then allows each child to get other information in order and classify it and put it in its place.

In the Primary classroom, sensorial materials are used just to give language to things. In the Elementary, it is the same principle; now they can start to organize and categorize and correlate that knowledge because they have already seen and experienced the stars and rain, etc. The teacher imparts information that is designed to give some fundamental principles, some background. For example, in a lesson about the Work of Air, there can be a discussion and presentation on how and why heated air rises. The initial presentations are designed to give the children a sense that there is a wonderful universe out there. The geography lessons are broken down into several areas. There are materials that are used by the child, either for the purpose of performing experiments or for the exploration of a particular concept. The lessons are also accompanied by visual images in the form of impressionistic charts and timelines.

The first area is the Universe and Its Laws, in which the child is given presentations to explore the following concepts:

- i. Composition of the Earth
- ii. States of Matter
- iii. The Solar System, including the Effects of Earth's Rotation and Revolution
- iv. The Work of Air and the Work of Water
- v. The effects of Human Beings on Earth (which looks at Interdependencies of Human Beings in society)
- vi. Economic geography.

In addition, the children use models, maps, and charts to learn about different countries of the world, their own country and land and water forms. Nomenclature booklets are associated with the physical geography.

(3) MATHEMATICS

As with all the other areas in Cosmic Education, the work in the Mathematics area begins with stories. The children are exposed to the history of the subject they are studying and the evolution of the subject is put into context for the child. The materials are sensorial in the beginning and gradually the child moves towards abstraction. The idea of math as a form of communication is infused in all the lessons as the child continues the work done in the Primary. The Elementary lessons begin with Numeration in terms of hierarchies of numbers and then a study

of some basic laws of math. There are lessons given also on the properties of numbers, measurement, operations with whole numbers including long multiplication and long division, squares and cubes of numbers, fractions, decimals, negative numbers, powers of numbers, non-decimal bases, ratio and proportion, word problems and an introduction to algebra. All the lessons are introduced with materials that the children use to do the mathematics operations. Fractions are taught using metal fraction insets and there is even a piece of material used for Decimal fractions. Worksheets are not used for instruction, but rather, students are encouraged to create their own equations to solve and generate their own fact sheets from their work with the materials.

(4) GEOMETRY

Like all the other areas in the Elementary, the geometry program begins with stories about the history of geometry. The approach to each subject links directly to history and with geometry, the etymology of the term is introduced to the children, giving them a sense of the other languages involved in ours. Geometry is connected to human beings and human life in a very real and practical way and the children are exposed to this idea through the lessons. There are a variety of materials used including charts, nomenclature booklets and activity cards. Lessons are given utilizing materials that demonstrate the geometrical concept and which the child can manipulate and thereby “discover” it for herself. The children are introduced to the concepts of similarity, congruence and equivalence of geometric figures. They have already learned the names of the geometric figures in the Primary classroom and can now explore the figures in depth. Some of the concepts covered include:

- i. The study of lines, angles and polygons
- ii. The Pythagorean theorem
- iii. Area of plane figures
- iv. Measurement in terms of volume, length, and mass

(5) HISTORY

Montessori considered history to be a prime ingredient in Cosmic Education because it encompasses everything that happened or might have happened. History is the core of Cosmic Education. The Elementary teacher imparts to the children a sense that all things flow from history. Again, the work in History begins with stories that are told to the children about life on earth. There is further exploration of the stories through timelines and charts. The Elementary program looks at the following areas of history and the child is encouraged to go into detail as his interest directs:

- I. Natural History (focuses on the period before the coming of human beings).
- II. The study of the history of humans and includes the language and mathematics stories as well as the study of the fundamental needs of human beings, and migration patterns.
- III. The study of Time and the calendar

The purpose of these studies is to provide a more detailed structure for the children in addition to helping them place things in context, develop an appreciation of unknown heroes and cultivate an appreciation of man's abilities. The history curriculum also includes a study of time. The children are taught to tell time and create simple timelines. The History Question Charts guide the children toward their own research of civilizations, the phases of human history, and United States history. Cultural empowerment activities will be included in these lessons as well and the children will be exposed to activities that seek to cultivate a sense of self and pride in the accomplishments of their ancestors. The history curriculum seeks to guide the child to the point of developing his own cosmic task by providing models from the past.

(6) BIOLOGY

The biology curriculum seeks to impart to the child the idea that knowledge of the environment gives the opportunity for meaningful interactions as it gives a wealth of information that can be used in communicating with others. The ultimate aim of the biology program is to help the child develop a global awareness of life on earth and how human beings impact it. In addition, the idea of one's cosmic task is also encountered here. As in all areas of Cosmic Education, the children are introduced to concepts through sensorial exploration before moving to the abstract. The lessons and presentations allow the children to see the connection with the other areas in the classroom and the interrelationships between things. The child is also exposed to the idea of individual responsibility for wise use of the natural resources in the environment so as to ensure the survival of all. The materials used include impressionistic charts, experiments, nomenclature booklets, nature walks and field trips. Again, work in the Biology area begins with stories and encompasses both Botany and Zoology. The children will be studying:

- I. The Plant and its Vegetative Parts--leaf, root, stem;
- II. The Plant and its Reproductive Parts--the flower; the fruit; the seed;
- III. Plant Classification--simple classification and scientific (Kingdom Vegetalia)
- IV. Simple and scientific classification of animals (Kingdom Animalia)
- V. Body Functions of Vertebrates
- VI. The Human Body and its systems
- VII. Ecology
- VIII. Cosmic Task, which looks at interdependencies of abiotic and biotic elements

(7) ART

The Elementary Art program is built on the premise that children cannot really be taught art. Instead, the belief is that all children have the inspiration to create within them and the job of the teacher is to prepare the child's hand and heart, and when the child is ready, she will create on her own. As such, in the

Elementary classroom, there is no systematic, step-by-step process of instruction toward a finished product. Rather, the children are introduced to a variety of media and techniques and are assisted with any difficulties as they arise from the child's own creative processes. As with all areas of Cosmic Education, the children are introduced to art through stories. The teacher then gives presentations on drawing, emphasizing techniques and media and allowing the child to create their own images; painting and the color wheel, sculpture, use of fibers, paper and printmaking and collage. The children are also introduced to the lives of great artists and exposed to their works through videos and field trips to museums. Other areas in the classroom are linked to art as the children learn to make timelines (history), draw specimens viewed through a microscope and specimen dissecting and arranging (science) and create a portfolio of geometric designs using compasses and insets for artistic compositions (geometry). The teacher gives presentations on the elements of artistic creation, isolating each element and giving each close attention. Each presentation focuses on one of the elements and is a self-contained activity in it of itself.

(8) MUSIC

The Montessori approach to music is the same as the approach to language in that it involves the equivalent of oral, written and read/aural stages. In the Primary classroom, the materials used to teach music are the Bells. In the Elementary classroom, it's the Tone Bars and other rhythm instruments. The music program in the classroom is an ongoing part of the class work and the presentations are given by the teacher, again, moving from a sensorial approach to more abstract instruction. There are several opportunities within the classroom to link music to the other work, particularly in the area of history. As in all the other subject areas, the music curriculum begins with stories about the history of music. The children then participate in listening activities; they engage in a study of music history and literature; they are exposed to percussion instruments; singing, movement games for control and for expression; rhythm activities; and finally the Tone Bars which are used to teach music notation, sequence of the major scales, and minor scales. Shining Stars Montessori will be securing the services of a music specialist on a part-time basis to assist with the music curriculum.

c. Methods of Instruction

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will employ a Montessori approach to all classroom instruction. Specifically, we will maintain practices consistent with those outlined in the Association Montessori International (AMI) teacher training programs. Following this model, all children will receive individual presentations throughout the morning work cycle, and older students (Kindergarten and above) will receive some small group lessons in the afternoon, while younger children are napping. The Elementary classroom work cycle will be three hours in the morning

and three hours in the afternoon. The teacher will employ group lessons as well as individualized lessons as the need is apparent. Morning lessons will be determined based on each child's individual needs and interests. In this way, Montessori makes it easy to exercise differentiated instruction and to recognize children's multiple intelligences and build from them. Small group lessons in the afternoon may be used to provide literacy support, address particular learning standards, or reflect with children on their learning process.

One of the many benefits to teaching in a Montessori environment is the individualized attention and lessons that each child receives. Not only is differentiated instruction inherent in the Montessori method - each child is given a differentiated and holistic education specifically tailored to his/her individual needs. Teachers and service providers have the opportunity to truly follow the child and make any necessary modifications to the materials and curriculum. Children are observed and individually assessed on a daily basis, as all Montessori instructors are trained and experienced observers and take continuous notes regarding children's progress and development. Dr. Maria Montessori was a scientist and instilled in her disciples the essential element of observation and researched-based action. The "guide" (or teacher)'s primary responsibility is not to "teach" as defined traditionally, but rather to study the child and understand his development on a scientific and individual level so as to tailor his presentations and design his environment accordingly. In this way, Montessori is the ideal educational model for reaching students at different levels of achievement and abilities. In addition to relying heavily on this individual-based methodology of instruction, Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS (SSMA-PCS) will also employ a number of early intervention strategies and academic supports for children with unique needs and learning differences.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS will follow the Student Support Team model as a primary means implement curriculum modifications and early interventions. An SST may be developed for any student who demonstrates difficulty adjusting to the Montessori method, students who display symptoms of possible developmental or socio-emotional delays, students who are frequently tardy or absent, students in need of further academic enrichment, students who demonstrate sensorial processing difficulties, and for other issues or situations that may be call for concern or special attention. Any child with an SST will be given a six-week plan for intervention, after which his/her progress will be assessed and the Team will decide on the next best measures. Some early interventions may resolve initial concerns, however if the concerns persist more intensive services may be necessary. The Academy's plans for meeting students' varying needs are detailed in sections (2) through (5) below.

The classroom teacher is a constant model for the children. She must present each lesson exactly how she expects the child to perform the task. In addition, she will model grace and courtesy throughout her daily interactions. There will be one Lead Teacher in each classroom, and one Teacher's Assistant. While the Teacher

performs individual lessons with the children, the Assistant is responsible for maintaining order in the classroom. Children are free to explore the materials and curricular areas independently, if not receiving a lesson from the Teacher. The Assistant will provide additional materials to the children as needed (paper, pencils, etc.), and will take notes regarding the children's choices in activities. Between individual presentations, the Teacher is available to provide support to the students as they work on their independently selected projects and encouragement to those children who may have difficulty choosing a work of their own. The Teacher will also take momentary pauses in instruction in order to take notes on children's work, progress, interactions and behavior.

The methods that the teacher employs when giving a presentation must adhere to the following standards:

I. Careful Movement: The hands are constantly moving. The teacher manipulates the materials carefully and is economical in her movements. In handling of the materials, care is shown. This provides endless possibilities of exploration by the child in their handling of the materials.

II. Minimum speech: The focus is on the material—looking at it, feeling it; that is where most of the information comes from. So the teacher, for the most part, does not speak while the hands are moving, unless to give the name of some part of the material.

III. Simple concepts: Only the essential presentation is done at a given time. Then the child is allowed to explore and work with it before their attention is drawn to another aspect of it.

Another benefit of the Montessori classroom is its multi-age environment. Children ranging in ages are grouped together in Primary (three to six years old), and Elementary (six to twelve years old). Older children are encouraged to lead by example, which in turn builds their confidence and interpersonal skills. Younger children are provided the stability of having the same teacher for three years as well as plenty of opportunity for cooperative learning.

With regard to test preparation in the Elementary classroom, the children will be given instruction on test taking techniques and will be taught test-taking skills. The lessons will be presented, as much as possible, following the Montessori guidelines and will be available as a choice of work for the child throughout the day. More specifically, on Fridays, children will be given practice tests, under mock test conditions so that they can get a sense of what it means to take a test and what the expected behaviors are. In this way, the child will be prepared to take the actual tests (such as DC-CAS, beginning in third grade).

(1) Formative and Summative Assessments:

Throughout the year, teachers will be responsible for observing and recording students' individual progress. The majority of student assessments will be performance-based; however, The Academy also plans on implementing standardized assessments beginning in the Kindergarten

Year.

Within the Early Childhood Montessori classroom, there are a number of activities and materials that a child may choose to work with. Each of these materials is specifically designed with a control of error that allows the child to check his work and correct any mis-steps there may have been. As children continue to master individual tasks, the teachers will begin to present new and increasingly challenging activities on an individual basis. Each child's progress will be documented daily, and there will be four reporting periods throughout the year. At the end of each reporting period, teachers will generate a report card (developed in MRX) for each child. These summative assessments will be used to report children's progress to their parents/families. Please see the sample excerpt below:

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Comments
Fine Motor Skills					
Child can pick up a small object using a pincer grip	Presented ²¹	Practicing	Mastered	Mastered	
Child can use tongs to transfer an object	n/a	Presented	Practicing	Mastered	
Child can hold a pencil with correct pincer grip	n/a	n/a	n/a	Practicing	

Teachers will utilize various assessment tools to inform their lessons and planning. In addition to observations, teachers will use standardized and performance-based assessments, as well. Children will be given standardized assessments beginning in the Kindergarten year. The table below outlines some proposed assessment tools and a timeline for their implementation. These standardized tests will serve as a resource for teachers to track children's progress over time. Teachers will be able to identify patterns and areas in need of improvement and make modifications in instruction. In addition, these assessments will help children to build test-taking and study skills necessary for their future academic success in the classroom, on future assessments such as the DC-CAS, and in increasingly competitive higher education environments.

Starting in January, Saturday Academy sessions will begin to prepare children for the DC-CAS testing. Some practice assessments will be done

²¹ "Presented": indicates that the child has had an initial lesson with the material/concept. "Practicing": indicates that the child has chosen to repeat the work and is in progress of mastering the task. "Mastered": the child has completely internalized the concept, and can perform the work skillfully and completely.

during the Saturday Academy and other formal assessments during the regular school week.

ASSESSMENTS	When Administered	Management system	Administrator	Training Needed
Teacher Observations (classroom based assessments)	On-going throughout the school year	MRX Database (teachers will be trained in use of MRX)	Classroom teachers and aides	Montessori certification; aides will be trained by teachers
Diagnostic Reading Assessment	Beginning of each year starting in the third year of Primary	MRX Database, SIF compliant system (teachers will be trained in use of both)	Classroom teachers; Saturday Academy faculty	Testing company training in administration protocol
Woodcock Johnson Cognitive Dev. Test	Beginning of each year starting in the third year of Primary	MRX Database, (teachers will be trained in use of MRX)	Hired contractor	Contractor will administer test
Albanesi Montessori	End of each year beginning in the first year of Elementary	MRX Database (teachers will be trained in use of MRX)	Classroom teachers and aides	Montessori certification; aides will be trained by teachers
Iowa Test of Basic Skills or Stanford Achievement Test (practice tests)	Spring semester beginning in first year of Elementary	MRX Database, SIF compliant system (teachers will be trained in use of both)	Saturday Academy faculty	In-house training in administration protocol by Curriculum Coordinator
DC-CAS	Beginning in third year of Elementary	MRX Database, SIF compliant system (teachers will be trained in use of both)	Saturday Academy faculty	Testing company training in administration protocol

Lastly, teachers will perform program assessments throughout the year. With the guidance of the Mentor Teacher and Principal, teachers will periodically review their methods of instruction, effectiveness of lesson planning, and thematic units. These formative assessments will be based on student achievement, teacher/assistant observations, and other performance-based, in-class assessments. Feedback will be given in teacher evaluations, to be done three times a year by the Principal. Adjustments to instruction, additions/cut-backs from unit planning, and additional materials will be made as needed.

(2) Special Needs:

A benefit of Montessori classrooms is the duration of a child's time with his or her teacher. It can be very difficult to diagnose children in Early Childhood, when behaviors may be the result of a developmental phase or indicative of a more serious issue. The Montessori teacher has a unique opportunity to monitor the child's progress over time. She has a strong training in child observation, and is inclined to notice repeated behaviors or habits that may require special attention. By implementing early intervention practices such as the Student Support Teams, teachers, families and support staff will be able to address any academic or non-academic concerns with an initial plan of action. Once the initial intervention has been exercised (normally a period of six weeks), the Support Team will reconvene and assess the effectiveness of the intervention. If further services are required, or if a child is in need of an evaluation, the school will work with parents and specialists to decide upon a course of action that would be in the best interest of the child.

If a child qualifies for special services, once evaluated, the Principal will be responsible for contracting the appropriate service provider(s). Some such service providers may include (but are not limited to) speech pathologists, occupational therapists, or special education teachers. Once the service provider has been contracted, an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) team will convene to determine the necessary course of action for the child. This team will consist of the Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Classroom Teacher, Parents/Guardians of the child, and the contracted Service Provider. The Curriculum Coordinator and Classroom Teacher will then be responsible for the implementation of services and planning/scheduling with providers. Regular IEP team meetings will be scheduled to review the child's progress.

The Academy strives to employ an inclusionary model when working with students with Special Needs, keeping in mind the Least Restrictive Environment requirements. We feel this is the best way for students to learn both cooperatively and individually. In addition, creating an inclusive environment helps to further our goal of educating and bettering the *whole* child.²² Since there is such an emphasis on individual work within the Montessori classroom, providers can easily work one-on-one with Special Needs Children. In the case of a student with severe disabilities or academic needs, pull-out services will be provided as needed.

²² As Mara Sapon-Shevin writes in the introduction of her book, Widening the Circle: The Power of Inclusive Classrooms, "It's within schools that children and adults learn some of the most basic lessons about who matters in the world ... within inclusive schools that anyone can become a fully loving and competent human being and citizen."

Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS is strongly considering a membership with the D.C. Special Education Cooperative. We feel that such a partnership would help ensure the best possible services providers to be contracted, as well as strict adherence to all policies and regulations as outlined in IDEA and other governmental requirements.

(3) English Language Learners:

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will operate in compliance with the six steps outlined by OCR, regarding the identification of and providing services to English Language Learners (ELLs). The Academy's process will be as follows:

- (1) The application and **enrollment** process will require only basic contact information from the student.
- (2) Once accepted to The Academy, all students will be given a Home Language survey for purposes of **identification**.
- (3) If the Home Language Survey identifies a language other than English as spoken at home, the child is identified as PHLOTE (has a Primary home language other than English), and will take the ACCESS test to **assess** his/her proficiency level.
- (4) Once the child is identified as an English Language Learner, their ACCESS score will help The Principal determine his/her **placement**, and the **ELL services** that he/she requires.
- (5) At the end of every academic year, all ELL students will take the ACCESS for ELL test to measure progress and to assess who may be ready for **exiting** or **transitioning** out of services. A score of 5 or 6 on the ACCESS will allow a child to exit from services.
- (6) After a child exits ELL services, he/she will continue to be **monitored** for an additional two years. After exiting, if it is determined that the child is in need of further services, Shining Stars will ensure that such services are provided as long as necessary.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will incorporate the English as a Second Language (ESL) push-in model for providing support to ELL students. We anticipate a moderate number of ELLs, and will provide individual, in-class services. Small group pull-out instruction will be provided on an as-needed basis, but the preferred method will be to provide services to children within their classroom environment (please see note about inclusion, below). The Principal will contract ESL teachers, and will be responsible for the oversight of compliance paperwork, student monitoring, and organization of testing. The Curriculum Coordinator will oversee the implementation of all language services, and will coordinate planning time between the ESL specialists and classroom teachers, as needed.

The Academy believes strongly in the inclusion model, and we feel that Montessori lends itself very well to providing individualized attention and lessons within the classroom. The presence of a specialist in the classroom would not be an interruption or hindrance on the education process, rather an asset. The ESL provider will coordinate the implementation of services with the classroom teacher, so as to provide consistency in content and instruction. Our goal will be to encourage English language acquisition while fostering a supportive environment that honors each child's native language.

Supplemental reading material will be provided for ELL students in their native language(s), and students will be encouraged to share their language with others through conversation, writing, story-telling and musical activities. Additionally, as part of the culturally inclusive model that The Academy will adopt, classroom teachers will incorporate a variety of music, history, geography and cultural lessons appropriate to the student population.

Classroom teachers will also use Sheltered English instruction in their small-group or individual presentations with ELL students. ESL training and workshops will be incorporated into professional development seminars at the beginning of the academic year, to provide teachers with an understanding of the Sheltered Instruction model. Additional training sessions and support for staff will be available throughout the year, on an as-needed basis.

The Principal will be bilingual in English and Spanish and have experience working with and coordinating services for English Language Learners. Shining Stars also hopes to hire Teachers' Assistants who speak one language other than English or Spanish (preferably Amharic, Chinese, French or Vietnamese, as these are the other top languages represented in DC schools). Shining Stars will ensure that all vital documents and information are translated for the families of ELL students.

(4) Gifted and Talented:

Students with exceptional abilities are easily identified in the Montessori classroom. As teachers are continually observing and documenting student work, it becomes apparent when there is a child who is advanced in any particular area. The teacher would then provide the child with extensions to available materials in the classroom, and may assign the child a particular responsibility within his/her strong area. For the same reasons that The Academy supports inclusive practices (when appropriate and in the least restrictive environment) for Special Needs and ELL students,

we plan to employ the same practice for gifted and talented students as well. The Montessori classroom is an excellent environment for inclusion by using differentiated instruction methods, individual work plans, modified curriculum tools and individually designed materials. Although being talented is not seen as a “concern” the child’s teacher or parents may wish to open a Student Support Team (SST) to ensure the continued support of the gifted child. The SST would outline specific modifications to the curriculum, as needed, such as advanced reading materials to be provided or more abstract math assignments to be completed. The Mentor Teacher will be responsible for ensuring that Gifted and Talented students are continually challenged in the classroom environment by checking in regularly with other classroom teachers.

For our Kindergarten students (and above), another mode of identifying Gifted and Talented students will be through their standardized assessment scores. The Academy plans to administer standardized language and math assessments three times (fall/winter/spring) during the academic year to track older children’s progress in these core areas.²³ Children who test high on these assessments may be given additional tests to identify their specific performance level (i.e. a Kindergartener who scores high on the GMADE may be given the 1st or 2nd grade level test in subsequent assessment periods). This will not necessarily qualify a child for early advancement; rather it will help to inform the teacher of what kind of supplemental materials these children may need. Teachers may incorporate advanced Elementary materials for students that “test” above their grade level.

(5) Strategies for Providing Intensive Academic Support:

One of the many benefits to the Montessori Method is the emphasis on individualized instruction. Teachers are able to work one-on-one with students and perform continuous assessments of their academic and socio-emotional development. If the teacher observes that a child is seriously deficient in one area, the teacher may draw support from other curricular areas in which the student is more comfortable in order to introduce initial concepts. For example, a child that has difficulty with number recognition and formation, but is a skilled artist and enjoys working with manipulative materials like clay, the teacher may introduce numbers molded out of clay and ask the child to copy the shapes. Once the child is familiar with the form, then numeral would be identified and the lesson would continue in a comfortable format. In this way, Montessori teachers are able to focus on

²³ The Principal will coordinate testing schedules with the Curriculum Coordinator, and will be responsible for collecting and maintaining students’ test data.

differentiated instruction techniques that build on the child's strengths and interests while introducing a challenging concept, and may provide extra support to help that child to improve and succeed in a comfortable environment. All teachers will receive additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction to supplement what they have already mastered in their Montessori teacher training. This support will be part of SSMA's initial teacher orientation at the start of each school year (the two weeks prior to classes beginning), and will be provided on an as-needed basis throughout the year. The Mentor teacher will be responsible for reporting staff support needs to the Principal in order to schedule necessary staff development seminars.

In addition to providing general in-class support, The Academy will utilize the SST model to outline any modifications or supports that need to be implemented within the classroom on a student-by-student basis. As the school grows, we are open to exploring the option of an on-site tutoring program for children that demonstrate a particular need for additional supports as well as breakout study skills groups as an alternative to the afternoon class.

Students struggling with the Montessori implementation

More often than not, children who experience difficulties in the Montessori environment are children who also have a tremendous disconnect between the home and school lives. In an effort to prevent this from detrimentally affecting our students, Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS (SSMA-PCS) plans to incorporate an aggressive parent involvement strategy to include Saturday Academies, parent support groups, Family workshops and seminars, and community-building events to strengthen the connection between home and school. SSMA-PCS will provide multi-systemic, wrap-around services to *all* students and families. Our desire to bring Montessori education to children in the District of Columbia extends to the home, as well. The Academy plans to involve families from the beginning of the enrollment process, and will require attendance at (at least) three parent workshops throughout the year. There will be mandatory parent seminars outlining the Montessori Method and providing specific techniques for supporting the child's experience and education at home. These seminars will be offered on a variety of days/times and child-care will be provided in an effort to keep from being an undue burden on parents/families. We believe that building healthy and strong relationships with the families of our students will allow them to feel supported and safe in their school environment.

3. Student Performance

a. Student Progress and Achievement

Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to use a variety of tools to track student progress including: performance-based, standardized, and observational. Inherent in a Montessori classroom are a number of performance-based assessments. As children practice with the variety of hands-on lessons and activities within the environment, teachers and their assistants are continually recording each student's progress. While these types of assessments will give an excellent summary of how children progress through the Montessori educational environment, we understand that keeping up with our alignment to the DC Standards is equally important. In addition to the Montessori system of observing and reporting (see sample template below), standardized assessments will begin in the Kindergarten year.

Sample Observation Record for Student X:

Week of:	Practical Life	Sensorial	Language	Math	Cultural Studies	Creative	Science
<i>Monday</i>							
<i>Tuesday</i>							
<i>Wednesday</i>							
<i>Thursday</i>							
<i>Friday</i>							

Each week there will be a record of every student's classroom activity. Student progress will be assessed according to the three-tiered grading rubric outlined in section A.1.d of this application. Teachers and assistants will maintain a shared clipboard for record-keeping purposes throughout the day. As a child is observed performing a task or practicing a work, the teacher or assistant will note the child's progress on his/her chart. At the end of each week, children's progress will be transferred from their charts into the Montessori Records Express (MRX) on-line system. Progress charts may then be sent home for families to review what their students have accomplished in class. MRX can be used to generate reports, assess frequency of work in the different curricular areas, and to plan for future lessons.

The Academy will implement tests to assess and track students' development in the Language Arts and Mathematics. A timetable of some suggested tests is included above. These assessments will be done at the beginning, middle and end of each academic year, and will be used for reporting, staff development, identification

of early intervention needs, and curriculum modification purposes. The Academy will use tests that involve a benchmark standard for each level. Any student who scores below the benchmark will be identified as needing academic intervention(s), and an SST²⁴ will be developed to address the child's needs. Study skills lessons will be provided to students on an individual, as-needed basis.

All third-year Elementary students at the Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS will take part in the DC-CAS. The Academy will introduce test-taking as a Montessori lesson, to supplement the classroom materials and hands-on experience that students have had thus far. Montessori students are very familiar with concrete activities; they are used to being able to manipulate materials in order to discover the desired outcome. Similar to standards-based teaching, Montessori students must achieve mastery in a skill or task before moving on to the next level, and are provided with differentiated instruction. Although Montessori children do not receive the same test preparation as "traditional" students, they are accustomed to explaining their work and using high-ordered thinking skills in order to achieve the desired outcome in their work. Additionally, Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS plans to supplement test-taking as a Montessori lesson in the Elementary classroom. Children may choose to take "sample tests" as an activity. Further preparation may include (but is not limited to) individual in-class supports, small-group practice tests, and/or afternoon workshops for students with particular needs.

b. Gateway Measures

Primary Transition (K – first grade)

Students will begin in the Primary classroom and will work in the same classroom for three years.²⁵ At the end of this cycle teachers will review assessment results, student records, socio-emotional readiness, as well as give consideration to a number of other variables to determine whether or not each "Kindergartener" (third-year student) is ready to transition to the next level, whether Primary to Elementary or within the Elementary classroom. Some of these variables may include (but are not limited to):

- Student displays a positive attitude toward school
- Student demonstrates inner security and a sense of order
- Student displays some level of independence in care of self and environment
- Student is able to use language appropriately to initiate and respond to direct communication
- Student demonstrates a habit of concentration

²⁴ SST: Student Support Team. Previously discussed in this application, this is a process for early intervention that allows a student the opportunity to receive modified lessons or social interventions as needed.

²⁵ The Montessori Primary classroom environment is designed for children from three to six years old. The classroom is intended to be a multi-age learning environment where children learn social dynamics as well as academic skills.

- Student demonstrates habits of initiative and persistence
- Student is able to make decisions
- Student demonstrates a sense of independence and self confidence
- Student displays a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school and community
- Student demonstrates proficiency in handling materials in the core subject areas
- Students demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests
- Student displays characteristics of the child in the Second Plane of Development (see previous)

Kindergarten transitions will begin with visits to the Elementary class. All students will be allowed to “visit” the Elementary classroom for the morning work cycle towards the end of their third year. This visit will allow the student the chance to meet the teacher and get a sense of what the Elementary classroom environment is like. Students who are six years old and have demonstrated readiness will begin in the Elementary classroom at the beginning of the fourth year.

Early Advancement

If the faculty and Principal believe that a student is socially, emotionally, or cognitively ready for the Elementary classroom, even though the child is five (would have to be turning six before the end of the school year), a meeting will be held with the student’s parents and the Elementary teacher to determine a proper course of action. Over the course of a week, the student will be allowed to “visit” the Elementary classroom, at first for one hour, then for the morning work session and then for the whole day, depending on his/her comfort level. If the student is able to make this transition seamlessly and displays no anxiety or displays a reduction in anxiety levels over the course of the week, it is most likely that the student will be allowed to transition into the Elementary classroom permanently at the end of the week.

Delayed Advancement

For a student who is six years old and does not demonstrate readiness to transition to the Elementary classroom, modifications to the transition period may be arranged. In such a situation, a meeting will be held with the student’s parents and both the Elementary and Primary classroom teachers to determine the best course of action. The student will be allowed to “visit” the Elementary classroom with his/her peers, but will be given the option to return to the Primary classroom whenever the need arises. In cases of extended delays or serious concern, the child may be asked to remain in the Primary classroom for an additional academic year.

Elementary Transitions (first through sixth grade)

Students will be in the Elementary classroom for a period of six years. Throughout the year, students will be formally and informally assessed in terms of

performance, behavior, and other criteria to be outlined later. At the end of the year, the student will “advance” to the next level but will remain in the same classroom. This allows a student, particularly one who might be struggling in a certain area, the opportunity for further work with the materials and concepts so that he can advance. First year students will be working primarily with materials and the beginning lessons for each subject area and will be assessed on those areas. Second year students will continue to work with the same materials, but at a much deeper level and with more sophisticated concepts. Depending on their abilities, some second year students can begin to wean themselves off some of the materials.

Throughout the entire six years, however, lessons will be presented with the materials whenever possible and students will be expected to work with materials. The upper level students, of course, will not be working with them in the same way they were when they first entered the classroom. The unique aspect of this approach to Elementary education is that it really gives the child the opportunity to work at his own pace and the freedom to choose, within limits, those subjects that really interest him and explore them to the fullest extent possible with the materials and resources that are available within the classroom and without.

Beginning in the third year, students will receive test-taking lessons and will be prepared to take the DC CAS test when it is administered. Each subsequent year, students will be prepared to take the standardized tests as needed. Any students who score below standards will be given supplemental materials and instruction as needed.

A major part of the Elementary classroom is the Going-Out experience, in which a student or group of students working on a particular area of research organizes and conducts their own field trip, with as little assistance from adults as possible, to visit a museum or other site in order to get answers to questions that may arise during the course of their research. The student(s) is responsible for initiating contact with the outside location, arranging transportation to and from the site, coming up with the research questions, conducting the research, preparing an oral and written presentation to be done in front of the class. In the beginning, the teacher will be very involved in guiding the student through this process. By the time the student reaches the sixth year, however, the student will be expected to go through the entire process without (or with very minimum) assistance from the teacher. This is the final test for the Montessori student who is leaving the Elementary classroom.

c. Leading Indicators

The Shining Stars Montessori Academy believes that a strong foundation in the early years is essential for building consistency and giving value to the child’s school routine. While attendance is not mandatory in the early years, The Academy does not foresee difficulties with attrition, as we plan to make regular attendance easy and attractive for our students. In conjuncture with MOMIEs TLC, The Academy will provide before-care services to those families needing to drop their children off earlier than the 8:00 a.m. start of the academic day. Additionally, we will work with

MOMIEs to provide early-care services for all families in need on Wednesdays, when The Academy has a 12:30 p.m. dismissal time (to allow for teacher planning and staff development).

The Academy plans to offer an attractive and exciting educational opportunity to our young students. Children will enjoy the freedom to explore the classroom environment, work at their own pace, and be successful, respected and acknowledged for their accomplishments. Both the Primary and Elementary classrooms will be places of interest, enticement and joy for the children. We strive to instill in each child an innate love for learning. Learning in a Montessori environment is active – it draws the children in. At The Academy, we anticipate children to feel motivated and excited for each school day.

In the event that attendance becomes an issue for any student, there are a number of steps that The Academy will pursue to draw that child back into the cycle of consistency. In addition to utilizing the Student Support Teams (SST) for addressing truancy concerns, The Academy plans to follow all policies set forth by OSSE regarding the monitoring, reporting, addressing and evaluating of student attendance. We will implement the appropriate technology for maintaining student files and tracking attendance. Teachers and staff will be informed of how to track student attendance in their Professional Development workshops, as well as given the tools to monitor students of concern. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will make combating truancy an essential part of every child's educational experience, but especially for those in the lower-performing percentiles. Children who demonstrate academic challenges must regularly attend school if their needs are to be met, and if their success is to be guaranteed. Attendance will be an integral part of any SST plan that addresses a child who is struggling academically.

The Academy will work with families to make attendance and punctuality both a priority and a reality. During the planning year, The Academy will establish an "Early Drop-off" program (as mentioned above) for working parents and those who would benefit from school breakfast. In addition, we will implement a "Ride Board"; a notice board will be placed in a high-traffic area of the school where parents can communicate about car-pooling, ride-sharing and other ways to make it easier for children to get to school consistently and on time.

4. Support for Learning

a. Parent involvement

Shining Stars Montessori Academy views parents and families as the foundation of a child's educational experience. A guardian is the child's first and most long-standing teacher in life. We plan on building strong and meaningful relationships with the families of our school community by providing support services, information sessions, academic conferences, parent education workshops, and "town hall" meetings throughout the academic year. In addition, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will have at least two parent representatives on its Board of Directors. .

The Academy will rely on parent participation in a number of committees, which will be established to provide support to the community and school functioning. Some such committees may include (but are not limited to) Material Making, Field Trips, Race and Ethnicity, and Special Events. The Academy hopes that by involving parents at this level, we will open up additional lines of communication between school and home and foster a true understanding of what each family's needs will be.

Once families have completed their enrollment packages, they will be scheduled a home visit during which a school representative will review the *Parent Agreement (to be drafted during the planning year)* and explain expectations and responsibilities of the family at school events. The first of these events will be at the beginning every academic year - Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS will provide a mandatory and comprehensive Back-to-School night, allowing for tours of the classrooms, community introductions, and dissemination of general school operations information. A significant part of the *Parent Agreement* will be the Saturday Academy. Families will be required to attend a pre-determined number of sessions throughout the school year as part of their community engagement.

As part of our plan to provide extensive wrap-around services to our students and their families, Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS plans to host a Saturday Academy beginning in year one of operations. These Academy sessions will provide additional social and academic support for students, while simultaneously allowing parents an opportunity to network, discuss their concerns, talk about general parenting issues, and learn more about the Montessori Method and Child Development. Sessions may address topics such as Montessori Philosophy, Redirecting Children's Behavior, and Alternative Parenting Strategies. Families will be given assistance and incentives to attend Saturday Academy, such as free breakfast and lunch, childcare for non-student siblings, carpool and transportation coordination, and door prizes (to include educational items such as workbooks, school supplies, flash cards, etc). Please see the proposal below for details about the Parent track for the Saturday Academy.

Saturday Academy
For Parents/Guardians
(As adapted from Eduardo Cuevas' "Parent Study Program")

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Goal: To inform parents about the Montessori model and to provide skills and practical examples of things that can be done at home to support their child's education and development.

Outline: At the beginning of each academic year, Shining Stars Montessori Academy (SSMA) will hold an introductory "Saturday Café" for parents/guardians to get acquainted with one another, meet the SSMA staff, and discuss any concerns or questions they may have about the upcoming year. The *Café* will be followed by a series of Saturday Academy *Workshops* throughout the year. These workshops will be designed with parents' interests and issues of concern in mind, while providing a practical framework for how to support their children's Montessori experience.

Saturday Café

This will serve as the foundation for building and designing further parent workshops. Our first session will serve as a meet-and-greet for parents, families, and staff of Shining Stars Montessori Academy. We will host general introductions, followed by break-out sessions where parents will be able to brain-storm and share future workshop themes, goals for the academic year, and priorities for the school community and other relevant concerns.

Workshops

To facilitate the continued support of each child's social, emotional and academic development at home, SSMA will hold regular Saturday Academy Workshops for Parents/Guardians. (A potential structure for the Workshops is included below.)

Workshops will be designed by the Administrative and Teaching staff of SSMA to meet the immediate and long-term needs of SSMA families (much like the classroom teachers follow the needs of individual children to guide their instruction!). These workshops are intended to be more *formational* than informational; participants will begin a process of understanding their child in a new way, learning to relate and support children's developmental needs, and to recognize the child as an individual, while the child continues on his/her path of discovering his/her special talents.

Sample Workshop Agenda:

9:00 Community Check-In (Breakfast provided)

Parents/guardians have the opportunity to share their experiences at SSMA, concerns about their children's development/progress, and receive general feedback and practical solutions to common parenting challenges.

10:00 Break

10:15 Role of the Adult

The following types of questions will be addressed by SSMA staff and/or guest speakers: How do I support my child's emotional growth? What kinds of activities/toys can I provide at home to reinforce what my child is doing at school? How can I get my child to talk about his/her day? What types of behavioral modification techniques can I incorporate that may be similar to what is practiced at SSMA? How do I recognize/identify what sensitive period(s) my child is in? What is positive parenting?

11:45 Lunch (to be provided by SSMA)

12:30 Montessori Theory

Parents will receive an introduction to Montessori education. SSMA staff will incorporate and address points raised by parents during the community check-in and link them to Montessori theory and practices.

1:00 Break

1:15 Montessori Theory, cont.

SSMA teachers/staff will provide parents with more detail about Montessori best practices theory. (Parents may be divided into two groups - Primary and

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Elementary – when applicable.) Throughout the year, this portion of the Workshop will be dedicated to varying themes, such as Montessori Mathematics, Hands-on History, Culturally-Inclusive Classrooms, Montessori Literacy Development, Science and Exploration in the Montessori Classroom, etc.

2:00 Questions & Answers
2:30 Closure

In addition to keeping parents and families actively involved in their child's education, we at The Academy wish to keep them well informed as to their student's progress and over-all school success. In order to keep parents informed of the School's progress, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will hold semi-annual parent/teacher conferences to report on individual student progress, as well as annual community meetings in which the school's Yearly Progress will be shared and discussed. We also intend on implementing quarterly newsletters, which will serve as an additional resource for providing parents/families with updates regarding the overall academic success and progress of the school.

The teachers and staff at Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be dedicated to maintaining positive and effective communication with parents and families throughout the child's educational career. Expectations for parent communication will be fully detailed in the staff handbook, and will be an essential component of teacher evaluations. There will be full disclosure regarding teachers' qualifications and professional backgrounds.²⁶

Especially in instances where special services or classroom interventions may be necessary, parents will be informed and involved early on and regularly throughout the intervention process. Shining Stars Montessori Academy is familiar with the Student Support Team process and plans to use this type of model for including parents in decisions made regarding any modifications or adjustments made to their child's education.

b. Community participation

Shining Stars Montessori Academy is committed to forming cooperative partnerships with a number of community organizations, including Howard University, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Roots Public Charter School, to expand our resources and advance our mission. MOMIE's TLC will be housed in the same building as The Academy. As such, students can visit the MOMIE's Children's Black History Gallery for enrichment. Additionally, MOMIE's staff will provide the before-care and after-care program for The Academy's students (as well as early-care for half-days), which will allow for continuity in the family support services, cultural empowerment programming, and Montessori mindset.

²⁶ All Shining Stars classroom teachers will be certified by the American Montessori Institute, as well as have passed the PRAXIS II in order to be "Highly Qualified" (as is required by the No Child Left Behind Act).

Through our partnership with MOMIE's TLC, The Academy has secured a number of community partners. MOMIE's has a number of long-standing relationships within the community we hope to serve. After speaking with a number of organizations about Shining Stars Montessori Academy, we are confident that the following groups will provide us with support and services:

DC Central Kitchen provides the After School Program with free, healthy snacks every day. The Academy will use the planning year to negotiate the provision of school-day snacks with the Central Kitchen.

American University's DC Reads Program and **Howard University's** Off-Campus Work Study Program partner with M.O.M.I.E's to provide high-quality University tutors and mentors to support the Program. The Academy will invite tutors to offer in-class workshops related to test-taking and study skills, to supplement the Montessori test-preparation plan we have outlined.

Brightwood Park United Methodist Church and the **Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC)** provide much-needed administrative and facility support for the After School and Summer Camp Programs (provided by MOMIEs), and have agreed to help The Academy by sharing resources and space, and hosting special fundraising events.

All Souls Church Unitarian, in Columbia Heights, currently supports MOMIE's annual Children's Gallery of Black History, and will help to increase community visibility and outreach for The Academy.

The Driskell Center, at the University of Maryland, currently partners with M.O.M.I.E's in providing Visual Arts student teachers to support arts development and appreciation. The Academy will invite these Student Teachers to aid in supplementing the Montessori Art curriculum to make it a truly enriching experience for the children.

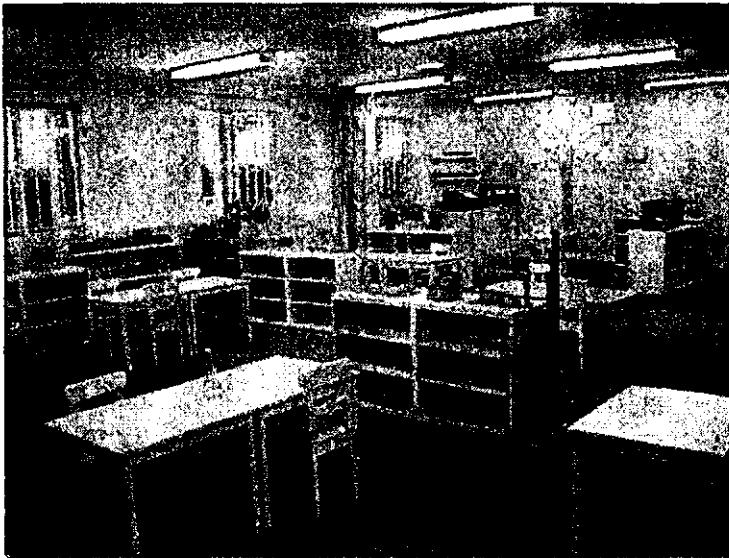
In addition to the above-mentioned groups, The Academy will continue to seek out other programs and individuals that maintain a similar philosophy regarding the education of young children during our planning year, and will secure partnering relationships. Some such partners may include (but are not limited to): Columbia Heights Youth Club (CHYC), Executive Director, Gail Oliver; Mentoring Works, Executive Director, Courtney Stewart; Sankofa Books and Video, owner, Halie Gerima; Empower DC, Executive Director, Parisa Nouriza.

Finally, a large part of The Academy's mission is to guide children in achieving their best at all times. An excellent way to encourage success will be to provide Shining Stars students with role models of color. It is essential to the development of a child's self-esteem that they see themselves reflected in the general community as positive and productive members of society. As part of a

guest speakers program, The Academy will invite Howard University administrators, educators, students, and student organizations to be presenters in the classrooms and at larger school assemblies.

c. School Organization and Culture

In its initial years of operation, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will have two Primary Classrooms. At full capacity, each class will have twenty students between the ages of three and six. Each class will be organized and designed to have all curricular materials available to the children at all times. The Montessori classroom is child-led; children are responsible for choosing their work throughout the day. A typical classroom design will have a number of child-sized bookshelves to house the various materials and activities, as well as small tables and chairs set up for individual work. Each classroom will have an area designated to the following areas of academic interest: practical life, sensorial, mathematics, science, geography, cultural studies, handwriting, language, and art. Music and movement will be addressed through teacher-directed activities. In addition, each classroom will have an in-class library and reading area. Below is an example from one such Montessori classroom environment:



The classroom climate will be simple, warm and inviting, and designed for a child's comfort. Ensuring that everything in the classroom is designed for and accessible to the child will encourage positive self-formation and confidence within the child. With this in mind, teachers and assistants will pay special attention to the images provided to the children. Books for the in-class library will be carefully selected and chosen to include positive images of people of all races, ethnicities,

gender, and ability. Teachers will be mindful about the messages and morals portrayed in classroom storybooks to ensure that they are culturally reflective and socially appropriate. While most Montessori classrooms boast plain and undecorated walls, in order to simplify and stream-line the child-centered environment, The Academy will make a point to include diverse posters and images in their classroom design. Artwork by black artists, posters displaying historical figures of color, and visual organizers (such as calendars and daily schedules with photos) will all be intentionally placed throughout the classroom so as to provide reinforcement for the children's growing sense of self and cultural confidence.

The classroom teachers are also responsible for observing the children's work and guiding them through the curricular areas as appropriate. Children will be invited for individual lessons as the teacher observes that they are ready for a new presentation. One of the benefits to multi-age classrooms is that children are in the same classroom environment for three years. This provides them ample time to explore the different areas and gain mastery of essential academic and social skills. It also allows for a continued consistency of instruction, and for the child to develop a positive and productive relationship with his teacher.

Another benefit to multi-age classrooms is the cooperative learning that occurs organically between the children. Older students are encouraged to help the younger students, which in-turn helps to cement their knowledge of the subject. In addition, children are encouraged to work with one another to resolve any disputes or disagreements that arise. The teachers give them mediation and peacekeeping skills through Grace and Courtesy presentations. In a Montessori School, it is the responsibility of the staff to be peaceful role models for cooperation, kindness, respect and patience. At The Academy, we believe firmly that children can develop their social intelligence as well as their academic knowledge at school, and it is our job to ensure both are done so successfully so that our children may grow to be positive and effective members of the global community.

In regards to staffing and leadership, the following table explains the proposed positions to handle administrative tasks within Shining Stars Montessori Academy. The Business Plan outlines our intended Management framework, and the Plan of Operations outlines specific job responsibilities, qualifications and expectations. School Administration will consist of two key positions: the Executive Director (or CEO) and the Principal (or Principal). The Administrative Team will actively recruit a well-qualified Administrative Assistant to support their roles and operations.

The Executive Director (ED) will be subject to Board approval and responsible for managing all operations of the school, under the direction of the Board. The integrity of administration is maintained through clear delineation of the respective roles of Board and ED and good communication between the ED and the board. The Executive Director's responsibilities will include, but are not limited

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to: providing professional leadership for the school, working closely with the Principal, managing all school operations in accordance with the policies set by the Board of Directors, and evaluating the operations of the school while serving as the Chief Executive Officer. The Executive Director will also be responsible for networking with community organizations, grant seeking and fundraising.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS: Proposed Staffing Chart for Year 1 of Operations

POSITION	BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTION
<i>Executive Director</i>	Will ensure school-wide fidelity to the Mission of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS. Will work directly with the Principal to coordinate the implementation of best practices in academic excellence, to develop a staff expectations and responsibilities, and to ensure the over-all success of The Academy. Will report to the Board.
<i>Principal</i>	Will ensure adherence to The Academy's Mission throughout the school community, and will work to involve parents in this process. Will coordinate services for those students with special needs. Will be responsible for the collection, maintenance and reporting of student data (to include demographics, assessments, and more). Will report to the Executive Director and the Public Charter School Board.
<i>Programs Coordinator</i>	Will formulate early intervention strategies Will develop wrap-around services program Will assist the Principal with day-to-day operations Will supervise the school's emergency management team Will be responsible for parent and community outreach
<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Will provide support to the Executive Director, and Principal. Will manage office and classroom supplies requests. Will maintain official student attendance, school lunch, and other student financial records. Will assist in the coordination of school field trips and other special events.
<i>Primary Teacher</i>	Will exercise The Academy's Mission by implementing a culturally empowering Montessori philosophy in teaching practices. Will be under the supervision of the Mentor Teacher and will report to the Principal.
<i>Teaching Assistant (x2)</i>	Will provide support to the Classroom teachers as directed, and will function under their supervision.

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	Will be ultimately evaluated by the Principal.
<i>Independently Contracted Service Providers</i>	Will provide services to students on an as-needed basis. Will provide training/professional development to staff when appropriate. Will coordinate the implementation of services with the classroom teacher(s). Will report to the Principal.

d. Extracurricular activities

Consistent with a number of local Early Childhood Centers, children will be provided with a minimum of thirty minutes of outdoor free-play each day (weather permitting). In addition, teachers will provide indoor movement exercises in conjunction with music lessons. Depending on student interest and family participation, The Academy plans to explore the possibility of organized soccer, basketball and t-ball programs. These would be provided as an afterschool option, and would require parent volunteers and additional staff supervision or collaboration with a program such as Stoddard Soccer. As The Academy grows, we also plan on implementing additional tutoring services to provide children with test-taking and study-skills. We understand that a traditional Montessori education may not adequately prepare children for standardized testing, as they are used to more hands-on performance based assessments. At Shining Stars Montessori Academy we appreciate the importance of such testing, and plan to prepare children accordingly. This may be done during the academic day, and/or as an afterschool option, depending on students' needs.

Perhaps one of the more unique offerings at Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS will be our implementation of a Saturday Academy. In addition to providing support services and networking opportunities for parents and families, the Academy will serve as an opportunity for students to spend extended time on academic tasks, and social development. Primary students will partake in social skill-building activities, games and projects, such as crafts, music and movement exercises. Elementary students will receive additional time on supplemental academic tasks, working with tutors on test-taking and study skills, working on projects and other research. Parents will be provided with easy activities and practical strategies to keep their children engaged, motivated and healthy at home. All Elementary students will be required to attend on the Saturdays that the Elementary students will be doing assessments and mock testing. Elementary students who miss Saturdays will be required to make up during Wednesday afternoon sessions.

Upon registration with the school, families will be asked to sign a commitment to attend 2/3 Saturday Academy sessions per month and to ensure that their Elementary children attend on the Saturdays specifically designated as "Test Preparation Day". Families will be given assistance and incentives to attend Saturday Academy, such as free breakfast and lunch, childcare for non-student siblings, carpool and transportation coordination, and door prizes (to include educational items such as workbooks, school supplies, flash cards, etc). Below is a

proposal for the Student track of the Saturday Academy at Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS. (A proposal for the Parent Sessions can be found in the section on Parent Engagement of this Educational Plan.)

Saturday Academy

For Students

(Original to Shining Stars Montessori Academy)

Primary Students

Goal: To provide additional support to Primary students by providing increased time-on-task activities which support the development of the whole child.

Sample Agenda:

9:00 Community Check-In (Breakfast provided)

While parents/guardians have the opportunity to share their experiences at SSMA, concerns about their children's development/progress, and receive general feedback and practical solutions to common parenting challenges, students will assist in some preparation of breakfast and serve themselves.

9:45 Self directed time

Students can engage in individual or group activities of their choice

10:15 Great Person Presentation/History lesson

Students will be introduced to this month's "Great Person" and work on hands on activities to help them learn about the life of this person.

11:45 Lunch (to be provided by SSMA)

Students and parents eat together.

12:30 Outdoor activities (weather permitting)

1:45 Meditation/Quiet Time

2:00 Self-directed time

Students can engage in individual or group activities of their choice

2:30 Dismissal

Elementary Students

Goal: To provide additional academic support to Elementary students by providing increased time-on-task activities, which support the development of the whole child, and to specifically prepare the students for DC-CAS assessments.

Sample Agenda:

9:00 Community Check-In (Breakfast provided)

While parents/guardians have the opportunity to share their experiences at SSMA, concerns about their children's development/progress, and receive general feedback and practical solutions to common parenting challenges, students will assist in some preparation of breakfast and serve themselves.

9:45 Test Preparation Activities Part I

Students will be introduced to testing protocol and skills and techniques; additional help in subject areas displaying weaknesses; sample testing; diagnostic testing.

11:45 Lunch (to be provided by SSMA)

Students and parents eat together.

12:30 Outdoor activities (weather permitting)

1:00 Test Preparation Activities Part II

Continuation from the morning session

2:00 Self-directed Time

Students can engage in individual or group activities of their choice

2:30 Dismissal

e. Safety, Order, Student Discipline

Student Safety is of the utmost importance to Shining Stars Montessori Academy. We believe that a solid Peace Curriculum, lessons in Grace and Courtesy, family outreach and parent involvement, Student Support Teams, open dialogue and a firm discipline policy and procedures are essential not only to securing the students' environment, but also to their academic success.

The Peace Curriculum

A typical Montessori Peace Curriculum will include lessons on grace and courtesy, as well as supplemental "incentives" for children to engage in positive social action. One such incentive may be the design of a "Peace Tree" in the classroom. Each time a child is appreciative of a peaceful or friendly action by another, they place a leaf with that child's name on the tree. This type of activity helps to reinforce the notions of community and positive action for the children.

Family Outreach/Parent Involvement

The Academy also maintains that Parent involvement is essential to creating a truly safe, respectful, culturally inclusive, and comfortable environment. In order to involve families in the development of our community, The Academy may host "Café Evenings" – a place where staff and families can come together and communicate about concerns they have for the students' well-being, brainstorm ideas for bettering the school environment, and celebrate the successes of The Academy. In addition, the Programs Coordinator will also serve as Parent Liaison and will be available to meet with parents as issues arise. Finally, Shining Stars Montessori Academy hopes to implement a series of workshops entitled "Redirecting Children's Behavior", a course developed by the International Network of Children and Families. This course would serve as a tool to bridge the gap between home and school, offering a comprehensive model for guiding children's behavior in a positive way, consistent with the Montessori model used by teachers in the classroom.

Discipline Policy and Procedures

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will have a zero-tolerance policy regarding violence, drugs, and weapons of any kind (or the threat thereof). The Dean of Students will be notified immediately if there is any instance or suspicion of a violation. Parents of the offending child will be contacted immediately, and the Academy will take the necessary and appropriate disciplinary action to ensure the continued safety and well being of all students. In the event of a serious behavior violation, school action will include the following steps:

1) Discipline hearing

The child's teacher, his/her parents, the Principal and any necessary specialists (if the child is currently receiving counseling services, for example) will convene to discuss the appropriate consequence(s).

Note: All instances of violence against another student or staff member will be taken very seriously and will result in an immediate in-house suspension, at minimum.

2) Decision

The Academic Principal will take into consideration the hearing's findings, and will determine and outline the appropriate consequence(s).

The Executive Director must approve expulsion decisions.

3) Notification

Parents/guardians will be notified, in writing, of the school's decision.

4) Consequence/Referral

Disciplinary consequences may include (but are not limited to): additional academic assignments, in-house suspension, school suspension, and/or expulsion. In addition to the appropriate consequence, a determination will be made if the child needs additional support services. In this case, the Programs Coordinator will coordinate a referral for services for the family.

5) Follow-up

Staff will be responsible for completing a follow-up evaluation of the student's behavior once the child has fulfilled his/her consequence.

During the planning year, The Academy will finalize a *Discipline Policies and Procedures* manual to be distributed to all families, teachers and staff. This manual will outline a Discipline Strategy based on the M.O.M.I.E's TLC model, so that consistency is maintained for those students who are enrolled at both programs. Staff will be provided with Professional Development opportunities to ensure that they are adequately trained and prepared to implement The Academy's discipline policy. Below is a brief description of what this manual will include:

- I. Preventative Positive Behavioral Model for Students**
- II. Staff Guidelines for Observing, Reporting and Documenting Student Behavior**
- III. Stair Step Discipline Strategy**
- IV. Discipline Team Conferences**
- V. Additional Actions**
- VI. Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

While we will strive to do our best, we realize that we cannot always achieve everything on our own. Thus, the Shining Stars Montessori Academy will make it a priority to apply for the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Initiative Grant as soon as

the Charter is approved. We intend to utilize this initiative to help us incorporate supplemental lessons pertaining to the five key elements outlined by the program as: Safe school environments and violence prevention activities; Alcohol and other drug prevention activities; Student behavioral, social, and emotional supports; Mental health services; and Early childhood social and emotional learning programs.²⁷

Finally, Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to implement an Emergency Response Plan. This plan will outline preparedness, response protocol, and recovery tactics for emergencies. The plan will outline lock-down, evacuation, and security measures to be implemented by school staff. Staff will be trained and prepared to implement the plan in case of emergency.

f. Professional Development for Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Staff

School staff will engage in at least one week of Professional Development prior to the beginning of every school year. Of utmost importance to The Academy's mission will be the completion of multicultural education training for all staff members. This training will be ongoing throughout the school year and will include opportunities for staff to share concerns and best practices and to ask any questions they may have. All staff will also be required to complete CPR/First Aid Training, as well as Food Handler's Certification during the first week of Professional Development. During this time, classroom teachers will meet with the Academic Principal and discuss thematic planning units for the year. In addition, all school staff will attend trainings for early intervention (such as Student Support Teams), inclusion best practices, and cultural awareness. Throughout the academic year, teaching and administrative staff will be required to perform three outside observations and to attend an annual Montessori Conference.

Additional professional development will take place throughout the academic year for additional trainings, planning time, and/or evaluations. There will be at least 10 designated Staff Development days on the school calendar. The theme of these dedicated days will be decided by the Principal and will be based on current Professional Development needs. Teaching Staff will have designated planning time during the week to collaborate on grade-level projects, plan for student lessons, review student progress and work, input student data into MRX, perform outside observations (up to three per year), and revise curriculum plans as needed. Teachers may also make use of this time to schedule meetings with Service Providers working inside the classroom, so as to coordinate lessons and strategies for implementation and review individual student progress for those children with IEPs or SSTs.

Teachers at Shining Stars Montessori Academy will maintain a daily schedule of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (with a half hour lunch break). This will allow them time for daily preparation of the classroom and/or materials in the mornings and a

²⁷ <http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/about.aspx>

period of planning time in the afternoons. Teacher Assistants will keep the same schedule as Teachers, and will utilize the planning period for making materials. Assistants will be responsible for classroom maintenance and for providing support to teachers during the allotted planning times.

g. Structure of the School Day and Year

The academic calendar will include a minimum 180 instruction instructional days. The Academy will offer an extended year program so as to provide students with a special opportunity to develop and learn that much more in the school environment. We believe that this is one more element that proves The Academy to offer a truly unique educational opportunity. Students will be dismissed at 12:45 p.m. every Wednesday to allow for additional professional development and teacher planning time. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will partner with MOMIEs TLC to provide early care for children on all half days, so as not to place an undue burden on our working parents/families. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will observe all Federal Holidays, and will maintain a vacation schedule similar to that adopted by DCPS. An example of a proposed school year calendar is attached.

The daily schedule will begin at 8:00 a.m. for arrival, and end at 3:00 p.m. with dismissal. The proposed daily routine allows for teacher and assistant breaks during the day. The Academy must also take into consideration the needs of its younger students; hence the "Nappers" schedule is included. As The Academy grows, the daily schedule will be adjusted to accommodate for the number of students and available recreational space. Below is an example of what a day at Shining Stars Montessori Academy may look like. The children's academic work and individual instruction will occur during the work cycle. The afternoon class is an opportunity for the older children to receive more advanced lessons.

Below please see an example of the daily schedule and proposed calendar for the Academic Year 2011 – 2012 to follow.

DAILY SCHEDULE	Non-nappers (Five and older)	Napping Students	
8:00 – 8:15	Doors open for drop-off		
8:20 – 11:20 Includes self-directed snack	Work Cycle Teachers/Assistants		
11:30 – 12:00	Recess Assistants		Teachers have lunch break
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch Teachers		Assistants have lunch break
1:00 – 2:45 Includes self-directed snack	Afternoon Class Teachers	Nap Assistants	
3:00	Dismissal		

SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY

B. BUSINESS PLAN

1. PLANNING AND ESTABLISHMENT

a. Profile of Founding Group

(1) Brief resumes of Founding Group members

The Founding Group of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy reflects a true diversity of the community that we will serve. Our Founding Members include two Montessori teachers, two lawyers, two non-profit leaders, a psychologist, a social worker, and a Howard University student. The Group is comprised of parents, education activists, and supporters.

Katherine J. Avery

Lead Primary Teacher – Latin American Montessori Bilingual (LAMB) Public Charter School (*February 2005 – June 2009*)

After teaching for over four years teaching in a Primary Montessori classroom at LAMB PCS, Ms. Avery brings a sound knowledge of the Montessori practice to The Academy, as well as her experience working in an actively growing D.C. public charter school. Ms. Avery will serve The Academy as Programs Coordinator and will also be a substitute Montessori teacher. Her primary responsibility will be to ensure the fidelity of implementation of the Montessori Method within the classrooms. In her role as Programs Coordinator, Ms. Avery will also serve as a parent liaison, helping to guarantee a successful academic experience for each child and family.

Rhonda Lucas-Sabater

Elementary Teacher – Bowie Montessori Children's House (2008-Present)

Ms. Sabater holds a Master's degree in Montessori Education, and is certified to teach three different Montessori age groups: Primary, Elementary and Infant/Toddler. Ms. Sabater will serve The Academy as a Montessori teacher and as the Academic Principal. She brings to bear a wealth of information regarding the

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Montessori approach and will use her Montessori and business experience to spearhead the establishment of a quality Montessori program at The Academy.

Ayize S. J. Sabater

Founder and CEO – M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC (*May 2000 – Present*)

Mr. Sabater has vast experience in business and non-profit development as the founder of M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC (Mentors of Minorities in Education's Total Learning System), a non-profit organization that, for ten years, has met the educational needs of underserved children of color in Washington, D.C., by infusing all of its educational programs with culture-based themes and lessons. In 1992 Mr. Sabater co-founded an early childhood academy in Georgia and served as its principal for 3 years. Mr. Sabater will help assist The Academy by utilizing existing experience and community relationships to generate support among potential community partners and to generate interest among potential The Academy parents and families.

in Psychology candidate – Howard University

Tricia Pitter

Licensed Social Worker, 2008

Ph. D in Psychology candidate – Howard University

Ms. Pitter is a graduate student in School of Education at Howard University. She has extensive experience in the field of Human Development and in the provision of social services. Miss Pitter has ten years of experience as a social worker and has been providing mental health services to elementary school aged children since 1999. Ms. Pitter will serve The Academy as a community liaison and as an advisor in the educational and social welfare of The Academy's students.

Allison R. Brown

Trial Attorney – United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division,
Educational Opportunities Section (*February 2006 – Present*)

A civil rights attorney with a focus on educational issues, Ms. Brown enforces the civil rights laws that guarantee equitable educational opportunities for all students. She works to ensure that schools and school districts are in full compliance with federal civil rights laws. Her role at The Academy will be to review legally binding

documents and to ensure the school is in compliance with all legal requirements and standards.

Nicholas U. Murphy

Trial Attorney – United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division,
Educational Opportunities Section (2009 – Present)

A civil rights attorney with a focus on educational issues, Mr. Murphy works to enforce the civil rights laws that guarantee equitable educational opportunities for all students. He works to ensure that schools and school districts are in full compliance with federal civil rights laws. His role at The Academy will be to review legally binding documents and to ensure the school is in compliance with all legal requirements and standards.

Malcolm Woodland

Child Psychiatrist – Superior Court of the District of Columbia (2008-Present)

Mr. Woodland is a licensed child psychiatrist that has extensive research expertise, particularly in issues regarding young Black males. He has a vast knowledge of various youth development programs that impact academic and health outcomes of urban children. He has published numerous scholarly publications.

Aldel Brown

Bachelor's degree candidate – Howard University

Mr. Brown is a double major in English and History at Howard University and has a particular interest in matters of education and cultural empowerment. Mr. Brown has secured several prestigious volunteer internships in which he has excelled, garnering a wide array of relevant and useful experiences. Mr. Brown will serve with Ms. Pitter to coordinate community partnerships between The Academy and the Howard University community and Shaw neighborhood residents.

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an Hall
Dan Hall

Executive Director – Hope and a Home (2008 – Present)

Mr. Hall is the Executive Director of an innovative D.C.-based non-profit corporation, Hope and a Home, which provides numerous services to homeless and low-income families. Mr. Hall is well connected to the non-profit and philanthropic community of D.C. Mr. Hall will assist by pulling in resources and key stakeholders needed for The Academy's long-term growth and success.

(2) Names and Addresses of entities submitting the petition

The names and addresses of the Founding Group members for The Academy are set forth in the chart below:

MEMBER NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE AND E-MAIL
Aldel Brown	601 Fairmont Street, NW #113a Washington, DC 20059	(617) 717-9630 aldelbrown@gmail.com
Allison Brown	2400 33 rd Street, SE Washington, DC 20020	(202) 581-2199 arbrown@post.harvard.edu
Ayize Sabater,	9707 Braddock Road Silver Spring, MD 20903	(240) 286-3765 AyizeWer1@aol.com
Dan Hall	1328 Ingraham Street, NW Washington, DC 20009	(202) 722-8923 Burton.hall@verizon.net
Katherine Avery	1761 U street, NW Washington, DC 20009	(202) 368-2825 kjavery@gmail.com
Nicholas Murphy	Capitol Hill Tower 1000 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20003	(404) 550-3935 Nicholas.Murphy@usdoj.gov
Rhonda Sabater	9707 Braddock Road Silver Spring, MD 20903	(240)398-8904 RalSabater@aol.com
Tricia Pitter	4512 9 th Street, NW Washington, DC 20011	(347) 749-5252 <u>Ebone savannah@yahoo.com</u>
Malcolm Woodland		

(3) Founding Group Organizational Affiliations

Both **Ayize Sabater** and **Allison Brown** are members of the Board of Directors for M.O.M.I.E Inc., the parent organization of M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC, located at 744 Jefferson Street, NW, Washington, DC. Mr. Sabater is the Chief Executive Officer of M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC.

(4) Names of Organizations/Agencies that are Partners in Planning and Establishing the School

Given The Academy's three-fold intersection of interest areas, of Montessori education, cultural empowerment curriculum and our environmental focus, the potential for community partnerships is great. Founding Group members have established partnerships with elected political and civic leaders:

- Council member Jim Graham
- ANC 1B, and
- The Pleasant Plains Civic Association

They have agreed to help educate and inform our children about effective ways to be a responsible and engaged citizen.

We have also established partnerships with numerous community organizations, that will provide direct support for The Academy's cultural empowerment curriculum, including, but not limited to:

- Sankofa Books, Video and Café
- The Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC)
- The Humanities Council

These organizations have agreed to help ground our children in understanding the significance and contributions of people from cultures around the world. We have called upon environmental activists, such as DC Urban Gardeners, for collaboration given our occupancy in one of the District's first "eco-green" child development centers. We will seek to engage social justice organizations, such as the World Peace Center, in providing a cultural empowerment curriculum to students that will create socially responsible citizens of the world. Organizations such as DC Action for Kids and the Children's Defense Fund will also be contacted to help us to achieve our mission to educate DC students with the tools necessary to develop to their fullest potential. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will also partner educational institutions such as the Roots Public Charter School, whose constituencies reflect The Academy's target population.

The Academy will also partner with other organizations such as M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC, Teaching for Change and others, to provide the cultural empowerment curriculum that The Academy is looking to implement, as well as to expand The Academy's community connections, and overall learning opportunities. The Academy plans to rent space from the newly renovated building that M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC will also occupy. *See Business Plan Section 5.a for a comprehensive break-down of our community partners.*

b. Planning Process

M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC founders, Ayize and Rhonda Sabater, had considered forming a school and applying for a charter in Washington, DC for the past several years. In 1992, Mr. Sabater was successful in founding an independent school in Atlanta, Georgia serving at-risk children of color. The school offered an innovative culture-based learning component and a robust academic curriculum. Mr. Sabater served as the Principal for three years until relocating to Washington, DC and is now seeking to use his former school start-up experience to advance The Academy. In 2000, Ayize and Rhonda Sabater founded M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC to provide educational services to underserved students in Washington, D.C. through an after-school program, a Children's Black History Gallery, and a summer camp program. Mr. Sabater serves as the organization's Chief Executive Officer. In 2009 Ayize and Rhonda Sabater decided to begin the process of opening a school and applying for a charter, after several parents urged them to expand their successful after-school educational program.

Mr. Sabater then approached other parents of students who attend the M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC after-school program to assist in this endeavor. Once Ayize and Rhonda Sabater and the M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC parents tapped into their personal and professional networks to recruit support, the Founding Group was formed. The Group includes parents of M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC students, educators, advocates, mental health professionals, attorneys, a CPA and community members, all of whom have been actively engaged in developing the charter application and committed to ushering The Academy through the application process.

Development of Mission and Educational Focus

The Founding Group came together to discuss each member's individual educational ideas and concluded that the charter school should begin by offering early childhood education since early childhood is a critical juncture at which to ensure equal educational opportunities. The Founding Group also agreed that the Montessori model perfectly embodied the Group's articulated educational goals and integrate well with the cultural empowerment aspect of the Group's stated educational priorities. Additionally, the Founding Group recognized that:

- (1) there are only two public Montessori schools in Washington, D.C. and

(2) currently, Montessori teaching is typically associated with private institutions that are available only to suburban children whose families have sufficient resources to pay the tuition required for enrollment.

The Founding Group therefore determined to combine the Montessori Method of instruction with a cultural empowerment framework in order to bring this hybrid model to the urban landscape and to students who are not typically found in Montessori programs but for whom Maria Montessori intended to provide.

The Founding Group has committed significant time and energy to advance the school plan. After determining the educational model, the Founding Group produced a mission statement that encapsulated the educational goals stated above. Founding Group members also attended numerous school planning meetings sponsored by Friends Of Choice in Urban Schools (FOCUS) and met with the founders and/or administrators of successful charter schools with similar student populations to the target student population that The Academy will serve. After all of these preliminary steps the Founding Group decided to formally develop a charter application.

Community Engagement and Continued Involvement

The Founding Group has given presentations at the neighborhood civic association and other community meetings. The Founding Group also hosted a Town Hall Meeting that attracted key community stakeholders who explored educational improvement strategies for Ward 1 and many agreed that The Academy was a unique and needed institution. Many of the stakeholders at that Town Hall Meeting committed to supporting The Academy (see letters of support and/or Business Plan Section 5.a). Founding Group members have also participated in a live interview, on a community radio station (WPFW 89.3 FM), where an estimated 80,000 listeners tuned in, as we spoke about our unique educational effort. During the planning year, we will further involve the community through community presentations, focus groups, and interviews. These combined efforts will ensure that a wide variety of voices, concerns, opinions, and needs are addressed in the planning of The Academy.

All Founding Group members have committed to becoming members of the Board of Directors, except Rhonda Sabater, Katherine Avery and Ayize Sabater, who will be employed by The Academy as the Academic Principal/lead classroom teacher, and Programs Coordinator/lead classroom teacher, respectively. Once chartered, The Academy will immediately work to recruit additional Board members to further deepen the experience and expertise of the Board. All Founding Group members that are affiliated with M.O.M.I.E's TLC will relinquish all Board and/or employment ties with M.O.M.I.E's TLC in order to ensure totally autonomous governance for both, The Academy and M.O.M.I.E's TLC.

The Montessori model recognizes that in order to raise peaceful and compassionate young adults, we must educate the *whole* child in an environment where diversity is embraced, celebrated, and openly discussed. The Academy will

be a realization of such an environment and will offer an excellent alternative for D.C. families.

c. Corporate Structure and Nonprofit Status of the School

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will soon be incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the District of Columbia. The legal team is currently working with outside counsel to obtain the non-profit 501(c) (3) status.

The legal team is currently working with outside counsel to take the draft Articles of Incorporation and file them with DCRA, within the next 2-4 weeks, to formally incorporate. A draft of the proposed Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of The Shining Stars Montessori Academy are attached to this Application in Appendix J. The final Articles and Bylaws will be forwarded to the DC Public Charter School Board once the charter application is approved by the DCPCSB and The Academy Board of Directors has voted to approve them.

2. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

a. Board of Directors

The Academy's Board of Directors will be charged with adherence to the school's mission and overall monitoring of compliance with internal policies and procedures. The Board will assume ultimate responsibility for the school's operations.

TERMS OF OFFICE & SELECTION PROCESS

All Board members will serve renewable three-year terms of office, not to exceed two consecutive terms of office. The selection process for The Academy Board members will be as follows:

- Members of The Academy's Founding Group – Aldel Brown, Allison Brown, Ayize Sabater, Dan Hall, Nicholas Murphy, and Tricia Pitter – will serve as members of the initial Board of Directors. Additional members, for a total that is an odd number not to exceed fifteen, will be recruited for specialized expertise in areas including but not limited to pediatric physical and mental health care, child fitness, nutrition, environmental activism, social justice and/or cultural empowerment education, and Montessori instruction.
- Once the charter application is approved, the initial Board of Directors members will develop a strategic Board development plan to be implemented during the planning year. That Board development plan will include a Board member profile, a detailed recruitment plan, Board member job descriptions, a committee list and committee descriptions, annual Board training and orientation procedures, and an accountability plan for Board members, which will include individual fundraising goals, meeting attendance requirements, and the volunteer hours commitment.
- Using the Board member profile and recruitment plan, the initial Board of Directors members will begin to recruit new members for the Board of Directors. Prospective members will receive a copy of this Application; promotional brochures, fliers, posters, and other materials; a copy of the Board member job descriptions; committee list; and accountability plan. All Board members will sign their accountability plan.
- Nominated individuals will become members of the Board of Directors by a majority vote of the existing Board.
- Once the full Board of Directors is established for the first time during the Planning Year, any new members will be recruited and recommended

through a Governance Committee to be established by the first full Board of Directors during the Planning Year.

PARENT MEMBERS

The Academy is committed to ensuring full participation of its parents and families in the school's operations. Pursuant to the DC School Reform Act, two parents will be selected by the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors and will be voted on to serve on the Board of Directors.

To ensure that the two parent Board members adequately represent the interests of other parents and families at The Academy, four potential parent representatives will be nominated by the President of The Academy's Parent Association. The parent representatives will then be selected by The Academy Parent Association through a democratic election process. Once that election has been completed and two parents have been selected by a majority vote of the Parent Association, the biographies and additional information about the two potential parent representatives will be submitted the Governance Committee of the Board for review. The full Board shall then vote on the parents' admittance to the Board.

Parent representatives will serve as liaisons between the Board and the family community at The Academy. The Board will request their input regarding how best to address parent concerns and in routine Board matters as well. Parent representatives shall have full voting rights on the Board and will participate in the same orientation as all other Board members.

COMPOSITION, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Board of Directors will initially include members of The Academy's Founding Group. The Board of Directors will have an odd number of members, no less than 11 and no more than 15 members. Board members will be recruited from several areas (as indicated above). The Executive Director will represent the interests of The Academy's staff in an *ex officio* capacity on the Board. Board meetings will be open to the public, and staff members, parents, and students will be invited to contribute and participate in scheduled meetings so long as they request to participate in advance. All Board members will undergo an orientation and

training session instructing Board members in school philosophy, Montessori instruction, and the cultural empowerment curriculum.

Four officers will serve as the Executive Committee for the Board: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each officer will be nominated by the Governance Committee to serve a renewable three-year term and must be voted on by the full Board. The President of the Board will work closely with the Executive Director to set meeting agendas and to guide and support the board. The President will also receive financial reports from the Finance Committee of the Board, which will include the Treasurer (the treasurer is responsible for reviewing the budget monthly). The Governance Committee of the Board will be responsible for conducting quarterly evaluations of all Executive Committee members.

The Board of Directors will include the following committees:

- Executive Committee
- Governance Committee
- Finance Committee
- Community/Parent Relations Committee
- Ad Hoc Committee, as needed

It is possible that there will be some overlap in the committee membership such that one member may serve on more than one committee. All Board members will serve on at least one committee. The membership will always include two positions reserved for parents of students currently attending the school.

The Board of Directors will be the governing body of the school with a fiduciary duty to its members, The Academy's students and families. The Board will be legally accountable for all of the school's operations. The Board's primary responsibilities will be as follows:

1. Programmatic Responsibilities

- hold the charter, and oversee adherence to The Academy's mission and compliance with the school's charter;
- create and monitor compliance with general operational policies;

- select and hire the Executive Director – the Board of Directors will be trained in selecting the Executive Director and delegating day-to-day operations and functions to that person;
- set annual strategic goals for the Board and for the school;
- set the cap on the number of students who may enroll in the school;
- maintain visibility in the school by volunteering in the school, occasionally observing in classrooms and participating in school functions;
- respond to requests from the Executive Director for input regarding sensitive administrative matters, program analysis or new program development;
- establish a grievance process for parents and staff, which will serve as a final appeal when resolution has not been reached through other administrative channels as set forth in The Academy's policies and procedures manual;
- ensure compliance with local and federal law.

2. Financial Responsibilities

Asset Management

- determine policies and use for resources in accordance with public charter law;
- approve and oversee contracts worth more than a specified amount as voted on by the Board;
- ensure overall maintenance of buildings and grounds (construction, renovation and maintenance);
- ensure that the physical property adequately supports programs.

Budget

- approve an annual operating budget;
- on a monthly basis the treasurer will review the budget;
- approve benefit policies, staff size and total compensation for staff.

Fundraising

- oversee fund development and set goals for major fundraising endeavors;
- in consultation with Executive Director, determine priorities for use of all funds raised, in line with the annual strategic goals;
- actively solicit donations in all major fund drives.

3. Evaluation

- set clear evaluation standards for the Executive Director;
- evaluate the Executive Director on an annual basis using an assessment tool developed by the Human Resources Committee and mutually approved by the Board and Executive Director;

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- evaluate the overall program of the school in light of annual strategic goals;
- conduct an annual self-evaluation, examining the organization and functioning of the board of directors;
- review bylaws and amend as necessary for effective operation;
- the treasurer will review and evaluate the budget on a monthly basis;
- participate in annual board retreat to reflect upon the school's mission, review evaluations and develop a new set of strategic goals.

Contact information for the initial Board of Directors is set forth in the chart below:

MEMBER NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE AND E-MAIL
Aldel Brown	601 Fairmont Street, NW #113a Washington, DC 20059	(617) 717-9630 aldelbrown@gmail.com
Allison Brown	2400 33 rd Street, SE Washington, DC 20020	(202) 581-2199 arbrown@post.harvard.edu
Ayize Sabater,	9707 Braddock Road Silver Spring, MD 20903	(240) 286-3765 AyizeWer1@aol.com
Dan Hall	1328 Ingraham Street, NW Washington, DC 20009	(202) 722-8923 Burton.hall@verizon.net
Nicholas Murphy	Capitol Hill Tower 1000 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20003	(404) 550-3935 Nicholas.Murphy@usdoj.gov
Tricia Pitter	4512 9 th Street, NW Washington, DC 20011	(347) 749-5252 <u>Ebone_savannah@yahoo.com</u>
Malcolm Woodland		

Resumes are attached to this Application as Appendix section G.

Plans for Strategic Direction

The Board, as the ultimate governing body, will use strategic planning and thoughtful oversight to ensure that the school is moving in the direction outlined by the school's mission. All Board members will be charged with participating in an annual board retreat to reflect upon the school's mission, review evaluations and develop a new set of strategic goals.

School Performance Monitoring

The Board, as the ultimate governing body, will monitor and evaluate the overall program of the school in light of annual strategic goals. Additionally, the Board will conduct an annual self-evaluation, examining the organization and functioning of the Board of Directors. Lastly, the Board will evaluate the Executive Director on an annual basis using an assessment tool developed by the Human Resources Committee and mutually approved by the Board and Executive Director;

Succession Planning

In order to ensure the longevity of The Academy, the Governance Committee will immediately, after formally being established, meet, in the planning year, to adopt a succession planning policy to address: term-limits; resignations; death; relocation; etc.

Leadership Accountability Plan

The Board shall have the ultimate power to hold all officers, agents and employees accountable for meeting the mission, expectations and policies set forth by the Board. To ensure this accountability the Executive Committee of the Board will immediately, after formal establishment, meet in the planning year to adopt a comprehensive "Leadership Accountability Plan."

Plans to Ensure Demand

The Board will work with all staff, employees and interested parties to ensure that The Academy is in high demand and meets or exceeds its targeted enrollment goals. To do this the Board will actively participate in the recruitment and marketing strategies of The Academy, *as outlined in Business Plan 5.b.*

Board Executive Decisions

The Board of Directors, when the charter is secured, will begin to hire staff and work with staff to fulfill all responsibilities of the school. The Board will assume its oversight role and strive to ensure that all adopted policies and procedures are correctly implemented.

Towards that end the Board will hire the *Executive Director "ED"*, who will serve under the supervision of the Board. The "ED" will provide professional leadership for the school, manage all school operations in accordance with policies set by the Board and evaluate the operations of the school. The Executive Director articulates the school's mission for all constituents (students, families, staff, and community) and works with the Board in developing long-range and strategic plans. The Executive Director receives

advice from the Academic Principal for educational staff hiring decisions and works with the Academic Principal to develop programs in accordance with the mission of the school.

As the only staff member whose compensation and employment terms are set by the Board and who is evaluated by the Board annually, the Executive Director is advised by and advises the Board members, working particularly closely with the President and Treasurer. The Board delegates to the Executive Director the responsibility for managing all operations of the school and the integrity of the administration is maintained through clear delineation of the respective roles of Board and the "ED" and good communication between the "ED" and the Board.

The Board will determine the "what" of school operations and the Executive Director, along with advice from the necessary staff, will determine the "how". The Board will adopt the policies and the Executive Director will be responsible for implementing them. Some examples of this process will include, but are not limited to:

- **Student Enrollment**--the Board will set the cap on how many students may be enrolled in the school. Recruitment, information sessions and the application process will be handled by the staff.
- **Employment**-- the school policy of non-discrimination will be adopted by the Board and the "ED" will advertise and recruit for all staff positions and all that entails.
- **School Schedule and Calendar**--the school will follow the DCPS calendar, as proposed in the Education Plan; however if it is deemed necessary, by the Board, the length of the school year will be amended and the "ED" will have the power to determine, for example, when to close the school during inclement weather, if a differing opinion from that of DCPS is held, and the "ED" will determine how to deal with the effects of such a closing.

Board's Relationship to Teachers and Administration

The Board of Directors will hire, supervise and work closely with the Executive Director to ensure that the mission of the school is being executed

according to its charter. In addition, the board will delegate all managerial and decision-making authority to the "ED". The board will meet monthly to discuss the state of the school and the progress toward the goals outlined in the *Accountability plan*, which the Board will develop in the planning year. There will be collaboration across the Board committees with staff and the creation of *ad hoc* committees as the need arises.

Board's Relationship to Parents

The Community/Parent relations committee of the Board will be working closely with parents to ensure that parental input is considered in the Board's decision-making process. The two parent representative directors will serve as the primary voice of parents in addressing the Board. The Board will also serve as the final appeal for parents dissatisfied with decisions made by school management.

Board's Relationship to Students

The members of the Board will be expected to be actively engaged in the life of the school, occasionally observing in classrooms and frequently attending performances and presentations by the student body. The members will not have direct supervision of or prescribed interaction with students and will not be expected to field direct questions or complaints from any student or group of students. Rather, should a student or group of students approach them, the directors are responsible for notifying the Principal so that official policy for incorporating input or addressing complaints may be followed.

Board Job Description

The Academy's Board of Directors Job Description and Responsibilities include: establishing policies in the areas of personnel, educational program, financial management, student discipline, organizational performance and other areas as needed.

- 1. Serve the mission of the school and/or organization**
 - Guide the school through organizational planning, setting of priorities and decision making
- 2. Selection of the Executive Director**

- Create a search process to find the most qualified individual who will serve as the Executive Director which caters to the Montessori method
- Oversee and Approve contract negotiation and renewal
- Support the view and review the performance of Executive Director

3. Provide Financial Oversight

- Provide constructive feedback to the Executive Director
- Support the Executive Director when board members misunderstand roles
- Provide a quarterly written performance review

4. Provide resources for the school to fulfill its mission

- Quarterly review of fund-raising targets and goals
- Support the Executive Director in raising funds
- Assist in the presentation of special events as spokespeople for the organization

5. Determine, monitor and strengthen the programs and services

- Assume programs and services are consistent with mission
- Review and approve measureable performance targets for students that address academic, personal and social achievements
- Monitor progress in achieving organizational goals

6. Promote the organization and enhance the schools public reputation

- Serve as advocates and community representatives of the school
- No Board member shall represent the Board for speaking engagements, unless authorized by all Board members to do so
- Provide an annual report and public presentation which details the CCPCS mission, programs, board members and the financial condition of the school

7. Maintain legal and ethical integrity

- Establish policies to guide Board members and staff
- Adhere to the provisions of the bylaws and articles of incorporation
- Adhere to local, state, and federal laws and regulations that apply to the school

- Provide accurate and timely reports as required by the local, state, and federal government
- Protect the school's staff, volunteers, and clients from harm of injury by ensuring compliance with occupational safety, health, labor and related regulations

8. Recruit and orient newly elected Board members

- Define Board membership needs in terms of skills, experience and diversity
- Guarantee the Board contains at least two current parent representatives, as required by the rules and regulations
- Provide a written board self assessment on an annual basis which will be available to regulators
- Cultivate prospective members and check credentials prior to nominating new board members

Board Performance Expectations

Each member of the Board will actively participate in the work of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy Board of Directors and will support the school campuses run by the organization. Each Board member is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. In addition to the responsibilities below, individual directors are expected to cooperatively in fulfilling board responsibilities outlines in the Role of the Board of Directors.

Specific Responsibilities

1. Believe in and be an active ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of Shining Stars Montessori Academy.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of the Board of Directors.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operation of the Board of Directors:
 - a. Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on personal agenda.
 - b. Support board decisions once they are made.
 - c. Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the board.
 - d. Build awareness of governance matters rather than subsuming management responsibilities.

4. Attend Board and committee meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the Board Chair, or another board member
5. Keep informed about the school's issues by reviewing materials, and participating in discussions by asking strategic questions.
6. Actively participate in fund-raising event(s).
7. Use personal contacts for the benefits of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy.
8. Serve on a committee.
9. Be open and honest to other board members about any potential conflicts of interest.

b. Rules and Policies

As soon as the charter is approved, the established Board of Directors will establish policies in the areas of personnel, educational program, financial management, student discipline, organizational performance and other areas as needed or as mandated by the District of Columbia or by federal law. Clear goals and expectations for The Academy's Board of Directors are set forth in the policies of the proposed by-laws (*attached to this Application as Appendix J.5*) and will be further detailed in the Board Manual that will be developed during the planning year. The Board Chair will appoint an ad-hoc committee to draft the Board Manual and the committee will have until August 2010 to complete a draft copy. The draft will be submitted for review with The Academy's legal team and then returned to the committee for revisions. Once final revisions have been made the committee will present the Board Manual to the full Board of Directors for a vote.

Following this schedule, we plan to submit the Board Manual to the DC Public Charter School Board no later than September 2010. The Board Manual will include rules and policies concerning: legal documents (for example, charter documents, by-laws, etc.); school code of conduct (for example, the school's discipline policies, Board's appeal hearings processes, etc.); human resources and personnel policies (for example, guidelines for hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, school staff and organizational chart, personnel and student policies, etc.); public and community relations (for example, the exact process for talking to the media, how to establish community partnerships, etc.); finance and resource development (for example, fiscal policies, budget, budget narratives, audit reports, resource development pointers, etc.); membership organization and operations (for example, job descriptions, performance expectations, committee descriptions, calendar, agendas, minute, Executive Director reports, etc.); strategic plans (for example, the school's Accountability Plan, Resource Development Plan, Financial Management Plan), etc.

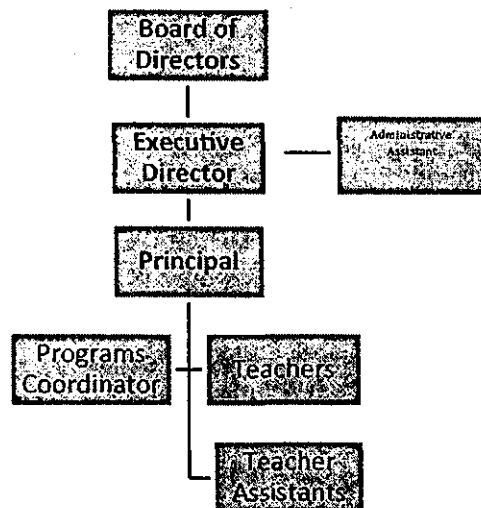
c. Administrative Structure--Shining Stars Montessori Academy

Figure 1: Administrative Structure of Shining Stars Montessori Academy

As denoted by Figure 1, the Executive Director will serve as the overall Chief Executive Officer of the school and will report directly to the Board of Directors. The Principal will both report to the Executive Director. A description of the key roles is provided below.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for The Academy is responsible for establishing policies in the areas of personnel, educational program, financial management, student discipline, organizational performance and other areas as needed. In addition, the Board will work closely with the Executive Director when partnering with community organizations, writing grants and planning fundraising activities and overseeing the financial and regulatory compliance efforts of the school. The Board may form committees consisting of Board members, members of the school community and founding members to undertake these efforts. Detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of the Board is outlined in Section B.2.a.

Executive Director

The Board will appoint a successful educator, business owner and/or community development specialist to serve as the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible to ensure that the school is effectively managed as well as financially sound and successful. The Executive Director will serve as the "face" of The Academy. The candidate must have a strong passion for the achievement of academic excellence as well as the provision of culturally infused pedagogy using the Montessori approach. The Executive Director will report directly to the Board,

provide outstanding management, vigorously fundraise, and oversee the efficient and effective implementation of The Academy's Mission. The Executive Director is responsible for the oversight and supervision of all staff (in collaboration with the Principal), the coordination of the day to day management of the school (in collaboration with the Principal) and to ensure fidelity of implementation of the school's mission and vision.

Principal

The Principal will be appointed by the Executive Director. The Principal will be an experienced, certified Montessori educator with at least 4-5 years of classroom experience, be highly qualified and be certified to teach elementary students in the District of Columbia (in compliance with No Child Left Behind requirements). The candidate must have a passion to provide stellar education and to significantly improve the performance of District of Columbia students as well as a solid track record of relevant achievement.

The Principal will be responsible for oversight of all the school curricular and student related activities as well as the direct supervision and management of teaching staff. In addition the Principal will be responsible for the coordination of student files, including the collection, maintenance and reporting of all student testing and assessment data, maintenance of adequate student files, and coordination of the Saturday Academy. The Principal will coordinate interventions and special services, for individual students in cooperation with their classroom teacher, and will contract with Service Providers on an as-needed basis (i.e. Special Education, Occupational Therapy, English as a Second Language in the event a student qualifies for these services). The Principal will oversee the implementation of early intervention plans, IEPs, and work with service providers to ensure each child's needs are being met within the school environment and in accordance with District and Federal requirements. She will also maintain and oversee communication with parents and families, and will organize Parent Education Seminars and Information Sessions throughout the year. She will report to the Executive Director.

Faculty

Faculty refers to all teaching staff. Faculty will report directly to the Principal. Teachers will be responsible for ensuring that students are provided with a high quality Montessori education based on AMI (American Montessori International) standards and infused with a cultural empowerment curriculum, maintaining a safe, orderly and nurturing classroom environment, preparing the classroom according to Montessori expectations and cultural empowerment standards, implementing the Montessori curriculum based on AMI standards, performing observations, assessments and evaluations of the students, and modeling appropriate classroom behavior.

Non-instructional Staff

This includes Classroom Aides, the Administrative Assistant/Office Manager, the Janitor and any other support staff not responsible for direct instruction of the children. Classroom Aides will report to the teachers and will be supervised by the Principal. The Office Manager will report directly to the Executive Director, and will provide support to all office staff and to the Academic Principal. Other non-instructional staff will report to the Executive Director, unless otherwise specified at the time of employment.

Community, Parent and Student Input

In addition to the abovementioned Administrative Structure the Executive Director will be charged with regularly meeting with Parent Association representatives or attending or sending a proxy to the Parent Association meetings. The Parent Association will be comprised of parents of students who attend The Academy and will meet to discuss the affairs of the school on a frequency set forth by its members. The Parent Association will also have direct access to the Board of Directors by election of two parents to the Board of Directors. Additionally, the Executive Director will hold school wide bi-annual meetings where Board members, community members, parents and students will be called upon to share ideas, concerns and other pertinent matters that relate to the long-term success of The Academy. The Board President will be responsible for ensuring that the issues addressed in these bi-annual meetings are adequately followed up upon by the Executive Director.

d. School Management Contracts

Not Applicable

3. FINANCE

a. Anticipated Sources of Funds

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will maintain an aggressive funding strategy in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of our institution, which will use a diverse funding portfolio. This portfolio includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Per Pupil Government Allocation

As a public school, The Academy will rely on local and federal public funds to meet the vast majority of our budgetary needs. We anticipate that over 70-75% of our financial support for The Academy will come from the District of Columbia Public Charter Schools Uniform Per student Funding formula (UPSFF). Our approach to the budgeting process has been to plan conservatively yet act aggressively to exceed those plans. Income projections are based on local and federal public funding (we anticipate that approximately 20-23% of our financial support will come from the various federal supports). Local funding is reflective of the per-pupil funding and facilities allowance, along with the various supplements for students in need of special education supports (calculated at approximately 10% of the total student population). Federal funding reflects Title V part B funding in years I, ii and iii of implementation; NCLB funding, Title I and additional funding from the supplemental federal lunch program.

Our budget reflects a 10% attrition rate when calculating the total revenue for per pupil allotment. For planning purposes, we project that 80% of the student population will be eligible for Title I grant funds by the time we reach our projected school capacity of 150-160 children. We will identify and pursue all federal entitlements for which our students and/or the school are eligible.

In our first year budget, per pupil revenue would yield approximately \$830,981.00 and when coupled with other public revenue entitlements and private revenue sources we anticipate generating \$947,349.00 in revenues for the first year. Our first year's total expenses (which includes: staffing, occupancy, and other costs) total \$824,239.00 and when those expenses are subtracted from the revenue we are left with a net income of \$123,110.00. Hence our revenues are sufficient to allow us to meet and/or exceed our educational goals; however we will additionally seek to secure a \$100,000 line of credit from a local bank to negotiate any cash flow shortages which may arise during the start-up. *Please see Business Plan Section F* for a more detailed break-down of the budget.

Pre-Opening Funding

During the pre-opening/pre-charter phase The Academy has been successful in securing a \$10,000.00 planning grant from the Walton Family Foundation. Lastly, when we are successful in securing a charter we will be eligible for an additional \$250,000.00 grant from the Walton Family Foundation and a start-up grant from Title Vb.

Contingency

The Academy will take advantage of the strong relationships M.O.M.I.E.'s, Inc. maintains with local foundations, including the Cafritz Foundation and the Philip Graham Fund, and we expect to raise considerable funds as a result of those relationships. The Academy will raise \$10,000 in its first year of operation from these foundation relationships and will improve upon that figure each year. The Board of Directors will all be expected to give generously for the longevity of The Academy and will establish a Funds Development Committee to focus on fundraising. Additional sources of revenue will be individual donations, program fees, income-generating events and products.

The Academy's Founding Group established a contingency plan which factored in two major issues which could adversely impact the school's financial viability:

- 1) the delay in our phase I facilities' renovation readiness; and,
- 2) an under-enrollment of students.

To address the challenge of revenue shortfalls, The Academy developed a conservative budget. The operating budgets look to maintain a contingency cushion that will be invested conservatively in a way that will generate greater returns when it is not utilized. We will also look to maintain a contingency fund that is equal to at least four months of operating revenues to address any potential funding shortfalls (and funds that exceed the four-month contingency reserve could also be converted to a capital campaign account for our long-term capital goals).

If the school is under-enrolled during the first year, The Academy will consider raising our class ratios and revising our staffing and facilities plan to accommodate fewer students. We will also launch an aggressive fundraising campaign to establish a funding stream to make up for any funding gaps. In addition, we will explore securing a \$100,000.00 line of credit or loan from a local bank (i.e., Self-Help or SunTrust) to cover any gaps. Another first- or second-year programmatic adjustment might include working to secure pro bono or reduced rate consulting or gifts in kind (for example, staff computers, furniture, and other services).

Five-Year Budget Goals

Our specific five-year budget objective is to maximize the use of public federal and local allocations for staff, training, educational program development and operational infrastructure. We also anticipate raising a modest level of external income from public and private fundraising sources. The Academy's financial goals and objectives are to compensate all staff through annual cost of living increases,

expand the educational program by providing enrichment classes such as yoga, capoeira, and healthy living classes to boost our staff's quality of living; and to purchase, renovate or construct a new facility for the school.

b. Planned Fundraising Efforts

Overview

Over the next 12 months, Shining Stars fundraising efforts will focus on 5 main areas: 1) grants development, 2) major donor cultivation, 3) corporate and local business sponsorship, 4) a social networking and 5) hosting special events and mailings. These activities will require full board participation. This plan will be evaluated in May 2011 to assess its impact and effectiveness. We anticipate having to raise approximately \$350,000 in our first year of operations and \$450,000 respectively in year two. This fundraising strategy will focus on year one operations. We anticipate in year one approximately \$590,000 to come from Federal (Title Vb – per pupil allotments) and from the Federal OSSE CSP grant.

Fundraising Strategy – 1) Grant Development

Shining Stars must raise \$350,000 to meet its year one (School Year 2011-2012) budgetary requirements. We have \$300,000 in grant requests pending. Assuming a 50% hit ratio, Shining Stars must make \$40,000 in grant requests over the next 12 months to generate the funds necessary to fulfill our current budget needs. The conservative hit ratio takes into account that many of the foundations we will approach over the next 12 months are new to Shining Stars. The Board of Directors has begun identifying foundations that will be approached over the coming months. Attached with this plan is a list of planned requests and when they are expected to be received and will be updated monthly by the Board of Directors as opportunities are identified and requests are approved or declined. Projected income by August 2011 - \$250,000

Some of the potential foundation grants, include, but are not limited to, the following:

Grantmaker Name

Contact

Bauman Family Foundation, Inc.

Patricia Bauman, Pres.; John L. Bryant, Jr., Dir.

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Beech Street Foundation, The	Jeffrey Bauman, Tr.
Bender Foundation, Inc.	Julie Bender Silver, Pres.
Bender Foundation, Inc., Dorothy G., The	Morton A. Bender, Pres.
Bernstein Foundation, Inc., Diane & Norman	
Block Foundation, Herb	
Cafritz Foundation, Morris and Gwendolyn, The	Rose Ann Cleveland, Exec. Dir.
Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, The	Terri Lee Freeman, Pres.;
Dart Group II Foundation, Inc.	Ronald Haft, Dir.
Flamboyant Foundation, Inc.	
Fradian Foundation	
Goldman Family Foundation, Aaron & Cecile	
Graham Fund, Philip L.	Eileen F. Daly, Pres.
Hanley Foundation, The	
Jones Foundation, Joseph E. & Marjorie B., The	Joyce Havard, Pres.
Jovid Foundation	Bob Wittig, Exec. Dir.
Kimsey Foundation	
Kiplinger Foundation, The	Andrea B. Wilkes, Secy.
Lea Foundation, Helen Sperry	Sperry Lea, Pres.
Ludwig Family Foundation, Inc., The	
Mazda Foundation (USA), Inc., The	Barbara Nocera, Prog. Dir.
Meyer Foundation, Eugene and Agnes E.	Julie L. Rogers, Pres.
Nef Foundation, Evelyn Stefansson	
Peet Foundation, H. O.	Marguerite Peet Foster, Pres.
Replogle Foundation, Luther I.	Gwenn Gebhard, Exec. Dir.

Fundraising Strategy – 2) Major Donor Cultivation

The Board will engage in a concerted effort to identify and nurture 3 new major donors (\$10,000 plus). Recruiting Board members to brainstorm and contribute to this effort would be coordinated through the Board Chair and members of the Fundraising Committee. The Board may also want to consider engaging external, non-Shining Star board members, as a member of the search team. Projected income by August 2011 - \$30,000.

Fundraising Strategy – 3) Business Sponsorship Campaign (Community Stars)

Shining Stars Board of Directors will create and implement a strategy to develop sponsorship relationships with at least six local businesses within the immediate community and greater Washington area. These relationships will include: monthly sponsorship of Shining Stars through profit sharing arrangements, reoccurring donations (cash or in-kind) and recruitment of volunteers. The goal of this strategy is to engage businesses as investors in the work that we do at Shining Stars and to deepen the relationship with the business community overtime. Implementation of this strategy will begin in September 2010 in order to make an effective end of the year appeal to businesses whose fiscal year ends in September and maximize our opportunities for corporate funding for the school year 2011-2012. Board member assistance in identifying potential business partners will be needed. This strategy will be lead by the Board of Directors and Fundraising Committee. Projected income by August 2011 - \$20,000.

Fundraising Strategy – 4) Social Networking

The goal of this strategy is to broaden the base of Shining Stars donors through engaging and educating existing, new and younger stakeholders on the issues of urban Montessori education. This goal will be accomplished through 1) creating a website, 2) design a newsletter to create an energetic look and more information on community events and partners through Constant Contact, 3) design a Facebook page to include more useful and engaging information, and 4) develop a twitter account that will be enable us to share information on our programs and important events, promote volunteer opportunities and attract donors to our website. Our website, Facebook page and twitter account will be marketed as sources to learning and engaging in urban Montessori education. These social networking tools will also be used to promote our partnerships with local and region wide businesses. Projected income by August 2011 - \$20,000

Fundraising Strategy – 5) Special Events and Mailings

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Finally, Shining Stars will conduct 2-3 appeal mailings along with hosting several events over the next 12 months. The goal for each of these activities is to educate existing and potential donors on Shining Stars impact, reinforce the importance of and need for our work and provide opportunities for investment through cash donations. Projected income by August 2011 - \$30,000

The school will take a systematic approach to institutional advancement and will leverage a volunteer base to develop a database of friends and supporters of the school for use in direct solicitations and event invitations. Additionally, we have received additional funding from our Founding Group members already and when we are successful in securing a charter we will require all Board members to provide donations, as we will be a 100% contributing Board. Lastly, we will apply for all government entitlement funds that the school is eligible to receive (School Lunch, Special Education, Title I, etc.).

c. Financial Management and Accounting

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will maintain its financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as defined by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Once The Academy is successful in establishing its charter it will be formally organized as its own independent 501©3 organization, that has a separate Board of Directors, separate bank account, separate financial management system from M.O.M.I.E.'s and all other external entities. The Academy will be contracting with an accounting firm, such as George B. Abrams, Certified Public Accountant, to serve as our Chief Financial Officer and bookkeeper. The firm will be responsible for preparing the organizational financial statements and statement of cash flow, budgeting and reporting on federal entitlements, monthly reporting including budget to actual cash flow, accounts payable and receivable and any additional interim reports. The Academy's will utilize a financial consultant in the initial years who will provide weekly bookkeeping services including bill payment, bank reconciliations and general banking services, some of which will also be done in-house us, and will provide financial projections and properly manage our cash flow. We will explore the establishing of a line of credit with an area bank to ensure an adequate cash flow. Additionally, we will also seek to negotiate payment terms with our vendors that will be consistent with our cash flow needs.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will contract with an outside, independent auditor, approved by the PCSB, to conduct our annual audit and complete the 990 Federal Tax Return. The auditor will follow the Generally

Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and DCPCSB audit policies and all GAAP policies.

d. Civil Liability and Insurance

In compliance with D.C. law and the recommendations of the D.C. chartering authority, Shining Stars Montessori Academy has sought a proposal from Ambush Insurance, an insurance company that has provided coverage for other D.C. public charter schools, for the recommended minimum insurance coverage for our targeted student population and projected personnel. The anticipated premium will be range from \$4,000 - \$6,000 per year and provide the following coverage:

General Liability \$1000 per occurrence, \$2000 aggregate

Directors and Officers Liability \$1000

Educators Legal Liability \$1000

Umbrella Coverage \$3000; \$5000 if providing transportation

Property/Lease Insurance 100 percent of replacement cost

Boiler and Machinery Insurance \$1000 (if appropriate actual loss sustained)

Auto Liability Insurance \$1000

Workers Compensation As required by law

e. Provision for Audit

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will contract with an auditor that appears on the D.C. Public Charter School Board approved list of auditors. The Academy will work with an outside, independent auditor to conduct our annual audit and complete the 990 Federal Tax Return. We will secure an approved PCSB independent auditor to conduct our annual audit and we have begun talking with BCGO accounting firm to explore the possibility of securing their firm to conduct an audit. The auditor will follow the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and DCPCSB audit policies and all GAAP policies.

4. FACILITIES

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a. Identification of a Site

The site that The Academy's Founding Group has identified to begin Phase I of our school's implementation is located at 2616 Georgia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001. M.O.M.I.E, Inc. currently has site control and is expected to complete a building renovation project in mid 2011. This location is strategically located in Ward 1 directly across the street from Howard University. In the unlikely event The Academy is unable to occupy space at 2616 Georgia Avenue, NW, as detailed here, the Founding Group has contacted Building Hope in Washington, D.C. to begin to implement a Facilities Plan B to secure a back-up facility and financing plan.

M.O.M.I.E.'s will rent two floors in this new facility to The Academy. The terms of the tenancy include at or below market rate for a period of five years (*see the attached letter of intent*). The Academy, once approved, will take immediate and deliberate steps to secure an occupancy permit from DCRA.



Proposed Eco-Green Children's center site at 2616 Georgia Avenue, NW

b. Site Renovation

The Academy's sponsoring non-profit, M.O.M.I.E, Inc., is currently in the middle of completing a renovation of the proposed site, which is scheduled to be

completed in June 2011. The site includes two floors which would accommodate approximately 60 children. Initially, in the first two years, the site can be divided into multiple classrooms of up to 29 children each and there will be six child-sized bathrooms and adult sized bathrooms on the first floor and this would allow us to accommodate approximately 60 children. Please see the renovation plan below:

Construction Plan and Timeline

The construction plan for erecting M.O.M.I.E's exciting green learning building include the following major milestones:

1. Researching Feasibility, Establishing Team and Developing Architectural Design Plans.

January 2008 –June 2009 DONE !

Members of the M.O.M.I.E's Board will explore the possibility of establishing a new home and headquarters for the organization, develop a team of board members to advance this possibility, and retain the services of a professional architect to develop schematic plans for this project.

2. Applying for Zoning Variance

November 2009—March 2010 DONE !

Members of the development team will work in collaboration with the architect to apply for a zoning variance for the project at hand.

3. Securing Funding for the Project

January 2009—September 2010 ALMOST THERE !

Members of the development team will work with a professional fund-raising consultant to help secure foundation and other investment for this project. As of February 2010, over \$720,000 has been secured from banking and other sources.

4. Permit Acquisition In Process Now!

July – September 2010

Submission of architectural and engineering drawings, in coordination by the architect and owner's representative, for the securing of the necessary electrical, plumbing, fire & other regulatory permits to proceed with the scheduled construction.

**5. Construction Phase I (The Start) – Demolition
September – October 2010**

Demolition and removal of interior partition walls, finish and sub-flooring on all levels and south exterior load bearing brick wall. Removal of fixtures, windows, appliances, utilities, etc all per drawings. Temporary bracing and wall framing to support existing structures floor, ceiling and roof framing.

**6. Excavation
November 2010**

Excavation of rear area of lot in preparation for new construction, foundation wall and slab. Excavation of south side of lot for footing, foundation wall and new exterior cinder block wall. New slab for 1st floor except in rear over cellar. Block up lower section of existing front doorway for new window opening.

**7. Construction Phase II (The Middle) – Floor , Framing, Installations & Additions
December 2010 – March 2011**

Framing for new floor joist system tied into existing floor joist for 2nd and 3rd floors. Perimeter wall framing for new third floor and roof structures. Installation of interior wood staircases per drawings. Interior partition framing per drawings. Exterior sheathing and sub-floor installation including exterior structure wrap. Leveling of ceiling and floor joist for existing joist that are to remain. The newly constructed additional sections will be developed with stucco finishing, etc. The new windows, cable railings, walls and ceiling joists will be installed.

**8. Construction Phase III (Ending) – Installation continued, Finishing
March 2011 –May 2011**

The installation of major mechanical systems, plumbing and electrical components will be done. Commercial kitchen equipment will be installed. Sheet rocking, compound finishing, sanding, priming and painting. Site cleaning, waste removal and structural inspections.

**9. Application for Certificate of Occupancy
June 2011**

Upon successful completion of the abovementioned project outline and time-line, the development team will apply to DCRA for a Certificate of Occupancy.

To negotiate the possibility of our facilities readiness we are exploring fall-back facilities by talking with Building Hope consultants. According to Building Hope, there are incubators that help start-up charters utilize school space during their initial stages of development.

c. Financing Plans for Facilities

Not applicable, given that The Academy plans to lease our initial Phase I site and all costs will be financed by the per pupil facilities allotment. During Phase II we anticipate leasing an additional facility for our expansion yet financing is too early to predict at this point. However, during that phase we plan to be working with real estate experts such as Building Hope to guide us in the process.

d. Building Maintenance

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will designate a member of its full-time staff to oversee and attend to our day-to-day maintenance needs and to ensure full compliance with any applicable laws and regulations.

5. RECRUITING AND MARKETING

a. Outreach to the Community

During its planning year, The Academy will commit to forming cooperative partnerships with a number of community organizations, including Howard University, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Roots Public Charter School. We will seek out other programs and individuals that maintain a similar philosophy regarding the education of young children, and form a lasting partnership with such people. As previously explained, one such partnership, already established, is with M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC.

M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC will be housed in the same building as The Academy. As such, The Academy students can visit the M.O.M.I.E.'s Children's Black History Gallery for enrichment. Additionally, M.O.M.I.E.'s staff will provide the before-care and after-care program for The Academy students, which will allow for continuity in the family support services, cultural empowerment programming, and Montessori mindset.

We will be a resource to the community as we work with M.O.M.I.E.'S TLC to host workshops, community forums and information sessions related to lives and

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work of great leaders, past and present as part of our cultural empowerment program. In addition, The Academy will host periodic workshops on the Montessori Method which will include a "Community Open House Day" in which members of the community can visit the classroom environments. Given the fact that the building in which we will be housed will be a "green building", The Academy plans to take advantage of this unique opportunity by hosting workshops on energy efficiency and the benefits of going green and provide tours of the building to show-off the green technology we will be using.

The following chart highlights some additional exciting and important community partnerships we have made to provide workshops and information sessions to the community at large.

Organization	Key Contacts	Partner Relationship
Elected and civic leaders		
Councilman Jim Graham	Calvin Woodland, Chief of Staff to Ward 1 CM	He has submitted a letter of support and his office has agreed to help educate our children about effective ways to be an informed and active citizenship
ANC 1B	Commissioner Thomas Kwesi Danda Smith	This single district member has submitted a letter of support and he has agreed to help educate our children about effective ways to be an informed and active citizenship
Pleasant Plains Civic Association	Darren Jones, President	The association has submitted a letter of support and they have agreed to help educate our children about effective ways to be an informed and active citizenship
Councilwoman Muriel Bowser	Jim Slattery, Special Assistant to Ward 4 CM	We have been in contact with her office about ways to partner
Mayor Fenty	Timothy Vafides, Ward 1 Outreach Specialist and Sybongile Cook, Ward 1 Outreach	We met with representatives of the Mayor's office and are exploring ways to partner with them

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	Specialist	
DC Vote	Eugene Dewitt Kinlow, Public Affairs Director	Founding Group member Ayize Sabater has worked with Mr. Kinlow in the past and his organization has agreed to help educate our children about effective ways to be an informed and active citizenship

Community Based Partners

Sankofa Books, Video and Café	Halie and Shirikiana Gerima, Owners	They have submitted a letter of support and agreed to help ground our children in understanding the significance of world cultures and host children for book signings and other discussion events
The Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC)	Sylvia Robinson, Executive Director	She has submitted a letter of support and has agreed to help ground our children in understanding the significance on the cultures of peoples around the world
The Humanities Council of Washington, DC	Joy Ford Austin, Executive Director	Her office has submitted a letter of support and they have agreed to help ground our children in understanding the significance of the cultures of peoples around the world
The Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative	Del McFadden, Community Program Coordinator	Founding Group Team members have worked with the Collaborative in various community events and have spoken of continued work to expose the children to community mapping and development practices
Mentoring Works2 Inc.	Courtney Stewart, Founder & CEO	Various Founding Group members have worked with Mentoring Works2 and they have expressed an interest in having their older youth to mentor our younger children
ONEDC	Dominic Moulden,	Mr. Moulden has agreed to help educate our children about effective

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	Executive Director	ways to be an informed and active citizenship
Development Corporation of Columbia Heights	Robert Moore, Executive Director	Founding Group Team members have worked with DCCH in various community events and have spoken of continued work to expose the children to community mapping and development practices
Howard University	Maybelle Taylor Bennett, Director of Community Association	Founding Group Team members have worked with the Howard University Community Association in various community events for more than 10 years and have spoken of continued work to expose the children to community mapping and development practices advanced by Howard U.
CentroNia	Timothea Howard, Community Specialist	Founding Group Team members have worked with CentroNia to teach history to their young children and we are contacting their school about continued ways of partnering to expose greater numbers of children, in their program and ours, to community mapping and the significance to people's heritage

Cultural Institutions

Anacostia Community Museum of the	Linda Maxwell, Education Director	Founding Group Team members have worked with the Anacostia Community Museum to educate large numbers of children about Black History and we are contacting their office about exposing additional children to some of the area's rich history
Alexandria Black History Museum	Louis C. Hicks, Director	Founding Group Team members have worked with the Alexandria Black History Museum and we are

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		contacting their office about exposing additional children to some of the area's rich history
The Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African American History & Culture	John W. Franklin, Director of Partnerships	Founding Group Team members have participated in various workshops sponsored by the Smithsonian and Mr. Franklin and we plan on contacting his office about exposing the children to the vast culture and history of African Americans
African-American Civil War Museum	Frank Smith, Director	Founding Group Team members have taken dozens of children to visit the Civil War Museum and we plan on contacting his office about exposing the children to the vast culture and history of African Americans
National Trust for Historic Preservation	Ben Kunkel, Education Program Manager	Founding Group Team members have participated in various workshops sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and we plan on contacting his office about exposing the children to the vast culture and history of America
The Gandhi Memorial Center	Carrie Trybulec, Director	Founding Group Team members have taken dozens of children to visit the Gandhi Center and we plan on contacting her office about exposing the children to the significance and history of Gandhi's peace movement
Cultural Tourism DC	Jane Freundel Levey, Chief Program Officer and Historian	Founding Group Team members have worked with Cultural Tourism DC to help develop the Georgia Avenue Heritage Trail and we are contacting their office about exposing the children to community mapping and the significance to a neighborhood's heritage

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Other Outreach:		
Listserve	Various Community list serves and yahoo groups	Georgia_Avenue@yahoogroups.com Columbia_heights@yahoogroups.com WardOneDC@yahoogroups.com

b. Recruitment of Students

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will develop a creative and strong recruitment effort to secure the projected student enrollment. Our recruitment includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Radio announcements (on R&B, Pop, Jazz, Gospel and other stations)
- Metrobus advertisements
- Billboards
- Newspaper advertisements
- Online social networking outreach
- Neighborhood List-Serve and e-mail outreach
- Direct Mail and flier inserts into area publications
- Open House meetings
- Speaking at various public events
- Car bills and door hangings
- Door to door talking to residents in a 10 block radius of the school
- Tabling at area grocery stores and malls
- Promotions through active community groups such as churches and community groups such as civic and action committees

Our recruitment efforts include a public awareness campaign to introduce ourselves to the community and emphasize the benefits of a Montessori school with culture-based focus. This recruitment strategy is part of a broader community outreach plan that the Founding Group is developing and that the Board of Directors will expand upon and implement. Additionally, our recruitment efforts will be coordinated with other public charter schools in the targeted Ward 1 area, including E.L. Haynes and Capital City.

c. Future Expansion and Improvements

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be a continually growing community of learners and, as such, there will be a sustained need to grow our facilities until we reach our intended goal of 150 children. As the students grow, so will the school so that we can accommodate the needs and demands of students in higher grades. We will achieve this in two phases of development.

Phase I

During Phase I, in our initial establishment year of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, and the following year (two years in duration) we expected to be housed at the building in Ward 1. Because of the unique quality of having multi-age classrooms, it is essential that we build our program mindfully and strategically. Our strategy is to enroll the majority of our children at age 3 with some 4 year olds (following the DC guidelines of completing the required age by September 30th of the year of enrollment) into the Primary Program and to continue to expand our program growing from the youngest age groups. Three year-olds will spend three years in this classroom, and four year-olds will possibly spend two years here, but may need to do three depending on the child's needs, before transitioning into the Elementary program. The Academy will open with two Primary Classrooms both with the capacity for 24-29 students (space will be reserved for a majority of three-year-olds, leaving 15-18 spaces total for entering four year-olds and 12-15 spaces for entering five year-olds) using a phase-in enrollment plan. Phase I will include two Primary classes, each consisting of Pre-School, Pre-K, and Kindergarten (ages 3-6).

Phase II

Maintaining our original site, Phase II will expand to another campus to accommodate a third Primary classroom and the new Elementary classroom, which will be set-up for First through Sixth grades (ages 6-12).²⁸ ** Please see Growth table below **

PHASE	I	I	II	II	II
Age	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Three	20	(+14)=14	(+40)= 40	(+42)= 42	(+47)=47

²⁸ Please see the earlier Education Plan section regarding plans for developing the school to full enrollment (up to Sixth grade). In this section we outline in more detail the proposed growth of Shining Stars Montessori Academy.

**Please note that these figures do not show attrition of 10% per year but it is figured into the overall totals & addressed by 3 & 4 year olds being enrolled to offset that 10% attrition rate.

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Four	19	$(20-4)=16$	$(14-2)=12$	$(40-5)=35$	$(42-5)=37$
Five	15	$(19-3)=16$	$(16-2)=14$	$(12-1)=11$	$(35-3)=32$
Six		$(15-3)=12$	$(16-2)=14$	$(14-1)=13$	$(11-1)=10$
Seven			$(12-1)=11$	$(14-1)=13$	$(13-2)=11$
Eight				$(11-1)=10$	$(13-2)=11$
Nine					$(10-1)=9$
Totals	54	$(+14-10)=58$	$(+40-7)=91$	$(+42-9)=124$	$(+47-14)=157$

Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to open in Ward 1, which has one of the highest populations of Limited English Proficient students. We can estimate that a significant percentage of our students will be English Language Learners and will qualify for language support services. The Academy has a comprehensive plan for identifying and providing for our ELL students; it is outlined in sub-section c of the Curriculum portion of our Application.

In addition to our English Language Learners, it is likely that The Academy will receive a small number of Special Needs students, as well. The District of Columbia estimates that nearly 17% of its students qualify for Special Education. The Academy will implement an early intervention process, as well as rely heavily on teacher observation in order to identify students who may need to be evaluated for Special Services.

C. PLAN OF OPERATION**1. Student Policies and Procedures****a. Timetable for Registering and Admitting:**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be open to all students in the District of Columbia. For the initial two years of operation, The Academy will accept three, four, and five year-old students. In subsequent years, The Academy will admit three and four year old new students. During the planning year (Summer 2010 to Summer 2011), the Academy will conduct a program of intensive community outreach in an effort spread awareness of the proposed school, a campaign to be spearheaded by the Principal. Student applications will open in January 2011 and close April 2011. If necessary, a public lottery will be performed on May 1, 2011 and a waiting list established. Randomly drawn applicants will be immediately informed of their acceptance and given one month to confirm their enrollment in the fall. If a student declines, then we will begin contacting those on the waiting list. If there are sufficient and not extra applicants to fill the available slots, a lottery will not be necessary, and students will be notified of their acceptance after the application deadline. After the initial year of enrollment, previously enrolled students will be required to submit a re-enrollment form and up-to-date health forms by the "Application Deadline", in order to give Administrators an accurate idea of how many new slots will be available.

Below is a proposed timeline for registering and enrolling students (after the initial year of enrollment is completed):

School Year 2011 - 2012

Open Houses	<i>October 27th December 8th February 23rd April 12th</i>	Open Houses will be advertised to the general public, and will be open to all those interested in applying to The Academy.
Application Deadline	<i>April 27th</i>	All interested applicants must submit their completed application by this date to be entered into the enrollment lottery. (Late applications will only be accepted if there are insufficient applicants for the number of slots available.) Along with necessary emergency contact information, health forms, and immunization records, all students will be required to provide proof of D.C. residency.
Enrollment Lottery	<i>May 1st</i>	In the case that there are more applicants than slots available, Shining

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		Stars Montessori Academy will hold a public lottery – to be conducted by an impartial member of the Board. The Board member will draw names until all of the open positions for admission are filled, at which point remaining names will be drawn and placed on the waiting list in sequential order.
Acceptance Notification	May 4 th	All applicants granted enrollment, will be notified – in writing – by this date. Potential students' families will be informed of the registration deadline, and expected to complete remaining paperwork (health forms, etc.) by that date.
Registration Deadline	June 1 st	All those wishing to enroll (after having received notice of acceptance) in the Academy will submit their letter of intent and completed application by this date. If The Academy does not receive the necessary documents by this date, the applicant will be denied immediate admission, and the waiting list/lottery will be activated. If/when more students apply then we can accept for enrollment, then their applications will go to a waitlist and when a position becomes open, the lottery system will determine who is selected for enrollment.

b. Policies and Procedures for Enrollment, Withdrawal, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students:

All applicants to the Shining Stars Montessori Academy must provide proof of residency within the District of Columbia. The Academy will be free and open to all District residents, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, disability, special needs, religion, sexual orientation or family income. Students may withdraw from The Academy at will. If a child withdraws from The Academy, then the first child on the waiting list will fill the slot.

Non-resident students may apply and will be required to pay tuition, according to the appropriate rate as set forth by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Non-resident students will be accepted at The Academy only in

the case that there are insufficient resident applicants to fill the open enrollment slots.

The Academy will develop a comprehensive discipline policy regarding suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary actions during the planning year. This policy will include the following elements:

- I. Preventative Positive Behavioral Model for Students
- II. Staff Guidelines for Observing, Reporting and Documenting Student Behavior
- III. Stair Step Discipline Strategy
- IV. Discipline Team Conferences
- V. Additional Actions
- VI. Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

Parents will be notified if there is concern significant enough to warrant extreme disciplinary action, and will be invited to a Disciplinary Hearing for their child. In addition, the Academic Principal will convene with classroom teachers - when necessary - to decide what action best suits each situation. Possible consequences may include: written warning, intervention strategy planning, in-school suspension, suspension from school, or finally, expulsion from school. The Academy will follow requisite due process procedures in the event that suspension or expulsion is warranted, and the Board of Trustees will make all final decisions regarding expulsion after a Disciplinary Hearing has been held.

2. HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION**a. Major Leadership Roles**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will have an Executive Director and Principal. These two persons will comprise the Academy's **management team**. The Principal will report to the Executive Director for purposes of accountability and to ensure fidelity of implementation of The Academy's mission. In addition to these positions, The Academy plans to develop a support system for its Administration to include senior staff members in leadership positions and administrative assistance. These additional positions will include designation of one classroom teacher as the *Mentor Teacher/Curriculum Coordinator*, and the hiring of an *Administrative Assistant*. Both the Mentor Teacher and the Administrative Assistant will report to the Principal. Below are the proposed persons to hold these positions, along with a brief description of their qualifications. For more detail, please reference the chart or the resumes in Section G of this application. Each individual is subject to Board review and approval.

Executive Director (full-time 100%): Dana Clark

The Board will appoint a successful educator, business owner and/or community development specialist to serve as the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible to ensure that the school is effectively managed as well as financially sound and successful. The Executive Director will serve as the "face" of The Academy. The candidate must have a strong passion for the achievement of academic excellence as well as the provision of culturally infused pedagogy using the Montessori approach. The Executive Director will report directly to the Board, provide outstanding management, vigorously fundraise, and oversee the efficient and effective implementation of The Academy's Mission. The Executive Director is responsible for the oversight and supervision of all staff (in collaboration with the Principal), the coordination of the day to day management of the school (in collaboration with the Principal) and to ensure fidelity of implementation of the school's mission and vision.

Other duties, responsibilities and qualifications include:

- Provide effective leadership, supervision, evaluation and oversight over all of the Academy's activities
- Ensure exceptional management of the school in accordance with the policies set forth by the Board
- Assume responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff
- Communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement to the staff as well as other relevant stakeholders.
- Works vigorously with the Board to develop and implement an aggressive fundraising plan to meet the Academy's funding needs
- Effectively manages the Academy's budgeting, finances and accounting needs in compliance with all laws

- Ultimate responsibility for facilities management and maintenance
- Develop and maintain a positive and productive network of relationships with the community, other stakeholders, students, and parents.
- Serve as the liaison between the Board of Trustees and The Academy
- Ensure that Board interests and decisions are served and implemented by the SSMA staff
- Act as an ex-officio member of the Board.
- Ensure SSMA compliance with all Legal regulations (National & District), Board Policies, and Civil regulations
- Oversee all hiring and direct supervision of all non-academic support staff
- Conduct regular staff meetings &/or coordinates meetings with Principal
- Ensure that the school functions to the highest standard consistent with SSMA philosophy and mission
- Contract with all non-academic Service Providers and works in conjunction with Principal for academic Service Providers (e.g. special educator)
- Implement School Board policies and regulations.

Qualifications:

- Possess a Master's degree or higher
- Have at least 15 years of professional work experience
- Have at least years 5 experience in the management of a non- profit with significant operating budgets
- Experience working in an educational or child development setting
- Skilled facilitator with strong communication and listening skills
- Strong understanding of the effective use of technology in the school
- Effective technology skills
- Knowledge of school budgeting
- Demonstrated successful with fundraising and corporate networking

Successful candidates will also have:

- A proven track record of executive level leadership and results
- Superb analytical and problem-solving skills
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills
- Ability to manage complex personal and political relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders
- Passion for improving urban public education
- Intention to serve in the capacity for at least three years

Principal (full-time 100%): *Rhonda Sabater*

The Principal will be appointed by the Executive Director. The Principal will be an experienced, certified Montessori educator with at least 4-5 years of classroom experience, be highly qualified and be certified to teach elementary students in the District of Columbia (in compliance with No Child Left Behind requirements). The candidate must have a passion to provide stellar education and

to significantly improve the performance of District of Columbia students as well as a solid track record of relevant achievement.

The Principal will be responsible for oversight of all the school curricular and student related activities as well as the direct supervision and management of teaching staff. In addition the Principal will be responsible for the coordination of student files, including the collection, maintenance and reporting of all student testing and assessment data, maintenance of adequate student files, and coordination of the Saturday Academy. The Principal will coordinate interventions and special services, for individual students in cooperation with their classroom teacher, and will contract with Service Providers on an as-needed basis (i.e. Special Education, Occupational Therapy, English as a Second Language in the event a student qualifies for these services). The Principal will oversee the implementation of early intervention plans, IEPs, and work with service providers to ensure each child's needs are being met within the school environment and in accordance with District and Federal requirements. She will also maintain and oversee communication with parents and families, and will organize Parent Education Seminars and Information Sessions throughout the year. She will report to the Executive Director.

Other duties, responsibilities and qualifications include:

- Coordinates the academic program of the school to ensure that academic goals are met or exceeded.
- Ensures that each student's academic and emotional needs are identified, respected, and met.
- Establishes and ensures adherence to high standards of student and staff behavior.
- Fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of learning that reflects excellence.
- Oversees alignment of Montessori curriculum with DC Standards.
- Develop and implement, as needed, the Academy's program plans, to include: curriculum and instruction, performance, technology, and areas of special emphasis (e.g. ESL, special education, talented and gifted, minority achievement).
- Monitors and ensures adherence to state and federal requirements (including that all teaching staff meet "highly qualified" requirements as defined by NCLB).
- Monitors and ensures staff's regular and proper use of the Montessori Records Express (MRX) data collection and reporting system.
- Prepares the school community, interpreting activities and policies and encouraging participation in school life.
- Serves as a parent liaison, advocate and ally.
- Reports and documents all academic matters in a timely manner.

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- Coordinates, staffs, and ensures proper implementation of the Saturday Academy Program.
- Plans and coordinates Parent Education seminars.
- Develops a plan for Professional Development to take place during the initial two weeks of staff orientation, as well as a continuing plan for Professional Development throughout the academic year.
- Ensures that staff is adequately supported and necessary resources are provided and available.
- Ensures the implementation of content alignment with standards.
- Monitors the evaluation of student performance and utilizes related data to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program.
- Coordinates with specialists to provide professional seminars on pertinent topics (such as MRX training, SSMA policies and procedures, CPR/First Aid training, Special Services provisions in the Montessori classroom, and ESL best practices)

Qualifications

- Some graduate work in education
- District of Columbia certification (in accordance with NCLB)
- Montessori training
- Experience as a Lead Teacher in a Montessori classroom
- Experience coordinating and implementing successful Student Interventions (such as SST plans, IEPs, ELL services, etc.)
- Experience with and a demonstrated dedication to working with urban youth
- Familiarity with DCPS Academic Standards for teaching
- Skilled facilitator with strong communication and listening skills
- Strong understanding of the effective use of technology in the school
- Effective technology skills

Successful candidates will also have

- Superb analytical and problem-solving skills
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills
- Ability to manage complex personal and political relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders
- Passion for improving urban public education
- Intention to serve in the capacity for at least three years

Financial Consultant: *Will Outsource*

The Academy also seeks a financial consultant to handle financial responsibilities of the school (i.e. Grant allocations, staff payroll, etc). During the planning year, the Board will hire an Executive Director who will manage these responsibilities.

Legal Counsel: *Jones Day Law Firm*

Shining Stars Montessori Academy has secured the pro-bono legal services of Jones Day Law firm. In addition the Academy has two Education/Civil Rights Attorneys on the founding Board – Allison Brown and Nicholas Murphy – who will continue to provide guidance and support pertaining to legal matters as part of the School's Board.

b. Qualifications of Classroom Teacher & Classroom Assistants

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will meet or exceed the highly qualified teacher requirements in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act in its employment of all Academic Staff. Fingerprinting and background check will be required of all prospective staff members. We will offer attractive compensation packages, plus opportunities to obtain Montessori teacher certification (for assistants) to attract and cultivate high quality staff. Other school staff will also hold the appropriate undergraduate/graduate degrees commensurate with their roles in the school. All staff prior to starting employment will be required to complete a thorough background check and meet school/state health requirements including TB test and physicals. In addition, candidates will submit necessary documents to complete personal file, including references, diplomas, transcripts and fingerprinting.

CLASSROOM Teachers

In keeping with our mission to provide the highest quality Teachers, Academic Staff will hold - at minimum - an undergraduate degree and District certification to teach early childhood or elementary students (in accordance with the NCLB Act). Teachers will also have Montessori teacher certification from the Association Montessori International (AMI). In addition, teachers will have experience working in urban settings, a minimum of two years teaching experience in Montessori environment, and will meet school/State health requirement standards.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Classroom assistants will hold a minimum of an associate degree as well as experience working with urban youth, a passion for working with children, meet school and State health requirements, be highly motivated, and have the curiosity to learn. Classroom Assistants will be required to undergo a Montessori Classroom Assistant workshop/training program. Classroom Assistants will assist the teachers in preparing and maintaining the Montessori classroom environment as directed by the teacher. They are directly responsible for maintaining a clean and tidy environment, refilling materials, and ensuring proper storage of all classroom supplies. The Assistant supports the Teacher with care and maintenance of all classroom materials, the preparation of curriculum materials as directed, and repairs to materials and equipment as necessary. She or he will supervise the

classroom and may work with individual or small groups of children as directed by the Teacher. The Assistant shares responsibility of safety and physical well-being of all children in the classroom, helps with maintenance of classroom inventory and records, reports all accidents/incidents orally and with a written statement both to the teacher and parents, maintains student privacy at all times, and models respect for all persons. Classroom Assistants will report directly to their Classroom Teachers, but will be ultimately evaluated by the Principal.

c. Staffing Plan

During its initial years of operation, Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to have seven full-time staff members to include: Executive Director, Principal, Programs Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Primary Montessori Teacher, and two Teachers' Assistants. In addition, The Academy will hire part-time staff to help with special operations of the school, to include Special Education Teachers, and ESL teachers, Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, or other service providers as needed. As The Academy grows to contain an Elementary classroom, necessary teachers and support staff will be hired at that time.

Position	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Executive Director (Dana Clark)		100%	100%	100%
Principal (Rhonda Sabater)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Programs Coordinator (Katherine Avery)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Administrative Assistant		100%	100%	100%
Classroom Teachers		100%	100%	300%
Classroom Assistants		200%	200%	400%
Special Education Provider(s)		Contracted as-needed	Contracted as-needed	Contracted as-needed
Language Specialist(s)		Contracted as-needed	Contracted as-needed	Contracted as-needed

* **Note:** 100% indicates that a position has 1 full-time person; 200% indicates 2 full persons; etc.

Recruitment Plan

During the planning stages, Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS has already made contacts at a number of established Montessori teacher training programs. Some contacts include the Barrie Institute for Advanced Montessori

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Studies (Maryland); Janet McDonell, Director of Primary Training, Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola College of Maryland; Richard Ungerer, Executive Director, American Montessori Society (AMS); and Virginia McHugh Goodwin, Executive Director, Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). Additionally, we have arranged to speak with classes at two local AMI-recognized training facilities including the Montgomery Montessori Institute and the Northern Virginia Montessori Institute. The Academy plans to utilize these contacts in the recruitment of trained and certified Montessori staff. Ideal teaching candidates will be AMI certified and have at least two years teaching in either a Montessori classroom or urban environment. Additionally, preference will be given to teachers who have already attained "highly-qualified" status (as defined by NCLB), by earning a passing score on the appropriate PRAXIS exams. If The Academy receives an excellently-qualified Montessori teacher who has not yet achieved "highly-qualified" standards as established by the No Child Left Behind Act, provisions will be made from the Professional Development budget to allow for necessary testing and certification costs.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS: Proposed Staffing Chart for Year 1 of Operations

POSITION	BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTION
<i>Executive Director</i>	Will ensure school-wide fidelity to the Mission of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS. Will work directly with the Principal to coordinate the implementation of best practices in academic excellence, to develop a staff expectations and responsibilities, and to ensure the overall success of The Academy. Will report to the Board and the Public Charter School Board, as needed.
<i>Principal</i>	Will ensure adherence to The Academy's Mission throughout the school community, and will work to involve parents in this process. Will formulate early intervention strategies and will coordinate services for those students with special needs. Will be responsible for the collection, maintenance and reporting of student data (to include demographics, assessments, and more). Will report to the Executive Director

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<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Will provide support to the Executive Director, Principal, and Programs Coordinator. Will manage office and classroom supplies requests. Will maintain official student attendance, school lunch, and other student financial records. Will assist in the coordination of school field trips and other special events.
<i>Primary Teacher</i>	Will exercise The Academy's Mission by implementing a culturally empowering Montessori philosophy in teaching practices. Will be under the supervision of the Mentor Teacher and will report to the Principal.
<i>Teaching Assistant (x2)</i>	Will provide support to the Classroom teachers as directed, and will function under their supervision. Will be ultimately evaluated by the Principal.
<i>Independently Contracted Service Providers</i>	Will provide services to students on an as-needed basis. Will provide training/professional development to staff when appropriate. Will coordinate the implementation of services with the classroom teacher(s). Will report to the Principal.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy hopes to maintain a student-teacher ratio no greater than 15:1. To ensure a properly functioning and fully operational Montessori classroom, we must respect the students' right to have individual lessons with the teachers, and this can only be provided if the class is kept at a reasonable size.

Staff will meet regularly throughout the year to discuss lesson planning, best practices and community issues. The Principal and Mentor Teacher will coordinate weekly staff meetings on an alternating basis, and the Principal will meet with all staff once a month. Staff meetings will take place once a week, and will not exceed one hour (so as not to interfere with teachers' planning time). These meetings will serve as a forum to discuss professional development opportunities, effective implementation of the cultural empowerment model, student assessments, school

growth, parent involvement and other Academy-related topics. Staff meetings may occasionally be replaced by supplemental training seminars when necessary.

d. Employment Policies

Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS will be an equal opportunity employer (EEOC) and will not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, marital status, disability or any other protected category. Harassment in any of the above-mentioned categories is prohibited and will not be tolerated and violators will be subject to disciplinary action. The Academy will be a drug-free workplace. The Academy will designate a Human Resources Committee of its Board of Directors to monitor compliance with the school's human resources policies and consider necessary updates and revisions to the policies. The committee will be established during the planning year, during which time members of the committee will also be identified. The Human Resources Committee will oversee final development of The Academy's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual by November of the planning year.

The Academy is committed to full compliance with all applicable federal and D.C. laws and regulations governing employment. Moreover, in order to implement its cultural empowerment program, The Academy is committed to employing a diverse community of educators and staff who reflect and are committed to advancing the community in which The Academy serves. During the planning year, the Board of Directors will establish and populate a Hiring Committee of the Board. The Hiring Committee will utilize a team approach to hiring; members of the committee will include the Executive Director, Principal, another Academy employee, at least one member of the Board of Directors. The Hiring Committee will conduct interviews and make hiring recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval. Teachers and staff will be offered one-, two-, or three-year contracts.

Hiring and Contracts

The Personnel Policies and Procedures manual will detail the process of hiring administrators, teachers and other school staff. For recruiting purposes, The Academy will place advertisements in area newspapers, announcements with area colleges and universities in their schools of education, and notification to Montessori Training Centers in the region. We anticipate that this will generate enough interest and applications from qualified individuals and the Board of Directors will be prepared to revise its hiring strategy should the school not receive sufficient applicants.

Salaries and Benefits

Salaries at Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be highly competitive in the nationwide market for Montessori professionals. Specifically, The Academy will develop a formula for salaries during the planning year that

will incorporate nationwide salaries for Montessori professionals (as reported by the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the North American Montessori Teacher's Association (NAMTA) in addition to The Academy's budget projections as developed through research of local charter school salary packages. The Board of Directors will approve final proposed salaries for all of The Academy's employees. Salaries will increase each year to reflect cost of living increases as well as merit increases, based on each employee's final evaluation, which will be generated as set forth in the standards and performance section of the Personnel Policies and Procedures manual.

In addition to competitive salaries, The Academy will offer to its employees: competitive benefits packages, extraordinary professional development, leadership opportunities, and other incentives. The Academy will also offer sick leave or an equivalent benefit to all full-time and eligible part-time employees. The Academy will develop specific recommendations to submit to the Board of Directors for a benefit plan including health and life insurance, retirement, and other benefits that will attract highly qualified teachers, administrators and other school staff. The Academy will also ensure that any teachers joining our staff from District of Columbia Public Schools will be able to continue participating in their existing retirement programs.

Due to the unique offerings of the school, the engaging professional environment, the creative opportunities for development, and the competitive salaries and benefits package, the Founding Group believes it will attract highly qualified staff for long-term employment.

Evaluation of Staff

Evaluation of performance will factor in the social, emotional and cognitive development of the children, the teacher's level of proficiency and experience, and other factors that affect the quality of the educational experience for children including communication with parents and colleagues. In a Montessori school, staff evaluation examines the person's work and how that person upholds the school's mission and values and helps to advance the school to its purpose. Fundamental to the Montessori evaluative process is to provide for each individual seeking the opportunity to enhance his/her own growth and development, particularly through self-evaluation.

In addition to encouraging self-evaluation, The Academy will also use a formal evaluation which will look to assess (but will not be limited in scope) the following: one's growth and/or success; one's challenges or areas to still be improved; how the children have developed while working with this staff member; the school's development as impacted by this staff member's input;

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and individual goals or specific accomplishments to be achieved. All staff will be evaluated on an annual basis, by their immediate supervisor and all evaluations will be written and submitted to the Principal for review. A possible evaluation format that Shining Stars may use includes:

Sample Teacher Evaluation Form

Teacher Evaluation		Supervisor Evaluation of Teachers	
Name:	Date:	Name:	Evaluation Period:
Classroom What have been the 2-3 most significant achievements in your classroom work this year? Are there things in your class that you want to improve? What classroom improvements have you made this year? What areas of the curriculum do you feel strongest? What areas do you need to increase your knowledge? How well are students doing on tests? Give examples of the children's growth in your classroom this year?		In what areas has the staff demonstrated growth during the year? How did the staff person progress towards goals established during the previous evaluation? Are there areas that still need to be improved? What suggestions or requests for growth would you make? Evaluate the staff person's role in the wider school community?	
School/Community How did you involve parents in the classroom or in their child's education this year? How did you engage in parent education this year? Describe instances where parent education was successful? In hindsight are there areas where parents could have been better engaged or better educated about Montessori and/or the school's mission? Were there events where the community was successfully involved? Are there things which your supervisor can do to help you achieve your goals or do your job better?		Comment on the following areas: Care of the environment: Professional Conduct: Commitment: Relations with parents: Relations with the children: Problem-solving/Conflict Resolution:	

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...from your co-workers? ...from the Board of Directors? ...from the office staff? ...from the parents?	Relations with peers: Any other evaluative comments or concerns?
Personal Goals How would you evaluate yourself in terms of the goals that you set for yourself? Identify 3-5 key goals or things to be accomplished in the upcoming year?	
In what ways have you contributed to the larger advancement of the school this year? Are there any other areas that you would like to contribute or do more in, for the school's advancement in the year ahead?	
Any other evaluative comments or concerns?	

Dismissal

The Human Resources Committee of the Board of Directors will be responsible for approving all employee dismissals. Before any employee may be dismissed The Academy will - where appropriate - first engage its Employee Evaluation System protocol in order to allow the employee the opportunity to cure deficiencies.

A rating of Needs Improvement or Unacceptable on an employee's evaluation will automatically trigger the school's supervisory intervention process, which will entail the following measures:

1. The employee and the Administrator will develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). For sixty (60) school days, the employee will receive ongoing professional support, guidance and feedback to ensure maximum probability of achieving the goals set forth in the PIP.
2. After sixty (60) days, feedback about the employee's performance will be collected and discussed. If the employee's performance is still in need of improvement or unsatisfactory, the employee will be placed on probation for thirty (30) school days, during which time the employee will be given regular support, guidance and feedback.
3. At the end of the thirty-day probationary period, if the employee's performance continues to need improvement or remains unsatisfactory, a recommendation for dismissal will be made to the Board of Directors.

This intervention process ensures that multiple perspectives are considered in the assessment of the individual employee and the employee receives substantial support in achieving the agreed-upon goals defined in the PIP. Dismissal will be used as a last resort.

Grounds for immediate dismissal will include the following:

- Sexual assault, inappropriate sexual contact with students or staff
- Illegal drug possession, distribution, or use
- Theft
- Assault or battery
- Other criminal misconduct

e. Use of Volunteers

The Shining Stars Montessori Academy, Public Charter School will be strategically located across from Howard University. Two of The Academy Founding Group members are closely affiliated with Howard University as an undergraduate and graduate student, and one Founding Group member is a Howard alumni. The Founding Group has begun to communicate with Howard University students and employees about volunteer opportunities at The Academy.

Additionally, The Academy will continue its community outreach efforts during the planning year to encourage parents and members of the local community to volunteer. All volunteers will be provided with information and training by The Academy about the Montessori Method and cultural enrichment. Volunteer opportunities at The Academy will include, but are not limited to, presentations on environmental activism, messages on cultural empowerment, reading to the children in one-on-one and small group sessions, and assisting school staff as additional chaperones on field trips. All volunteers will be required to complete a background and criminal records check.

As part of SSMA's plan to develop a sense of person and social responsibility in students, a program of community involvement through volunteerism will be developed during the planning year and instituted as part of the overall school program.

Finally, a large part of The Academy's mission is to guide children in achieving their best at all times. An excellent way to encourage success will be to provide the Academy's students with positive role models of their ethnicity. It is essential to the development of a child's self-esteem that they see themselves reflected in the general community as positive and productive members of society. As part of a

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guest speakers program, The Academy will invite Howard University administrators, educators, students, and student organizations to be presenters in the classrooms and at larger school assemblies.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETING DISTRICT AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Academy will comply with all applicable statutes, codes, and regulations.

a. Health and Safety

The school will conform to all applicable health and safety laws pursuant to §38-1802.02(11) and §38-1802.04(c) (4) of the DC School Reform Act, and will comply with all required or requested health and safety inspections by government officials. All the Academy's teachers will be certified in CPR and First Aid. The Academy will have a private room with running water and a refrigerator in order to take advantage of a school nurse program, such as the Children's School Services School Health Program at Children's National Medical Center or other programs that the Founding Group is currently researching. In addition, the Founding Group will finalize its development of an emergency preparedness/response plan with recommendations from the Department of Health's Office of Early Childhood Development.

In order to enroll at The Academy, all students must show proof of immunization for:

- DPT (Diphtheria/Pertussis/Tetanus)
- OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine)
- MMR (Measles/Mumps/Rubella)
- HLb (Haemophilus Influenza Type B)
- HepB (Hepatitis B)
- Varicella (if the student has not had the chicken pox)

Students at or above the fifth grade should also have had a Tetanus/Diphtheria booster shot unless they have had one in the last five years.

b. Safety and Fire Codes

M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC is currently in the process of renovating the facility at 2616 Georgia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001, where Shining Stars Montessori Academy, PCS anticipates renting classroom and office space. The building will be one of the first "green" child development facilities in the D.C. area. As part of the renovation process, contractors are ensuring that the building will meet all D.C. Fire Inspector's Office standards. The Founding Group will take measures to ensure the safety of all of its students and personnel and ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and D.C. Code §5-501 et. seq.

c. Transportation

The Academy will make sure that all families who enroll students at the school are familiar with the nearby Metro bus routes and Metro train stations and make Metro student bus tokens available to any students needing them through the

Metro student bus token program. We will also ensure all families are aware that students attending charter schools are eligible for the same discounts on Metro bus and rail as students attending District of Columbia Public Schools. The school will make arrangements for transportation of students with disabilities through DCPS.

d. Enrollment Data

The Academy will maintain accurate enrollment and attendance records for all students in accordance with §2204(c) (12) of the DC School Reform Act. The Academy will maintain a separate enrollment file for each student, record attendance on a daily basis, save attendance records, and make the records available to the D.C. Public Charter School Board or other appropriate authorities upon request.

e. Maintenance and Dissemination of Student Records

In order to maintain school records, and to ensure ease of compliance with applicable regulations, The Academy will adopt an electronic student information system to maintain and update student data utilizing services such as Student Information System and/or Montessori Records Service. Such a system will allow The Academy to quickly comply with requests for review and allow the school to report information per the DC School Reform Act, Parts B and D, and other applicable statutes, including DC Code §31-401, et seq. (Compulsory School Attendance); DC Code §31-501, et seq. (Immunization of Students); DC Code §31-601, et seq. (Tuition of Nonresidents); DC Code §29-501, et seq. (Non-profit Corporations).

f. Compulsory Attendance Laws

The Academy will carefully maintain enrollment and attendance records through the D.C. Public Charter School Board's On-Line Attendance Management Software (OLAMS) to ensure that every student is accounted for each day school is in session. Each day, the school will call parents of any student who is unexpectedly absent (*e.g.*, not previously arranged, no call from parent the morning of day student is out). The school will also take any and all steps necessary to remedy repeated violations of school or District attendance requirements.

g. Subchapter B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Academy will comply with all federal regulations concerning special education. The Academy's Special Education programs and services will be developed by professionals who are thoroughly familiar with the requirements of federal law pertaining to students with special needs. Additionally, The Academy has a special relationship with the Special Education Cooperative and other organizations that will be instrumental in assisting The Academy to provide a free, appropriate public education to students with special needs pursuant to both the IDEA and Section 504.

h. Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act

The Academy expects to receive Title I funds and will use Title I funding to provide intensive academic support programs. The academic support programs provided will comply with all District and Federal requirements for use of Title I funds.

i. Civil Rights Statutes and Regulations of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia

The Academy will comply with all federal and District civil rights codes, statutes, and regulations, including §2202(11) and §2204(c)(5) of the DC School Reform Act, to ensure that students, employees, and volunteers will not be discriminated against or harassed based on membership in a protected group.

j. Other

The Academy will comply with all other Federal and local laws that will be issued.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER

a. Timetable and Tasks for Implementation of Charter

Timetable and Tasks

Pre-Approval Tasks	Started	6/10-10/10	11/10-3/11	4/11-8/11
Academic				
a. Develop Educational Plan, goals and outcomes 1-5 th year	x			
b. Align Montessori Curriculum, standards and methods	x			
c. Research various supports for student learning		x		
d. Research student information data management software	x	x		
e. Inventory and catalogue Montessori classroom materials in storage	x	x		
f. Research needed additional Montessori classroom materials and furniture		x		
Business				
a. Develop 1 st and five year operating budget projections	x	x		
b. Develop cash flow projections for 1 st and 2 nd year	x	x		
c. Secure corporate structure	x	x		
d. Secure non-profit status	x	x		
e. Develop Governance Systems	x			
f. Marketing and Recruitment				
1. Develop community outreach strategy & plan	x	x		
2. Develop marketing presentations (print, digital, etc.)		x		
3. canvass the community (with speaking, literature and general information)	x	x		

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4. host or make presentations at community meetings	x	x		
g. Development activities to raise money via soliciting for private, foundation, corporate, individual or government grants	x	x		
h. Development activities for needed resources	x	x		
Operations				
a. Facilities				
1. identify school site	x			
2. ensure site meets school's occupancy specifications	x			
3. negotiate leasing options and signing		x		
b. Personnel				
1. draft job descriptions	x			
2. Draft employee handbook (outlining personnel policies, hiring policies, etc.)	x	x		
3. outline employment contracts	x	x		
4. develop competitive employee benefits package (health, 401K, continuing education, etc)		x		
5. identify staffing needs (for internal excellence and for specialized services) and hiring timeline	x	x		
6. outline staff recruitment strategies		x		
7. develop staff orientation and training system		x		
8. develop professional and criminal records/background check system and procedures			x	
c. Admissions				
1. design application forms			x	

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2. finalize application timeline		x		
3. develop contingencies for addressing under or over enrollment		x		
4. develop admissions process (from intake to enrollment)		x		
5. outline open house and observation schedule		x		

Post-Approval Tasks	Started	6/10-10/10	11/10-3/11	4/11-8/11
Academic				
a. Develop Educational Plan, goals and outcomes 1-5 th year	Done			
b. Align Montessori Curriculum, standards and methods		x	x	
c. Research various supports for student learning		x	x	
d. Select and train on student information data management software		x	x	
e. Complete catalogue of Montessori classroom materials in storage		x		
f. Select and purchase needed Montessori classroom materials and furniture		x	x	x
g. Organize Montessori materials in classroom				x
Business				
a. Develop 1 st and five year operating budget projections	Done			
b. Develop cash flow projections for 1 st and 2 nd year	Done			
c. Secure corporate structure		x		
d. Secure non-profit status		x	x	
e. Develop Governance Systems and Board Manual		x	x	
f. Develop Board Succession plan		x	x	

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g. Develop Board Leadership Accountability Plan		x	x	
h. Marketing and Recruitment				
1. Implement community outreach strategy & plan		x	x	x
2. Develop marketing presentations (print, digital, etc.)		x	x	x
3. Canvass the community (with speaking, literature and general information)		x	x	x
4. Host or make presentations at community meetings		x	x	x
i. Development activities to raise money via soliciting for private, foundation, corporate, individual or government grants.		x	x	x
j. Development activities for needed resources		x	x	x
Operations				
a. Facilities				
1. identify and select school site	Done			
2. ensure site meets school's occupancy specifications		x		
3. negotiate leasing options and signing		x		
4. arrange for various regulatory inspections			x	x
5. obtain certificate of occupancy & other permits				x
b. Personnel				
1. design job descriptions	Done			

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2. Finalize employee handbook (outlining personnel policies, hiring policies, etc.)		x		
3. finalize employment contracts		x		
4. develop competitive employee benefits package (health, 401K, continuing education, etc)		x	x	
5. identify staffing needs (for internal excellence and for specialized services) and hiring timeline		x		
6. develop staff recruitment strategies		x	x	
7. implement staff orientation and training system			x	x
8. develop professional and criminal records/background/health check system and procedures		x		
9. perform national background/criminal records/health check on all staff			x	
c. Admissions				
1. design application forms		x		
2. finalize application timeline		x		
3. develop contingencies for addressing under or over enrollment		x		
4. develop admissions process (from intake to enrollment)		x		
5. finalize open house and observation schedule			x	

b. Maintenance and Reporting of Academic and Non-Academic Performance Data

Shining Stars Montessori Academy plans to purchase and utilize Montessori Records Express (MRX), an internet-based record-keeping system that was developed specifically for Montessori schools and the unique nature of their educational programs. MRX can be individually designed and tailored to meet the

unique needs of a school, which makes it an excellent means for maintaining up-to-date records of student work, lessons presented, as well as monitor the socio-emotional development of each child.

Montessori Records Express will be an excellent asset in maintaining data and informing planning. Teaching staff will use MRX to help monitor their frequency of presentations within the different curricular areas. If the teacher observes that he/she is putting more of an emphasis on one curricular area, reviewing MRX records will highlight the imbalance, and the teacher can adjust his/her lesson planning accordingly. MRX will also aide in identifying any areas of student weakness or strength as well. If an individual child shows significant gains in a particular area, it may be time for the teacher to present extended activities to further motivate and challenge the child. Similarly, if a child does not demonstrate sufficient progress in a particular area, the teacher can plan differentiated lessons and more individualized instruction to help that child succeed. Lastly, if there is a decrease of use reported in MRX for a given curricular area, the teacher may need to assess the variety and quality of materials presented in that area and make necessary changes/enhancements to the educational environment.

Overall, MRX will be utilized to store demographic information, record attendance, assist in planning and coordinating early interventions, recording and monitoring discipline and non-academic performance data, tracking students' individual socio-emotional development, and maintaining health records. This capacity is parallel to that of any SIS, and is better suited for academic progress reporting because of its alignment with the Montessori curriculum.

Should a SIF-compliant system be required for reporting purposes, we are open to discussing this option with Dave Raskin, founder of MRX, to see if it is something they would consider adding to their technology. If MRX cannot be made SIF-compliant, we will explore the option of purchasing a supplemental SIS - such as Power School - to be used for reporting purposes. We are confident that the MRX system will be best suited for SSMA, but recognize that an alternative system may be required and are open to adjusting our plans accordingly.

With regard to communication, teachers will use MRX (or an alternative SIS) to design and generate "report cards" for Parent-Teacher conferences. Report cards will be distributed four times a year. For the first three reporting periods, teachers will hold Parent/Teacher conferences to explain and discuss the child's progress with his/her parent(s). The final report card will be mailed home at the end of the school year. These reports will serve as a means for assessing student progress and following overall school success, and can be used for general reporting as well. As an internet-based system, all reports can be e-mailed as needed.

Presented	This score will be given when a child has received or observed the initial presentation for a material/concept. The child may repeat the activity once after the initial presentation, and will remain at this level until he/she has independently chosen to practice it again.
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Practicing	<p>This score will be given once a child has independently chosen to repeat an activity/lesson after his/her initial exposure. A child is "practicing" with every use of the material, as he/she refines the skills needed to complete the work masterfully and knowledgeably.</p> <p>Using the Montessori Records Express (MRX) data system, the teacher can enter the frequency with which a child uses each material. This will help to distinguish between a child who has chosen to repeat a lesson just a few times, and one who practices daily with the same task until it is mastered. This information can help the teacher recognize Sensitive Periods for each child, as well as identify potential areas of strength and weakness for her students.</p>
Mastered	<p>This score is given only after a child has demonstrated a solid knowledge of the underlying concept of a work and skillful completion of the task. A child who has "mastered" a lesson should be capable of presenting the concept to a peer.</p>

*Student progress will be recorded in MRX using the above-mentioned three-tiered grading rubric.

For the purposes of internet capabilities, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will use a T1 – or better – speed connection. The Academic Principal, with support from the Administrative Assistant, will be responsible for the oversight and communication of all MRX student data. MRX will be the Student Information System of choice used by The Academy. In accordance with the PCSB and DCPS, The Academy will implement a supplemental SIS if MRX does not meet the necessary requirements. Both MRX and any potential supplemental system will be used to maintain student attendance records, vital health information, emergency contacts and residency information. The Principal, with support from the Administrative Assistant, will be responsible for the collection and maintenance of student files.

c. Major Contracts Planned

Possible contracts of \$25,000 or greater value may include: food service, facilities rental agreement, etc. In determining the best relationships or contracts to engage in, The Academy founders will consult other charter schools, independent schools and other small businesses for their advice.

d. Orientation of Parents, Teachers and Other Community Members

Teacher and Staff Orientation

Orientation for the school's faculty and staff will take place during the summer prior to the school's opening and at various times throughout the school year. During a two or three week summer institute, the faculty and staff will participate in training and activities around early literacy, curriculum implementation, behavior management, classroom management, cultural empowerment and multiculturalism, and other areas necessary to ensure the faculty members are adequately prepared to provide an excellent Montessori learning environment with a focus on cultural empowerment.

Orientation of Parents and Other Community Members

The Academy considers parents and the surrounding community to be key components in ensuring that children's learning is fully supported. The Academy will dedicate tremendous energy and resources to providing necessary support for its families, and educating parents about the importance of the Montessori approach to early literacy and how the acquisition of early literacy skills leads to greater comprehension and a higher chance for success later in school. The Academy's Founding Group is keenly interested in creating a school where parents feel they are partners in the education of their child. Parental involvement will begin during the application process, when parents are educated about the school's mission, vision and educational program. Whether at an open house, an information forum, or during a one-on-one discussion with the school director, parents will consistently be reminded about the school's philosophy and their role in helping the school succeed, for Montessori teaching does not stop at school, but must continue throughout the day at home.

The same holds true for cultural empowerment – it must be an ongoing process in which all stakeholders are engaged. Once the academic year begins, the school will hold a "back to school night" early in the school year to educate parents about opportunities for greater involvement in roles that provide a positive impact on the school's Montessori operations. By educating parents a more comprehensive and meaningful involvement is more likely to be achieved, which will help in providing the best Montessori experience for the children.

The school will also provide orientation/information sessions which will be opportunities for engaging the surrounding community. The Academy will invite its neighbors to attend open houses, where anyone from the community can learn more about the Montessori Method and the importance of cultural empowerment. The teachers and staff will conduct several of these open houses by giving presentations in the Montessori model and in how The Academy blends Montessori with a cultural empowerment curriculum to motivate students to be self-aware social advocates. The Academy will also draw considerably from Howard University's vast educational resources and expertise in providing support and orientation to parents and to the local community. The Founding Group deeply believes that the more community involvement The Academy maintains, the more long-term success The Academy will achieve in providing the best educational experience for our students.

e. Services to be contracted from DCPS

The Academy will consider contracting with DCPS for the following services or as a service provider, as needed, for assessment and therapeutic services: School Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist.

Future Expansion and Improvements

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be a continually growing community of learners and, as such, there will be a sustained need to grow our facilities until we reach our intended goal of 150 children. As the students grow, so will the school so that we can accommodate the needs and demands of students in higher grades. We will achieve this in two phases of development.

Phase I

During Phase I, in our initial establishment year of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, and the following year (two years in duration) we expected to be housed at the building in Ward 1. Because of the unique quality of having multi-age classrooms, it is essential that we build our program mindfully and strategically. Our strategy is to enroll the majority of our children at age 3 with some 4 year olds (following the DC guidelines of completing the required age by September 30th of the year of enrollment) into the Primary Program and to continue to expand our program growing from the youngest age groups. Three year-olds will spend three years in this classroom, and four year-olds will possibly spend two years here, but may need to do three depending on the child's needs, before transitioning into the Elementary program. The Academy will open with two Primary Classrooms both with the capacity for 24-29 students (space will be reserved for a majority of three-year-olds, leaving 15-18 spaces total for entering four year-olds and 12-15 spaces for entering five year-olds) using a phase-in enrollment plan. Phase I will include two Primary classes, each consisting of Pre-School, Pre-K, and Kindergarten (ages 3-6).

Phase II

Maintaining our original site, Phase II will expand to another campus to accommodate a third Primary classroom and the new Elementary classroom, which will be set-up for First through Sixth grades (ages 6-12).¹ ** Please see Growth table below **

PHASE	I	I	II	II	II
Age	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Three	20	(+14)=14	(+40)=40	(+42)=42	(+47)=47
Four	19	(20-4)=16	(14-2)=12	(40-5)=35	(42-5)=37
Five	15	(19-3)=16	(16-2)=14	(12-1)=11	(35-3)=32
Six		(15-3)=12	(16-2)=14	(14-1)=13	(11-1)=10

¹ Please see the earlier Education Plan section regarding plans for developing the school to full enrollment (up to Sixth grade). In this section we outline in more detail the proposed growth of Shining Stars Montessori Academy.

**Please note that these figures do not show attrition of 10% per year but it is figured into the overall totals & addressed by 3 & 4 year olds being enrolled to offset that 10% attrition rate.

Seven			$(12-1)=11$	$(14-1)=13$	$(13-2)=11$
Eight				$(11-1)=10$	$(13-2)=11$
Nine					$(10-1)=9$
Totals	54	$(+14-10)=58$	$(+40-7)=91$	$(+42-9)=124$	$(+47-14)=157$

Growth and Maximum Enrollment

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be a continually growing community of learners. School growth will follow that of the students, in order to accommodate the needs and demands of students in higher grades. We will achieve this in two phases of development (see Growth Table at the beginning of this section).

Phase I comprises the initial enrollment year of Shining Stars Montessori Academy, and the following year (two years in duration). Because of the unique quality of having multi-age classrooms, it is essential that we build our program mindfully and strategically. In Phase I, the majority of the children will be accepted at age 3 with some 4 and 5 year olds (following the DC guidelines of completing the required age by September 30th of the year of enrollment) into the Primary Program. Three year-olds will spend three years in this classroom and four and five year-olds will spend a minimum of two years here, and possibly three, depending on the child's needs, before transitioning into the Elementary program. The Academy will open with two Primary Classrooms both with the capacity for 29 students (space will be reserved for a majority of three-year-olds, leaving 10-15 spaces total for entering four year-olds).

Phase II begins in year three of The Academy's establishment, and includes the opening of one Elementary classroom. Children who have finished their kindergarten year in the Primary classes will graduate to the Elementary class. This class will be comprised of 10-15 six year-olds in its first year (depending on retention rates), and will expand to include rising first-graders each year thereafter.

Children will be in the Elementary classroom for a period of 6 years. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will accept a new class of three-year-olds every year (and four year-olds will be accepted through the third year of operation). The number of slots available will be dependent on pre-existing class sizes, but will be no lower than 12 new slots per year. At full capacity, The Academy hopes to enroll a total of 150 children. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will accept a new class of three-year-olds every year. The number of slots available will be dependent on pre-existing class sizes, but will be no lower than 12 new slots per year.

Random Selection Process

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will be open to all students in the District of Columbia. For the initial two years of operation, The Academy will accept three, four, and five year-old students. In subsequent years, The Academy will admit three and four year old new students. All applicants to the Shining Stars Montessori Academy must provide proof of residency within the District of Columbia. The Academy will be free and open to all District residents, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, disability, special needs, religion, sexual orientation or family income. Students may withdraw from The Academy at will. If a child withdraws from The Academy, then the first child on the waiting list will fill the slot.

Non-resident students may apply and will be required to pay tuition, according to the appropriate rate as set forth by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). Non-resident students will be accepted at The Academy only in the case that there are insufficient resident applicants to fill the open enrollment slots.

During the planning year (Summer 2010 to Summer 2011), the Academy will conduct a program of intensive community outreach in an effort spread awareness of the proposed school, a campaign to be spearheaded by the Principal. Student applications will open in January 2011 and close April 2011. If necessary, a public lottery will be performed on May 1, 2011 and a waiting list established. Randomly drawn applicants will be immediately informed of their acceptance and given one month to confirm their enrollment in the fall. If a student declines, then we will begin contacting those on the waiting list. If there are sufficient and not extra applicants to fill the available slots, a lottery will not be necessary, and students will be notified of their acceptance after the application deadline. After the initial year of enrollment, previously enrolled students will be required to submit a re-enrollment form and up-to-date health forms by the "Application Deadline", in order to give Administrators an accurate idea of how many new slots will be available.

Below is a proposed timeline for registering and enrolling students (after the initial year of enrollment is completed):

School Year 2011 - 2012

Open Houses	<i>October 27th December 8th February 23rd April 12th</i>	Open Houses will be advertised to the general public, and will be open to all those interested in applying to The Academy.
Application Deadline	<i>April 27th</i>	All interested applicants must submit their completed application by this date to be entered into the enrollment lottery. (Late applications will only be accepted if there are insufficient applicants for the number of slots available.) Along with necessary emergency contact information, health forms, and immunization records, all students will be required to provide proof of D.C. residency.

Enrollment Lottery	<i>May 1st</i>	In the case that there are more applicants than slots available, Shining Stars Montessori Academy will hold a public lottery – to be conducted by an impartial member of the Board. The Board member will draw names until all of the open positions for admission are filled, at which point remaining names will be drawn and placed on the waiting list in sequential order.
Acceptance Notification	<i>May 4th</i>	All applicants granted enrollment, will be notified – in writing – by this date. Potential students' families will be informed of the registration deadline, and expected to complete remaining paperwork (health forms, etc.) by that date.
Registration Deadline	<i>June 1st</i>	All those wishing to enroll (after having received notice of acceptance) in the Academy will submit their letter of intent and completed application by this date. If The Academy does not receive the necessary documents by this date, the applicant will be denied immediate admission, and the waiting list/lottery will be activated. If/when more students apply then we can accept for enrollment, then their applications will go to a waitlist and when a position becomes open, the lottery system will determine who is selected for enrollment.

Policies and Procedures for Suspension, and Expulsion of Students

The comprehensive discipline policy regarding suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary actions includes the following elements:

- I. Preventative Positive Behavioral Model for Students
- II. Staff Guidelines for Observing, Reporting and Documenting Student Behavior
- III. Stair Step Discipline Strategy
- IV. Discipline Team Conferences
- V. Additional Actions
- VI. Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

Parents will be notified if there is concern significant enough to warrant extreme disciplinary action, and will be invited to a Disciplinary Hearing for their child. In addition, the Principal will convene with classroom teachers - when necessary - to decide what action best suits each situation. Possible consequences may include: written warning, intervention strategy planning, in-school suspension, suspension from school, or finally, expulsion from school. The Academy will follow requisite due process procedures in the event that suspension or expulsion is warranted, and the Board of Trustees will make all final decisions regarding expulsion after a Disciplinary Hearing has been held.

Shining Stars Montessori Academy will have a zero-tolerance policy regarding violence, drugs, and weapons of any kind (or the threat thereof). The Dean of Students will be notified immediately if there is any instance or suspicion of a violation. Parents of the offending child will be contacted immediately, and the Academy will take the necessary and appropriate disciplinary action to ensure the continued safety and well being of all students. In the event of a serious behavior violation, school action will include the following steps:

1) Discipline hearing

The child's teacher, his/her parents, the Dean of Students and any necessary specialists (if the child is currently receiving counseling services, for example) will convene to discuss the appropriate consequence(s).

Note: All instances of violence against another student or staff member will be taken very seriously and will result in an immediate in-house suspension, at minimum.

2) Decision

The Academic Head of School and Dean of Students will take into consideration the hearing's findings, and will determine and outline the appropriate consequence(s). *The Executive Director must approve expulsion decisions.*

3) Notification

Parents/guardians will be notified, in writing, of the school's decision.

4) Consequence/Referral

Disciplinary consequences may include (but are not limited to): additional academic assignments, in-house suspension, school suspension, and/or expulsion. In addition to the appropriate consequence, a determination will be made if the child needs additional support services. In this case, the Dean of Students will coordinate a referral for services for the family.

5) Follow-up

Staff will be responsible for completing a follow-up evaluation of the student's behavior once the child has fulfilled his/her consequence.

Shining Stars Montessori

2011-12 Budget

As of May 24, 2011

	2011-12	Percent of Total Revenue
REVENUE		

01. Per Pupil Charter Payments	\$704,158	51%
02. Per Pupil Facilities Allowance	\$159,570	11%
03. Federal Entitlements	\$281,499	20%
04. Other Government Funding/Grants	\$19,358	1%
Total Public Funding	\$1,164,585	83.7%
05. Private Grants and Donations	\$168,000	12.1%
06. Activity Fees	\$58,173	4.2%
07. Other Income	\$856	0.1%
Total Non-Public Funding	\$227,029	16.3%

TOTAL REVENUES

\$1,391,614

	2011-12	Percent of Total Revenue
ORDINARY EXPENSE		

Personnel Salaries and Benefits

08. Principal/Executive Salary	\$157,500	11.3%
09. Teachers Salaries	\$50,000	3.6%
10. Teacher Aides/Assistance Salaries	\$60,000	4.3%
11. Other Education Professionals Salaries	\$151,080	10.9%
12. Business/Operations Salaries	\$35,000	2.5%
13. Clerical Salaries	\$0	0.0%
14. Custodial Salaries	\$27,500	2.0%
15. Other Staff Salaries	\$0	0.0%
16. Employee Benefits	\$81,985	5.9%
17. Contracted Staff	\$30,000	2.2%

18. Staff Development Expense	\$23,760	1.7%
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Subtotal: Personnel Expenses

\$616,825

44.3%

Direct Student Expense

19. Textbooks	\$10,800	0.8%
20. Student Supplies and Materials	\$60,800	4.4%
21. Library and Media Center Material	\$5,400	0.4%
22. Student Assessment Materials	\$6,750	0.5%
23. Contracted Student Services	\$10,800	0.8%
24. Miscellaneous Student Expense	\$7,290	0.5%

Subtotal: Direct Student Expenses

\$101,840

7.3%

Occupancy Expenses

25. Rent	\$199,800	14.4%
26. Building Maintenance and Repair	\$4,245	0.3%
27. Utilities	\$7,076	0.5%
28. Janitorial Supplies	\$1,415	0.1%

	2011-12	Percent of Total Revenue
ORDINARY EXPENSE		

29. Contracted Building Services:	\$5,661	0.4%
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Subtotal: Occupancy Expense:	\$218,197	15.7%
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Office Expenses

30. Office Supplies and Materials:	\$5,400	0.4%
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31. Office Equipment Rental and Maintenance:	\$16,330	1.2%
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32. Telephone/Telecommunication	\$5,400	0.4%
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33. Legal, Accounting and Payroll Services	\$68,578	4.9%
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34. Printing and Copying	\$2,430	0.2%
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35. Postage and Shipping	\$1,350	0.1%
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36. Other Office Expense	\$0	0.0%
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Subtotal: Office Expenses:	\$99,488	7.1%
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General Expenses

37. Insurance	\$11,880	0.9%
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38. Transportation	\$10,800	0.8%
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39. Food Service	\$44,824	3.2%
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40. Administration Fee (to PCSB)	\$4,319	0.3%
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41. Management Fee	\$0	0.0%
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42. Other General Expense	\$16,766	1.2%
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Subtotal: General Expenses:	\$88,589	6.4%
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TOTAL ORDINARY EXPENSES:	\$1,124,938	80.8%
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NET ORDINARY INCOME	\$266,676	19.2%
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43. Depreciation Expense	\$9,654	0.7%
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44. Interest Expense	\$0	0.0%
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NET INCOME	\$257,022	18.5%
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CAPITAL BUDGET

Computers and Materials:	\$11,988	0.9%
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Classroom Furnishings and Supplies:	\$9,639	0.7%
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Office Furnishings and Equipment	\$29,639	2.1%
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Renovation/Leasehold Improvement	\$1,415	0.1%
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TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET:	\$52,681	3.8%
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ASSUMPTIONS

Student Enrollment	54
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Average Teacher Salary	\$50,000
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Average Class Size	27.0
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Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS
Key Personnel

Staff

Executive Director: Dana Clark

Principal: Rhonda Sabater

Programs Coordinator: Katherine Avery

Board Members

Jameela Alter

Allison Brown

Aldel Brown, Secretary

Nicholas Murphy

Jonathan Stith, Treasurer

Malcolm Woodland, Chair

Tricia Pitter

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS



C E R T I F I C A T E

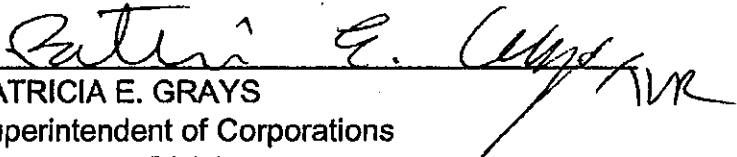
THIS IS TO CERTIFY that all applicable provisions of the District of Columbia NonProfit Corporation Act have been complied with and accordingly, this **CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION** is hereby issued to:

SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of this office to be affixed as of the **9th** day of **July, 2010**.

LINDA K. ARGO
Director

Business and Professional Licensing Administration


PATRICIA E. GRAYS
Superintendent of Corporations
Corporations Division

Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
SHINING STARS MONTESSORI ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

We, the undersigned natural persons of the age of eighteen years or more, acting as incorporators of a corporation under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act (D.C. Code, 2001 edition, Title 29, Chapter 3) (the "Act"), adopt the following Articles of Incorporation:

FIRST: The name of the corporation is "Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School" (the "Corporation").

SECOND: The period of duration of the Corporation is perpetual.

THIRD: The Corporation is organized, and shall be administered and operated, exclusively to receive, administer, and expend funds for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code (the "Code"), for the sole purpose of operating a District of Columbia public charter school. In order to accomplish the foregoing educational purposes the Corporation shall have the power to conduct any and all activities and exercise all rights and powers that are lawful for a nonprofit corporation formed under the laws of the District of Columbia that is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

FOURTH: The Corporation shall have no members.

FIFTH: No part of the net income of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its directors, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services actually rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes and objects set forth in Article Third hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions set forth in these Articles of Incorporation, at any time during which it is deemed a private foundation as defined in Section 509(a) of the Code, the Corporation shall not engage in any act of self-dealing as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Code; the Corporation shall distribute its income for each taxable year at such time and in such manner as not to become subject to the tax on undistributed income imposed by Section 4942 of the Code; the Corporation shall not own any excess business holdings that would subject it to tax under Section 4943 of the Code; the Corporation shall not make any investments in such manner as to subject it to the tax imposed by Section 4944 of the Code; and the Corporation shall not make taxable expenditures as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Code. Any reference in these Articles of Incorporation to any section of the Code shall be deemed to incorporate by reference the corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws.

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7-9-10

SIXTH: The affairs of the Corporation shall be carried on through the Board of Directors of the Corporation (the "Board of Directors"); the manner of their election or appointment, other than the initial Board of Directors provided for herein, shall be as provided in the bylaws of the Corporation, as amended from time to time (the "Bylaws"). In furtherance and not in limitation of the powers conferred by statute, the Corporation is expressly authorized to carry on its business and to hold annual or special meetings of its Board of Directors either within or outside of any of the states, territories or possessions of the United States, or the District of Columbia.

SEVENTH: Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles of Incorporation, the Corporation shall not conduct or carry on any activities not permitted to be conducted or carried on by an organization exempt from tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or by an organization contributions to which are to be deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code.

EIGHTH: Upon the dissolution of the Corporation or the winding up of its affairs, the assets of the Corporation shall be distributed exclusively for charitable or educational purposes or to organizations which are then exempt from federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, and to which contributions are then deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code; provided, that any assets of the Corporation to be distributed pursuant to a plan of distribution under Section 29-301.48(3) of the Act shall be transferred to the State Education Office of the District of Columbia, to be controlled by the Office of Education Facilities and Partnerships and used solely for educational purposes, pursuant to Section 38-1802.13a(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Code.

NINTH: The address of the initial registered office is 1761 U Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. The name of the initial registered agent at such address is Katherine Avery.

TENTH: The Corporation reserves the right to amend, change or repeal any provision contained in these Articles of Incorporation or to merge or consolidate the Corporation with any other nonprofit corporation in the manner now or hereafter prescribed by statute; provided, however, that any such action shall be undertaken exclusively to carry out the objects and purposes for which the Corporation is formed, and all rights herein conferred or granted shall be subject to this reservation.

ELEVENTH: The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors is seven (7), but the number of directors may be increased or decreased in the manner set forth in the Bylaws, provided that the number of directors shall be an odd number not less than three (3) nor more than fifteen (15). The names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as the initial directors of the Corporation until the first annual meeting or until their successors are duly elected are as follows:

Aldel Brown, 601 Fairmont Street N.W. #113a, Washington, D.C. 20059

Allison R. Brown, 2400 33rd Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20020

Dan Hall, 1328 Ingraham Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009

Nicholas Murphy, 1000 New Jersey Avenue S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

Tricia Pitter, 6431 Old Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20785

Ayize Sabater, 9707 Braddock Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903

Malcolm Woodland, 2218 Chester Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20020

TWELFTH: The name and address of each incorporator is as follows:

Ayize Sabater, 9707 Braddock Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903

Tricia Pitter, 6431 Old Landover Road, Hyattsville, MD 20785

Katherine Avery, 1761 U Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009

THIRTEENTH: Except as required by law, the directors and officers of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the Corporation. All persons, corporations or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claim against, the Corporation, may look only to the funds and property of the Corporation for the payment of any such contract or claim, or for the payment of any debt, damages, judgment or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the Corporation.

The Corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify each of its present and former directors, officers, employees and agents and any persons who serve or have served at the Corporation's request as a director, officer, employee or agent of another organization or in a capacity with respect to any employee benefit plan (and the heirs, executors, and administrators of the foregoing) (the "Agent") against all expenses and liabilities which he or she has reasonably incurred in connection with or arising out of any actual or threatened action, suit or proceeding in which he or she may be involved by reason of his or her being or having been an Agent, such expenses and liability to include, but not be limited to, judgments, court costs, attorney fees, the cost of reasonable settlements, and penalties imposed under Section 4958 of the Code.

Indemnification will be provided if a settlement or compromise is determined by the directors and counsel to the Corporation to be in the best interest of the Corporation and that such Agent appears to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that his or her action was in the best interests of the Corporation or an employee benefit plan, as the case may be. A majority of disinterested directors must have adopted a vote approving such settlement or compromise for indemnification to be effective in this situation. Any person seeking indemnification under this Article Thirteenth shall not vote on the adoption of such vote. If there are not disinterested directors, a settlement or compromise may be approved for indemnification by the president of the Corporation based upon a written opinion by independent counsel that the conditions for the indemnification have been met.

No indemnification, reimbursement or other payment may be made under this Article with respect to penalties imposed under Section 4958 of the Code, to the extent such indemnification, reimbursement or other payment would cause the compensation of an Agent to exceed "reasonable compensation," as defined in the Treasury Regulations to the Code and as determined by the Board of Directors. To the extent that any such payment is made, the amount of such payment may be reduced by any amount determined to exceed reasonable compensation. Any such reduction shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have executed these Articles of Incorporation, acknowledging the same to be our acts as of the latest of the dates set forth below opposite our signatures.

Incorporator Signature: Ayize Sabater

Date:

7/9/10
Printed Name: Ayize Sabater

State of / District of Columbia:

The undersigned, a Notary Public in and for District of Columbia, does hereby certify that on this 9 day of July, 2010, personally appeared before me Ayize Sabater who, being by me first duly sworn, declared that he/she signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation as an incorporator of the proposed corporation named therein, and that the statements contains therein are true.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on the date aforesaid.

Blanca M. Clayton

Notary Public

My commission expires: 4-30-2012

Incorporator Signature: [Signature]

Date: 7/9/2010

Printed Name: Tricia Pitter

State of / District of Columbia:

The undersigned, a Notary Public in and for District of Columbia does hereby certify that on this 9 day of July, 2010, personally appeared before me Tricia Pitter who, being by me first duly sworn, declared that he/she signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation as an incorporator of the proposed corporation named therein, and that the statements contains therein are true.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on the date aforesaid.

Blanca McClayton

Notary Public

My commission expires: 4-30-2012

Incorporator Signature: [Signature]

Date: 7/9/2010

Printed Name: Katherine Avery

State of / District of Columbia:

The undersigned, a Notary Public in and for District of Columbia does hereby certify that on this 9 day of July, 2010, personally appeared before me Katherine Avery who, being by me first duly sworn, declared that he/she signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation as an incorporator of the proposed corporation named therein, and that the statements contains therein are true.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on the date aforesaid.

Blanca McClayton

Notary Public

My commission expires: 4-30-2012

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7-9-10

Reset Form

Print Form

DCRA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & REGULATORY AFFAIRS

District of Columbia Government**Corporations Division**

PO Box 92300

Washington DC 20090

RA-1. Registered Agent Written Consent

Use this form to appoint a Registered Agent for an entity. Choose Option A or B, but not both. There is no filing fee for this form.

Under DC Official Code (DCOC) Titles 29 and 41, a Registered Agent (RA) must be:

1- A bona fide resident of the District of Columbia (DC),

OR

2- A for-profit corporation, authorized to conduct business in the District by the virtue of certificate of incorporation or certificate of authority,

OR

3 - Another non-profit corporation, authorized to conduct business in the District by the virtue of certificate of incorporation / authority.

Entities may not act as their own RAs.

Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) and Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) and Limited Partnerships (LPs) may not act as RAs.

Registered Agent Address may never be outside the District of Columbia. Address must be physical street address, never a PO Box.**A. By a District Of Columbia resident:** I, a bona fide District resident, consent to act as a RA for the entity below.

Name of Resident

Address of Resident

Katherine Avery

1761 U Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009

Entity Name

Signature

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School

**B. By a legally authorized corporation:** The authorized corporate Registered Agent in the District, by the signatures of its President/Vice-President and Secretary/Assistant Secretary, agrees to act as RA for the entity below.

Name of RA Corporation

Address

Entity Name

☐ President☐

Vice-President

Signature

☐ Secretary☐

Assistant Secretary

Signature

If you sign this form, you agree that you understand that anyone who makes a false statement anywhere on it can be punished by criminal penalties of a fine up to \$1000, imprisonment up to 180 days, or both, under DCOC § 22-2405.

Mail all forms and required payment to:Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Corporations Division
PO Box 92300
Washington, DC 20090
Phone: (202) 442-4400**For overnight delivery send to:**Corporate Bank of America
Attention: DC Government
Wholesale Box 92300
Washington, DC 20090
7-9-10Please check dcra.dc.gov to view organizations required to register, to search business names, to get step-by-step guidelines to register an organization, to search registered organizations, and to download forms and documents. Just click on "Corporate Registrations."

BYLAWS OF
The Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School
A Not-for-Profit Corporation

ARTICLE I
ORGANIZATION

1. Name. The name of the organization shall be Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. It is hereinafter referred to in these Bylaws as the Organization. The Organization may at its pleasure by a vote of the membership body change its name.
2. Seal. The Board of Directors shall provide a corporate seal that shall be in a form selected by a resolution of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. General Powers. The property, affairs, and business of the Organization shall be managed and controlled by its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may by general resolution delegate to officers of the Organization and to committees such power as provided for in these Bylaws.
2. Number. The Board of Directors shall serve without pay and consist of an odd number of members, no less than seven (7) and no more than eleven (11) members.
3. Parent Members. The Board of Directors shall include two (2) individual parents of students who attend Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. The Shining Stars Parent Association shall, by vote, recommend parent members to the Board of Directors.
4. Terms. Board members shall serve a term of four years. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio member of the Board for the duration of his/her employment as Executive Director.
5. Resignation. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President of the Board. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or, if no time is specified, at the time of acceptance thereof as determined by the President or Board of Directors.
6. Removal. The vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall be required to remove a Director from office prior to the expiration of the term for which that Director has been elected.
7. Vacancies. Vacancies shall be filled by the Board, with the recommendation of the Executive Director.
8. Meetings. The Board shall meet on a quarterly basis, and the President of the Board or a majority of the voting members of the Board may call Special Meetings as necessary to fulfill Board responsibilities.
9. Quorum. The presence in person or by phone of two-fifths of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board. If less than a majority of the Board of Directors is present in person at any meeting of the Board, a majority of the Board members present may adjourn the meeting to a later date.
10. Manner of Acting. The act of a majority of the Board of Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by law or by these Bylaws. Any action required by law to be taken at a meeting of

the Board, or any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Board, may be taken without a meeting if consent is given by a majority vote of the Board.

ARTICLE III OFFICERS

1. Officers. The officers of the Board shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected by majority vote of the Board.
2. Terms. Elected officers shall serve a term of one year.
3. Duties. The President shall preside at all Board meetings, appoint committee members, and perform other duties as associated with the office. The Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President in case of the President's absence and shall perform all other duties as associated with the office of Vice-President or as assigned by the President. The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the Board, keep all approved minutes in a minute book, send out copies of minutes to all, and perform all other duties as associated with the office of Secretary. The Treasurer shall keep record of the Organization's budget, prepare financial reports as needed, initiate and assist with the annual audit, and perform all other duties as associated with the office of Treasurer. The Treasurer also shall serve on the Finance Committee of the Board.

ARTICLE IV COMMITTEES

1. The following committees shall be formed by the Board of Directors:
 - a. Executive Committee – comprised of all Officers of the Board.
 - b. Finance Committee – to conduct financial oversight of the Organization.
 - c. Funds Development Committee – to raise additional funds for the Organization.
2. By a majority vote, the Board of Directors may appoint such other standing and ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

ARTICLE V FISCAL POLICIES

1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the board shall be October 1 to September 30.
2. Contracts. The Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent, or agents of the Organization in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Organization and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.
3. Checks. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Organization, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent, or agents of the Organization and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the President or Vice President of the Organization.

4. Deposits. All funds of the Organization shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Organization in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.
5. Funds. The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the Organization any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Organization.
6. Books and Records. The Organization shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI INDEMNIFICATION

Any present or former member of the Board of Directors, officer, or employee of the Organization, or other such persons so designated in the discretion of the Board of Directors, or the legal representative of such person, shall be indemnified by the Organization against all reasonable costs, expenses, and fees paid or incurred in connection with any action, suit, or proceeding to which any such person or his legal representative may be made a party by reason of his being or having been such a Director, officer, or employee serving or having served the Organization. There shall be no indemnification in matters as to which the Director, officer, or employee is found, by a court of laws or other tribunal, guilty of misconduct or liable for negligence or other tortious conduct in respect of the matters in which indemnity is sought; nor shall there be indemnification in matters settled or otherwise terminated without a final determination on the merits where such settlement or termination is predicated on the existence of such misconduct or negligence.

ARTICLE VII PROCEDURE

The rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall provide the rules of procedure for the Organization where they are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws or Board proceedings.

ARTICLE VIII DISSOLUTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School shall dissolve if the charter for the charter school has been revoked, has not been renewed, or has been voluntarily relinquished; and

Any assets to be distributed pursuant to a plan of distribution under § 29-301.48(3) shall be transferred to the State Education Office of the District of Columbia, to be controlled by the Office of Education Facilities and Partnerships and used solely for educational purposes.

ARTICLE IX
AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed and replaced with new Bylaws by a two-thirds vote of the member of the Board of Directors present at any meeting, provided a quorum is present and provided a copy of the proposed amendment(s) are provided to each Board member at least seven (1) days prior to said meeting.