Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request

Charterholder Info

Charter Holder

Name:
Camino Montessori

CTDS:
07-82-11-000

Mailing Address:
2118 East La Donna Drive
Tempe, AZ 85283
View detailed info

Representative

Name:
Judith Webster

Phone Number:
480-295-2806

Downloads

Download all files

Current Grade Levels

Current Grade Levels Served

- Kindergarten
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade

New Grade Levels

For each grade level being added, provide the following as a representation of a program of instruction aligned to the State's approved academic standards and to methods of instruction described in the charter. Please note that a separate upload must be prepared for each grade level and content area and be named as such. Additionally, applicants must restate the name of the file in the Brief Description box (e.g., First Grade Reading, HS Alegebra II).

For K-8
Language Arts & Math: A completed curriculum sample for reading, writing, and math for each grade level being added including all attachments as outlined on the required template and instructions.

For 9-12
Language Arts & Math: A completed curriculum sample for reading, writing, and math coursework for each grade level being added including all attachments as outlined on the required template and instructions. Each course must align with the State's graduation requirements.

Add Grade Levels

3rd
4th

Curriculum Samples

Download File — 3rd grade ELA curriculum sample
Download File — 4th grade ELA curriculum sample
Download File — 3rd grade MATH curriculum sample
Download File — 4th grade MATH curriculum Sample
Download File — DSP-Required Information

Effective Date
08/10/2015

Attachments

Board Minutes — Download File

Narrative — Download File

Timeline for implementation — Download File

Additional Information
No documents were uploaded.

Signature

Charter Representative Signature
Judith Webster 02/25/2015

Minutes

Camino Montessori Board of Directors

Board Meeting

Tuesday Dec 16, 2014 @ 6:15 PM

Board Members Present
J. Webster, K. Webster, M. Mulligan

Board Members Absent
K. Perkins, V. Slife

I. Opening Items

Call the Meeting to Order
M. Mulligan called a meeting of the board of trustees of Camino Montessori Board of Directors to order on Tuesday Dec 16, 2014 @ 6:36 PM.

Read & Review Mission Statement

Approve Minutes
K. Webster made a motion to approve minutes from the Board Meeting on 09-23-14.
M. Mulligan seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Consent Agenda

Financial Report
M. Mulligan made a motion to accept & approve the consent agenda items as presented.
K. Webster seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

A-P & Payroll Vouchers Review & Signatures
M. Mulligan made a motion to accept & approve the consent agenda items as presented.
K. Webster seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Finance

Annual Audit Submitted
Reviewed & board agreed to invite Holcomb & Shreeve to January's meeting as part of board's ongoing prof. devel.

School Tax Credit 2014
Judy to provide ECA account update at January, 2015 meeting.

IV. Governance

Task Force-Board Member Orientation-update
Tabled for 1/2015 meeting.

Board Job Descriptions-Distribute & Acknowledge/Sign
Tabled for 1/2015 meeting.

Expansion of the Board of Directors
Agreed to aggressively pursue 1-2 new board members. Agreed to discuss forming 1-3 committees based on

priority. Will further discuss at January meeting.

V. Academic & Student Achievement

PMP
Reviewed PMP with board members. Have begun to implement with teachers, while waiting for feedback/rating from Charter Board (which should be in January).

VI. Facility

Possible new location for the school - Letter of Intent
M. Mulligan made a motion to move forward with providing a Letter of Intent for possible lease/purchase with Robby Richards regarding property located at the SW corner of Honeycutt & White-Parker Roads in Maricopa.
K. Webster seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VII. School & Program Development

Camino Expansion and Growth
M. Mulligan made a motion to authorize Judy to submit amendment requests to the AZ School Board for Charter Schools to add 3rd-4th grades and increase our current enrollment cap of 65 to 100 for the 2015-2016 school year.
K. Webster seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
Item to be added to future agendas to ensure continued review and updates for the board.

VIII. CEO Support And Eval

Begin Process for CEO Eval using High Bar automated system
Marianne & Kevin are moving forward with the CEO evaluation.

IX. Other Business

Bonus for School Director
Tabled for future discussion.

X. Closing Items

Call to Public
No public in attendance.

Adjourn Meeting
Next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20th, 2015 at 6:15pm. To be held at Camino.
M. Mulligan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
J. Webster seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 08:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Mulligan

Adding Grade Levels-Narrative
CAMINO MONTESSORI

Narrative* – <u>The following narrative requirements supersede the requirements listed in the upload area of the ASBCS Online system</u> for the *Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request*. Provide a narrative that responds to the prompts listed below:

Camino Montessori (CM) was created to offer an alternative to mainstream education for children preschool aged through their elementary years (6th grade). CM was established as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in November, 2009. We signed our Charter Contract in January, 2013, and were awarded the AZ CSP Grant in March, 2013. CM successfully opened its doors in August, 2013 to 40 Kinder-2nd grade students & currently serves 54 K-2nd graders. Since our opening, we have gained strong parent support & continue to develop a stronger sense of community—CM's children are currently able to thrive in all areas of their development.

1) **Describe the rationale for the increase in grade levels served.**
Our most important objective is to providing a Montessori based education to the children who began this journey with us last year. We currently have sixteen 2nd graders re-enrolled for 3rd grade, should we be granted the request to add 3rd grade. The request for 4th grade is to allow the potential 3rd graders the opportunity to continue by moving up into the next multi-age grouping that begins with 4th grade.

Adding 3rd-4th grades will further strengthen the authenticity of our program. The 3rd grade is the 3rd cycle year in the lower elementary program, and it is important to give our 2nd graders, and the younger students moving up in subsequent years, the opportunity to complete the full 6-9 year old curricular cycle.

Adding the requested grade levels will also allow us to continue competing in the current marketplace, as well strengthen our efforts for long term sustainability. We have lost several students and siblings during the current school year because parents were anxious about where their children would go next year.

2) **How do the additional grades support the mission, educational philosophy, and methods of instruction?**
<u>Philosophy</u>*:*
We believe that all children "self construct" if given the right support & environment, and that the Montessori framework provides optimal benefits to children in their elementary years. We believe that providing an early childhood foundation to our program will maximize student learning outcomes as children progress through grade 6 in our expanded program. We believe all children benefit from a 'child-centered' approach where children are expected to actively participate in their learning. When our elementary program spans all 6 years we will be able to offer all children the support to become life-long learners and problem solvers. We believe that each child needs time to unfold & develop.
<u>Methods of instruction</u>*:*
The methods of instruction for the added levels are as outlined in our original charter application. The Montessori curriculum is designed for the full elementary span of 1st-6th grade students. Montessori methods are tailored to meet the needs of multi-age communities comprised of 1st-3rd grade (Elementary I) and 4th-6th grade (Elementary II). Within these environments Montessori-trained teachers meet each child where they are, and build on their strengths & interests through 'personalized' individual and small group instruction. Students are provided "hands on", discovery,

inquiry-based opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. They are provided concrete structures and models to illustrate abstract ideas and concepts they need to learn. There is a high emphasis placed on processes, patterns, precision and quality. Children work with concrete materials for however long they need, and move to abstraction when they are ready. In this way, knowledge and learning are obtained at a much deeper level.

Special emphasis*:*

Camino Montessori is guided by its Montessori practice at all levels of operation—a "whole school" management approach. Our vision is to create a traditional Montessori-based elementary program to maximize the educational benefit for children in this stage of development. We believe our existing program meets needs of students & families exceptionally well, considering are in our second year of operation. Our approach is one child at a time, and always with primary focus on what's best for the child, not what's easiest for the adults or system.

Mission*:*

Adding additional grades to complete our elementary program continues to support our whole vision of Camino Montessori—We continue to provide "A Preparation for life", one child at a time.

Adding additional grades and enrollment allows us to continue *building a high quality authentic Montessori school* education program for the City of Maricopa & the surrounding area. Completing the lower elementary level supports higher quality and greater level of authenticity.

By adding additional grade levels we can continue to *empower each child to realize their fullest potential* through active, reflective and creative education throughout their elementary years.

All children will benefit as we continue to *foster a love for learning* through all of our *active partnerships* involving students, parents, staff, and our local community.

We continue to model *embracing our diversity and unique talents* within a safe, challenging, respectful and *supportive environment* designed for the full elementary level (1st-6th grades). When humans feel safe, have some choice & control, are interested in the topic/work, and have some movement within their day, they are motivated to learn. We will continue to meet each child where they are, striving to build upon their interests and strengths.

By adding grade levels and completing our elementary program, we are better able to achieve our long term objective of a fully actualized adult. Camino will continue to *recognize that personal growth involves responsibility* toward oneself, others and the earth. And that with our educational model each child moves closer to becoming a self-determined, self-motivated and contributing adult member of our *global community*.

How does the implementation of the existing program of instruction meet the needs of students at the grade levels being added?

Camino Montessori adheres to the developmental continuum as prescribed by Dr. Montessori in her description of the *"Four Planes of Development"*. As described in our charter application, our elementary curriculum is designed for children within their "second plane", or stage, of development, which comprises ages 6-12 years (1st-6th grade). Our vision for the next three-four years is to meet the needs of our current students, and all new students by establishing the complete continuum of Montessori preschool through the elementary level.

We still anticipate that during the next several years of operation, we will continue growth and stabilize our *Elementary I* (1st-3rd grade) and Elementary II levels/programs. Next year we will adding a pre-school level to provide the traditional 3 year age grouping for Kindergarten. By adding

pre-school and growing our preschool-Kinder program, we ensure stronger enrollment for elementary levels.

3) **(adding any grades K-8 only) Describe the level of proficiency that students must obtain to demonstrate mastery of academic core content and clear criteria for promotion from one level to the next.**

Camino Montessori believes in building a strong foundation for success in the early years of school. Classrooms are multi-age communities where students have the same teacher for several years (typically 3 years). The teacher truly gets to know each child, and forms a strong bond with the parents.

In Montessori education there are three critical transition periods where it is necessary to evaluate the readiness for a child to advance to the next level; at the end of the Kindergarten year, the end of *Elementary I* (typically 3rd grade), and, finally, the end of *Elementary II* (typically 6th grade). Prior to these transitions, our holistic evaluation process occurs continually throughout each day, week, and culminates at the end of each academic year. Since we are publically funded we include all State mandated assessment requirements in this process--currently:

Annual State mandated assessments
Benchmark & screening assessments—minimally 3 times per year
Annual Course Credits & grades as prescribed by ADE
3rd grade Reading (MOWR) requirements—when evaluating whether to promote students from 3rd grade to 4th grade (Elementary II).

Montessori methodology easily accommodates use of *differentiation methods* for each student's learning style. CM's curriculum accommodates a full spectrum of learners due to its rich curriculum which is specifically designed to respond to the "natural interests and tendencies" of children at this stage of development. Accommodation to individual needs (a 'personalized' approach) is an inherent asset of our methodology. We expect our students to progress through each level by completing the Montessori curriculum appropriate for their age, and to master core academic skills as outlined in State CCRS Standards.

Promotion and retention practices for added levels, and all students, will continue as outlined & defined in our charter application. When considering promotion, the child's social and emotional growth are equally considered with academic progress. Retention is an action that may be taken to assist a child to become successful in their learning. At all levels, early intervention is critical for maximizing the positive outcomes needed for every child to succeed.

As stated in our charter application, *students will be identified for promotion or retention* on the basis of:

- Academic achievement and summative progress data
- Current Minimum Expectations for Promotion to the Next Grade/Level
- Completes at least 80% of Camino Montessori curriculum for appropriate grade level at 80% mastery
- Meets current Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) *Level of Academic Performance standards* set for State math and reading.
- Physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations & assessment data
- Special needs considerations
- Other important information or data provided by parents, guardians, teachers, and other outside resources.

The *demonstration of individual student learning* will be measured by, but not limited to, the following:

- Montessori-based assessments in core curricular areas (e.g., Montessori-specific curricular products and assessment tools).
- Minimum expectation: Completes at least 80% of Camino Montessori curriculum at the appropriate grade level at 80% mastery as indicated by records & data generated by web-based student information system (currently, Montessori Compass).

- Teacher/Classroom-based student assessments and observations in reading, language arts, and math--grade level placement scores at least a year above/below expectations.
- Scientifically based diagnostic screening and assessments in math and reading. Currently using STAR Early Literacy benchmark & screening assessment for Kinder-2nd grade. Assesses all areas of early literacy and numeracy skills. This year we added STAR Reading and STAR Math to ensure more effective assessment for students moving up to higher grades.
- Applicable State mandated assessment results (AZMerit)—established benchmark expectations as defined by the ASBCS and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

The meeting of intervention goals/objectives as determined by the Student Support Team (SST) and/or the student's IEP.

4) **NOT APPLICABLE** (adding any grades 9-12 only) Describe course offerings, the process and criteria for awarding course credit, the policy on acceptance of transfer credit, and graduation requirements that identify number of credits in each content area and electives consistent with State requirements.

5) **What changes in staffing will be needed to implement the new grades, and how will they comply with the Highly Qualified federal guidelines?**

Staffing changes are minimal for the upcoming 2015-16 school year. We currently have one Montessori-trained Highly Qualified teacher and will hire an additional Montessori elementary teacher.

For the following 2016-17 school year we will plan to promote one of our Assistant Teachers (currently completing her Montessori elementary teacher training requirements) to a lead teaching position. This will provide the necessary 2 teachers for two 1st-3rd grade classrooms, and one teacher for a 3rd-4th grade transition classroom. We will also need to hire two new Assistant Teachers at this time to ensure our desired 1:15 teacher to student ratio.

All teachers hired are required to meet the Highly Qualified federal guidelines.

Adding Grade Levels-Timeline
CAMINO MONTESSORI

Timeline for Implementation*– Describe the timeline for implementing the grade(s) requested, including the number of students served per grade per year, and, including whether the *Adding Grade Levels to Charter Amendment Request* will be submitted in conjunction with any other amendment or notification requests which would warrant concurrent consideration.

2015-2016: 3rd grade implemented with 14 currently enrolled 2nd graders targeted to move up to 3rd grade, if approved.

2016-2017: Implement 4th grade to create the first upper elementary multi-age classroom. Our plan create a new classroom by combining 12-14 third graders targeted to move up to 4th grade with 14-16 second graders targeted to move up to 3rd for a total of 26-30 students.

Although we are currently pursuing several viable options for a new site with more space, we are currently limited to grow much larger due to the limited capacity of our current site. Our current space and enrollment cap of 65 will accommodate our grade level growth plans for next year, however we plan to submit amendment requests to add 5th-6th grades, and increase our enrollment cap early in the 2016-2017 year.