Patagonia Montessori Elementary School, Inc.

500 N. 3rd Ave. ◆ PO Box 628 ◆ Patagonia, AZ 85624 ◆ (520)394-9530 ◆ fax (520)394-2864 ◆ www.patagoniamontessori.org

Response to Financial Framework Renewal

Patagonia Montessori was founded by a group of parents and educators who believed that even in a small, rural community, families deserve the right to have a choice when it comes to education. Our school is based on the philosophy of Maria Montessori. We offer small, mixed age classes, equipped with hands on manipulatives that the children can use to discover abstract concepts through concrete means. We offer an environment that fosters mutual respect and a lifelong love of learning.

In the past, we have filled our classrooms from the children in our immediate community. However, the number of school aged children in our area has declined. This has inspired us to bring Montessori education to our neighboring communities.

In order to address our decline in enrollment, we have decided to take the following actions.

Kinder Plans

In order to build a sustainable student base, we decided to first target kindergarteners. We have a great retention rate, and having more kindergarteners will ensure growth for our elementary classrooms. Our Kinder Plans include:

- In February, we met with the director of the Nogales Head Start Center. Although they are not Montessori, they follow much of the principles, such as mixed age classes, beautiful work made from natural materials, and the ability for the child to choose their work. For these reasons, we felt the parents would be open to a Montessori education for their child.

  They have between 40 and 50 children who will be ready for Kindergarten next year. We distributed pamphlet about the benefits of a Montessori education and flyers announcing our open house at the end of March.

- We have partnered with the Patagonia Family Resource Center to educate parents on various childrearing topics. Our first collaboration is to present a workshop on Positive Discipline. This workshop is on March 31.

Building the Middle School

We have a very unique Middle School Program based on the Montessori philosophy. Even though middle school students will only be at the school two years, we feel that targeting families with Montessori experience will help build our middle school program. Our efforts on the middle school front include:

- We are planning on partnering with Tubac Montessori, targeting the 6th graders graduating. Tubac only accommodates students up to 6th grade. We can provide a middle school Montessori education to families wishing to continue their Montessori education.

Overall Charter School Student Recruitment

Our overall efforts to obtain more students will focus on Nogales as a recruitment area. However, we will be working on making sure current families as well as new Patagonia residents know about our school and what we have to offer. Some of our recruitment ideas include:

- In order to obtain students from Nogales, we are planning on putting up signs about our school as well as setting up information booths outside of businesses.
- In Patagonia, we are currently trying to have a greater presence in town. We have flyers on the bulletin boards and have a window box at the post office to advertise our programs and events.
- Because we have a fantastic Creative Strings program, we are having a concert on April 22 at the Tin Shed Theater in town. This will give exposure to our school as well as our violin, mandolin, and guitar program.

All of these actions will increase enrollment and, in turn, the school's financial viability. Next year we are anticipating enrolling 15-20 new students.

Our school fills a need in our community. We have an amazing staff dedicated to providing the very best Montessori education to children in southern Arizona. We have a student body not only excelling academically, but excited about learning. We look forward to serving the families in our area for many years to come.

Jessi Beebe

Executive Director/Charter Representative

Jessi Beebe

MISSION STATEMENT: We believe education is a drawing forth of the child's innate being. In a structured and nurturing environment, we provide tools for successful living and learning: respect, responsibility, confidence, discovery and joy.