MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL OF FLAGSTAFF, INC.
an Arizona Subchapter S Corporation

Succession Plan

A. Corporate Board of Directors and Officers

The succession plan for the charter holder is included in the by-laws of the corporation. Article III Section 4 covers the directors. Article V Section 5 covers the officers. In both cases the ultimate authority for replacing either directors or officers rests with the shareholders of the corporation. At present, the shareholders of the corporation are both the directors and the officers. As a for-profit closely held corporation, in the case of the death of both shareholders, their estate plan transfers ownership of the corporation to their heirs, both of whom are college educated adults (Business Administration and Economics majors) who are familiar with the remaining Governing Board members of the school and all of the school's administrators. The heirs have been given instructions in the unlikely event of the death of both shareholders/ directors/officers to rely on the expertise of the Governing Board members and the advice of the senior administrators to insure the continued viability of the school.

B. Instructional Leadership Team of the School

Career Course - MCSF does not fit the traditional model of a school with a well developed career ladder for its staff members. First, it is relatively small with limited positions. Second, the staff is composed of specialists, most of whom have no desire to move into another position requiring different skills. Third, a superior Montessori certified teacher, for example, may not possess the skill set to serve as an administrator, and vice versa (in our experience this has been the case). Fourth, members of the staff of MCSF are treated as individuals rather than as positions on a ladder. Their personal career aspirations are treated individually, outside the box, and to the extent possible in a small school environment. Our approach works very well and has for many years.

As a Montessori School, MCSF hires college graduates as teachers who are also certified to teach the Montessori curriculum at the kindergarten level, the 1st through 3rd grade level or the 4th through 6th grade level. MCSF recruits teachers through the American Montessori Society, and develops its own "home grown" staff internally from among the classroom assistants and parents who, by working in the classrooms, show both the interest and ability to become Montessori certified teachers. We also hire a limited number of teachers who are in certification training. Some teachers are certified at multiple levels, but very few in our system. Because one of the goals of our middle school is to prepare the students for success in a variety of high schools, both local

(FUSD, Northland Preparatory Academy, and Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy) and east coast preparatory (Phillips Exeter Academy recruits our students), our middle school teachers are hired for their expertise in specific subjects, their creativity and their ability to work as members of a team.

The skills required to fill our positions are specific and do not easily lend themselves to being applied to multiple positions. For example (and as mentioned above), a superior teacher is not often also a superior administrator and a superior administrator is not often a great teacher also. For this reason staff members who are administrators are generally not Montessori certified and are hired for their ability to manage rather than teach.

A teacher certified at the kindergarten level must earn another certificate to move to the 1st grade – 3rd grade level. For that reason our teachers are compensated on the basis of their skill and experience at the level of their certification. A teacher certified to teach 1st through 3rd grades, for example may be compensated at a higher level than those certified to teach 4th through 6th grades, and at a higher level than an administrator also.

Since there are at least 2 full time teachers in every classroom, the more experienced Montessori certified teacher mentors the less experienced and functions as the Lead Teacher. A Montessori certified teacher with several years of experience and a superior record in the classroom generally functions as a Supervisory Lead Teacher, guiding the progress of more inexperienced teachers in three classrooms of, for example, 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. There is no automatic milestone at which a teacher gains the title of Lead Teacher or Supervisory Lead Teacher. The titles identify staff members filling a need and performing a function, and are rarely, if ever, used.

MCSF employs 35 persons:

POSITION	FTE
Chief Administrator	1
Business Manager	1
Site Administrator	4 (One also teaches Language Arts)
Administrative Assistant	1
Special Education Director/Teacher	1
Art Teacher	2
Spanish Teacher	1
Music Teacher	2
Supervising Lead Teacher	2
Lead Kindergarten Teacher	4
Afternoon Kindergarten Teacher	3
Lead Elementary Teacher	4
Elementary Teacher	6
Part-Time Elementary Teacher	1
Middle School Social Studies/Math/PE	1
Middle School Literature/Science	1
Middle School Language Arts/Admin	1

Incentive Programs – Competition is not encouraged in most Montessori schools, and not at MCSF, among its students or its staff. Instead the methodology, and MCSF specifically, encourages cooperation, mentoring, teamwork, sharing, and mutually beneficial behavior. That being said, teachers are rewarded for specific performance that is delineated in every annual contract. Among the items for which extra compensation is awarded are: teaching a larger than average class of students (usually over 30), taking on additional curricular tasks (such as building an archaeological dig on the playground), assuming responsibility for a major portion of the fall carnival, etc. We have not found that flex time or extra days off are practical ways to compensate teachers for extra or superior performance. For that reason, MCSF generally awards financial bonuses. MCSF's method for determining bonuses is a part of each employment contract and has been reviewed and approved by our auditors.

Ongoing Professional Development – Budget constraints limit what the school is able to do. Still MCSF encourages professional development and schedules in house classes whenever possible (usually about twice annually). The school also sends teachers to classes from time to time and asks them to return and present classes to the remainder of the staff on what they have learned. Using teachers to teach other teachers has proven beneficial and is in keeping with the Montessori Methodology. MCSF encourages Montessori certified teachers to earn additional certificates and when possible and if necessary provides no interest loans to enable such training. From time to time, when the conference is located near enough to make the travel cost manageable, MCSF sends the entire staff to AMS training conferences.

High Standards & Appropriate Resources for Hiring Qualified Personnel– MCSF naturally seeks the best qualified staff members. MCSF seeks generally only those college graduates who are also certified as Montessori teachers. We usually seek applicants through the American Montessori Society, require three references with whom we generally speak at length, require a visit to the school and a day of interviewing with experienced teachers and administrators. MCSF has also had a good deal of success developing candidates for staff positions from among college educated parent volunteers and Arizona certified teachers who wish to become Montessori certified teachers after working in the classrooms of the school. Hiring individuals from among those we have observed in the classroom has provided us with some of our best teachers over the years.