

Rationale and Replacement Plan for Waiver from State Statute and Rules

Basic Information:

School Name: DCS Montessori Charter School

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STATUTE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

State Statute 22-7-1014(2)(a) which requires each district to administer the school readiness assessment to each student.

Rationale: DCS Montessori Charter School should have the authority to implement relevant curriculum and assessments that ensure students' success in higher learning. The domains of physical well being, motor development, social-emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge are assessed daily due to the present curriculum and assessments. Support is readily available through numerous avenues based throughout the program. Assessment tools include observation, documentation, formative and summative assessments. They will reflect student success which is based upon an authentic and accredited curriculum founded on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

Plan: DCS Montessori Charter School has a full day Kindergarten program which utilizes the Montessori philosophy and curriculum while adhering to Colorado Academic Standards.

1. Physical well-being and motor development (based on State Standards)

- Students participate in a structured physical education class twice per week for a total of 90 minutes. The content and lessons meet or exceed state standards. Students are assessed on motor-development skills acquired throughout the year. They are assessed throughout the year using Elementary Progress Reports (EPR).
- Students participate in two recesses each day for a total of 250 minutes per week. Structured and unstructured recess activities include running, climbing, digging, balancing, hopping, and throwing and kicking balls.
- Students participate weekly in Art Education, learning skills that will meet or exceed state standards. Development of fine motor skills is achieved through drawing, painting, and creating objects. Students attend art class for 45 minutes

each week and are assessed on fine motor skills acquired throughout the year using EPR.

- Students participate in music education classes for 45 minutes each week. Students participate in a variety of movement, singing, and rhythm exercises. The content and lessons meet or exceed state standards. Students are assessed throughout the year using EPR.
- Students have access to various Montessori materials that develop coordination, balance, fine motor and gross motor skills. Lessons and materials include activities such as play dough, gluing, painting, cutting, sweeping, dusting, pouring, lacing, sewing, washing windows, scrubbing tables, carrying large boxes and trays, folding towels, gardening, and stacking chairs.
- Students are assessed four times a year on Gross and Fine Motor Development with the Montessori Aims for the Developing Child Checklist.
- Students participate in large group circle time activities in the classroom each day for 30 minutes which include singing, movement, and rhythm activities.
- Physical well-being and motor development are assessed by the classroom teacher throughout the year by observation protocols, recording daily lessons, anecdotal records, and checklists.

2. Social and emotional development (based on State Standards)

- Students are expected to demonstrate positive behavior in all areas of the school, including the classroom, the hallway, during lunch, and at recess as learned and modeled based on Love and Logic principles and Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons.
- To encourage self-regulation and executive functions, students are taught through the Love and Logic principles and Montessori philosophy to be intrinsically motivated and to use their own errors as a means for self correction and growth.
- Students are instructed in the “Brain Wise” program through an initial six week series and then through classroom practice of the principles learned, which include peaceful communication, friendship, and bullying awareness. This program assists students in developing friendships, problem solving, community building, and managing emotions.
- Students and teachers have access to a school psychologist to address any social-emotional needs that may arise throughout the year. She works with students in the Kindergarten classrooms when needed. In addition, she conducts small group interventions for students who struggle in these areas.
- Students are instructed in a variety of peaceful communication modalities including the use of the Peace Rose as a means to help resolve conflict and Love Lights as small symbols to announce to their peers that they are feeling peaceful and full of love. These tools help the students to realize their potential as members of the larger classroom and school community.
- Assessment information is gathered by observation protocols by the classroom teacher, based upon appropriate developmental guidelines and Colorado State Standards.
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3. Language and comprehension development (based on State Standards)

- Students receive language instruction throughout the day. This is a comprehensive program based on Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Students master the sounds and letters as well as many sight words, enabling them to improve encoding and decoding skills. The program includes instruction in reading, writing, and speaking.
- Students receive instruction in reading and writing on an individual basis, rather than in a group, and they are assessed on a daily basis by the classroom teacher.
- Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) are administered three times per year. Students who do not reach the benchmark are monitored more closely and given additional instruction. Students who do not reach the benchmark after the second assessment receive individual instruction by the school reading specialist.
- If the student is far below the reading benchmark on two consecutive administrations, the student is placed on a READ plan and given an additional 30 minutes of small group or 1:1 instruction.

4. Cognitive and general knowledge (based on State Standards)

- **Math-** Students are required to perform math lessons daily, based upon the Montessori curriculum. This curriculum meets or exceeds the state standards for mathematics. Each lesson is administered 1:1. All subsequent math work is reviewed upon completion. Observations and documentation are performed daily by the classroom teacher to monitor progress and growth. Written assessments are administered four times per year and stored in Infinite Campus as EPR.
- **Science-** Science topics of instruction include: Geology (Layers of the Earth, fossils and rocks, dinosaurs), Oceanography, Astronomy, Four Seasons and Weather, Living/Nonliving classification, Animals and their needs (including biomes), Plants, Care of the Environment (Ecology, classroom cleanliness and order, daily jobs, caring for classroom pets and plants), Care of Self (learning how to zip/button/tie, cleanliness, exercise, nutrition), Human Anatomy, and Physical Science (magnets, sink & float, gravity, temperatures, light, and sound). Group lessons and discussions occur for various topics. All subsequent work is monitored until completion. Observations and documentation are performed daily by the classroom teacher to monitor progress and growth. Written assessments are administered two times per year and stored in Infinite Campus as EPR.
- **History and Geography** – Students are instructed on various topics Including: Geography (Land and Water Forms, Biomes of the World, Globes, Puzzle Maps of the world, continents, and the United States to develop spatial sense), World landmarks, Flags of the World and United States, Native American Peoples-Past and Present; Early Exploration and Settlement (including the voyage of Columbus, the Pilgrims, and Independent Day), Presidents, Past and Present (including Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and current United States President), and symbols and Figures (including the American Flag, Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore and The White House). Group lessons and discussions occur for various topics. All subsequent work is monitored until completion. Observations and documentation are performed daily by the classroom teacher to monitor progress and growth. Written assessments are administered two times per year and stored in Infinite Campus as EPR.

- All observations and documentation are performed by the classroom teacher and are based on appropriate developmental guidelines and State Standards.

Any student who does not make adequate growth in any of the above areas receives Response to Intervention strategies in small groups, or 1:1 instruction. RtI plans are developed with support documentation. The information includes results of formal assessments, informal assessments, and developmental checklists.

If students do not respond with adequate growth following this intervention, they may be referred to an Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Speech/Language Therapist, or SPED Teacher for further assessment. These assessment results are held in the Enrich IEP System.

Methods and assessments used are clear and relevant and have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in State Statute 22-7-1014(2)(a).

Duration of the Waiver: DCS Montessori charter School requests that the waiver be for the duration of its contract with Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested until June 30, 2020.

Financial Impact: DCS Montessori Charter School anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon Douglas County School District or DCS Montessori Charter School.

How the Impact of the Waiver will be evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to DCS Montessori Charter School's curriculum and the overall program design.

Expected Outcomes: DCS Montessori Charter School expects that as a result of this waiver, we will be able to continue to provide appropriate assessments and support that ensure student success in higher levels of learning in all academic content areas while adhering to the Montessori philosophy and curriculum.

