



## Cooperative Accreditation On-Site Visiting Team Report

### Report on Verification of School's Self-Study and Compliance with AMS Standards and Criteria

SCHOOL INFORMATION	
Name of School	Head of School
<b>California Montessori Project, SJUSD campuses</b>	<b>RaDene Girola, Julie Miller, Kim Aldridge</b>
School's Street Address	City, State, Zip, Country (if outside Continental US)
<b>American River - 6838 Kermit Lane, Fair Oaks, CA</b> <b>Carmichael - 5325 Engle Road, Carmichael, CA</b> <b>Orangevale - 6545 Beech Avenue, Orangevale, CA</b>	
Accreditation Cycle (check one)	Date of On-site Visit (mm/dd/yyyy)
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Accreditation <input type="checkbox"/> Reaccreditation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X	<b>February 26 - March 1, 2017</b>
Protocol (check one)	
Cooperative Accreditation with : <b><u>Western Association of Schools and Colleges</u></b> Levels Served by the School: <b><u>Pre-K - Middle School</u></b> Levels Applying for Accreditation: <b><u>All</u></b> Enrollment: <b><u>American River = 398, Carmichael = 657, Orangevale = 252</u></b>	

ON-SITE VISITING TEAM APPOINTED BY THE AMS OFFICE OF SCHOOL ACCREDITATION	
Name of Team Chair	Organization and Affiliation
<b>E. McCrae Harrison</b>	<b>AMS Montessori Academy at Christina</b>
Name of Team Co-Chair (if applicable)	Organization and Affiliation
<b>Terry O'Neill</b>	<b>WASC</b>
Name of Team Members	Organization and Affiliation
• Sharon Dunn	AMS Woodinville Montessori School
• Susan Baccellieri	AMS Eton School
• Reem Beilisi	WASC Averroes Institute
• Joanne Green	WASC Dixon Montessori Charter School
• Angela Covil	WASC California Managed Schools

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## **COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The three San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) campuses of the California Montessori Project (CMP) were visited by a team of seven representing WASC and AMS over three days. These campuses, American River, Carmichael, and Orangevale are part of the six-school consortium of Montessori charter schools first chartered in 2000. In 2006, each campus was granted a charter from the school district in which it operates. These three SJUSD campuses were re-chartered effective July 1, 2016 for a five-year period and serve approximately 1,300 students pre-K through middle school.

The American River campus sits on a 7-acre lot in a residential neighborhood. It is housed in the Leighton Littlejohn building and is leased from the SJUSD. This campus includes 20 classrooms, 2 playgrounds, and sports fields all of which are maintained and cleaned by SJUSD.

The Carmichael campus has been located in space leased from the Carmichael Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) since 2011 in a building that was originally a high school. Carmichael has 40 classrooms, including Special Education Resource Rooms, Art and Music Rooms, and Library, a large field, and a play structure. While the building is maintained by CRPD, it is cleaned by a contracted night crew. This campus offers Carmichael room to grow.

The Orangevale campus is located in a residential area and opened in 2010. It shares space with SJUSD Child Development Programs and has 13 classrooms and the use of large fields and play structures. There is a growing middle school at the Orangevale campus. This facility is maintained and cleaned by SJUSD.

“The mission of the California Montessori Project is to offer a quality, tuition-free Montessori Education that challenges our students to reach their full potential.” CMP is a non-profit public benefit corporation overseen by a governing board composed of a cross-section of professionals with experience in education (Montessori and traditional), business, technology, facilities, etc. and charged with the operation and fiscal affairs of the schools. The Executive Director of CMP oversees the Central Administration and the School Sites. Principals and Deans of Students are located at each School. Central Administration includes a Director of Program, HR, IT, Finance, Student Services and Safety, Data Information Management, the Director of Special Education, Project Development, and Data Information Management.

CMP employs lead teachers with dual certifications, California State at the highly-qualified level and Montessori, for the age-level at which they teach. Lead teachers may be in the process of obtaining their Montessori certification. CMP provides funding to teachers to enable them to pursue Montessori or other training as deemed appropriate and necessary. All lead teachers must also be AMS members. Assistant teachers (paraprofessionals) must be Qualified by Elementary Secondary Education Act standards. Montessori training is preferred for assistants.

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CMP recognizes the importance and value of Professional Development and has many opportunities built into the academic calendar for both Lead Teachers and Assistants. Some examples include bi-monthly early release days on which speakers on Montessori or other topics may be brought in to focus on an area of need, network-wide staff development days, and monthly Super Saturdays designed specifically for classroom assistants. The executive director also encourages proposals by teachers for individual professional development. In this year when the annual AMS conference will be held in California, CMP has set aside funding that will enable all interested teaching staff to attend. Despite knowing how challenging it would be to orchestrate, some teachers expressed a desire for more cross-campus work on Early Release days so that there could be more cohesion among all the CMP campuses.

CMP has fully taken on the challenge of integrating the Montessori curriculum and best practices with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted by the State of California, and continues to evolve this interweaving through task forces and work groups designed to improve perceived areas of weakness. As described to the team, the Montessori scope and sequence was the starting point in this process and the CCSS were matched to it. In instances where there seemed to be no obvious Montessori lesson or materials, new Montessori lessons were created to fill the lacuna. Additionally, there is a commitment to identify and specifically target students who demonstrate a need for further assistance in order to reach their full academic potential. The Response to Intervention system is in place as is the IEP process and the identification of English Language Learners needing extra services.

Parent involvement is a priority at CMP and parents, after vetting, are encouraged to participate in classroom activities, on fundraisers, on field trips, and to share their expertise whenever possible and appropriate. Parent education is also highly prized and many opportunities exist for parents to learn about Montessori education among other things. Parents interviewed expressed great satisfaction with and confidence in the schools and in the education their children are receiving. Many said they value they appreciate the many forms of communication between school and home, though they also recognized that some families simply will not inform themselves and do not choose to become involved in their children's school. Some consternation was voiced that laws have changed and volunteer hours can no longer be required; the feeling was that more parent participation improves the school and without that requirement, fewer parents volunteered.

The California Montessori Project has embraced the use of technology on every campus. Every third through eighth grader has been issued a ChromeBook for school use that will stay with the student as s/he progresses through CMP. Programs meant as enhancements to learning are offered through reading and math online programs. Additionally, World Language is offered through Rosetta Stone to each student via individual licenses and relative math and language programs meant to augment the Montessori materials in use. It is thought that using these programs, in tandem with the Montessori curriculum, will improve summative assessment scores.

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### SECTION I: The Educational Nature of the school

Knowing that children have an innate desire to learn, and produce purposeful, meaningful work, CMP's teachers classrooms designed for discovery of knowledge and skills and create a peaceful classroom community by modeling respect, grace and courtesy to students.

#### Montessori Learning Environment

The Prepared Environment was evident in the classrooms; they were very well-maintained, orderly, clean, nicely appointed, and attractive. The spatial design varied from room to room, yet each one allowed for controlled and purposeful movement around the shelves, tables, work rugs and students. One teacher remarked that he moves throughout the classroom at different times throughout the day to make sure the flow continues to be smooth and intentional. On each campus there were a couple of rooms that were rather less homey-feeling or less tidy, but still a general order and cleanliness was present. Montessori materials were on display on child-level shelving, storage was tidy and/or well concealed, and every classroom had a water source. Classrooms had well-maintained Montessori materials neatly and progressively arranged on the shelving. Some of the smaller Lower elementary or 2/3 classrooms had very few cultural subject materials in their small area and there were few map-stands observed. Many of these materials may be borrowed from adjacent classrooms in which space was less restricted. Classrooms had bearded dragons, chinchillas, guinea pigs, mice, turtles, fish tanks, birds, or even, in one, a therapy dog, Bentley, and all had plants. Temperature and light were at appropriate levels. One classroom had, as one of the classroom maintenance jobs, "Aroma Therapist," and, indeed, many of the rooms had some sort of aroma enhancing technique. Many rooms played classical or light jazz music at a low level. The majority of San Juan campuses' classrooms were remarkably quiet, which should allow most students to focus better and internalize more. In some cases, it was the teachers' voices that were loudest -- and even those were very low.

Environments were also appropriately adjusted for age levels, with diverse furnishings at the right height and of an appropriate type for Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School students. Arrangements were conducive to group work, with most classrooms also having locations where students could be solo. At each campus, varied lighting sources were evidently encouraged, so arrays of soft-shaded lamps, strings of lights and other features added color and warmth, as did artwork and artifacts reflecting the classroom's namesakes (e.g., that of a national park, a marine animal, or an artist). Most but not all Middle School environments featured risers where Community Meeting and other gatherings could be held; all included some type of sofas or alternative seating, along with tables. Elementary and secondary environments included libraries of books accessible to students. The way each campus and level handled storage of students' work differed; some had open, stacked cube modules; others had baskets, bins or closed cupboards. Each had a clear system in place. As with other levels, plants and animals were present in the environments. Teachers' desks were off to the sides, never holding center-stage. Smartboards and whiteboards provided learning and organizational tools.

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All three campuses were designed with outside “hallways” with court yards and classrooms opened onto covered walkways which allowed students to snack, lunch, practice guitar, or work on clay projects in the open air. At one campus, the outside hallways had balance beams and small, individual trampolines for children to use en route to the lavatories. At several junctures during classroom observations, team members noticed the noise level emanating from outside during lunch times.

### Students' Learning Activity in a Montessori Environment

“The way they teach here: first the Montessori way, then preparation for high school.” (Zack, 13) Students in most classrooms were focused on work individually or in pairs. Those in partnership spoke exceptionally quietly with each other. In most cases, the students had a clear understanding of what they should be doing and seemed to move from job (work or activity) to job smoothly. They followed work plans, even at the K/1 level, getting their completed tasks checked off throughout the work period.

Individuality was recognized and allowing the children to work through their exercises without being interrupted was observed. An example of this was when at least three separate students were doing Golden Bead Division with each student having independently set up the materials to do the exercise in a different manner. Each way was organized and led to student through the exercise successfully.

The extended, uninterrupted work period was observed in all classrooms. In most cases, “specials” are handled in the classroom, though physical education and art are managed by specialist in some cases. Even with these special classes, the uninterrupted work time was maintained at least four days a week. There was evidence of music appreciation (E.g., a focus on a specific composer) in some classrooms, but lessons in co-curricular areas were not observed. As the students worked through their prescribed Work Plans, there was a strong emphasis on Math and Language Arts exercises being done in the morning. One student commented, “I get Free Choice, when I complete my Work Plan.” Others lamented that all they could really do after finishing their daily work was read.

One teacher reported that activities such as exploring the “habitat” environment right outside of the classroom had generated an integration of life and environmental sciences, math, and language learning for his Lower Elementary students. Other teachers commented on the many theme-based projects that are done by the students at home, supported by learning activities in their classrooms and presented to the school community.

Job charts were in the classrooms as the children work at taking care of their indoor environment and “COE (Care of Environment)” was on many classroom schedules. An afternoon group of young TK/K students was observed busily sweeping the outside sidewalks. As one student put it, “I hate when I get bark chips inside my shoes, so I like it when the chips are not on the sidewalk.” Indeed, most classrooms had shoe racks for children to store their shoes on when they changed into slippers.

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Lower Elementary students were seen using a wide variety of Montessori materials including grammar, math, geometry, and language arts. Upper Elementary students were observed in small group lessons with Montessori language and math materials, as well as carrying out reading, writing, and math activities individually, among groups--with everyone not necessarily working on the same "job"--and with one-on-one teacher or teaching assistance support. Google Chromebooks are in heavy use in all Upper Elementary and Secondary environments; students are expected to use them for multiple collateral learning programs, such as *Accelerated Math* and *Accelerated Reader*, as well as for writing and other activities. These are adjunctive and may be more beneficial and less confining to some students than others. Classrooms contain storage units for the Chromebooks--often well-concealed or cleverly incorporated -- and students freely access their specific, assigned laptop and headphones during work time.

In the Middle School environments, teachers were observed giving large group mathematics lessons coordinated with the *Math Go* paper and digital textbooks and workbooks, using their document cameras and smart boards. Students participated in the lessons and then were expected to complete the related, specific worksheet or pages as one of their 'jobs.' In two of the three campuses, Middle School communities had a specific homeroom as their center of work and interaction, but also rotated between three teachers, each with more expansive training and passion in the subject areas of Language Arts, Science, or Social Studies. The respective teachers' homerooms, particularly at American River, reflected both their general responsibilities and their focus areas in terms of decor and supplies. Students were observed in small group activities and/or all group lessons in these varied environments. The range of teaching and learning experiences witnessed included groups preparing for presentations by making artistic representations and creating slides through Google slideshare; an immersive, multi-station cultural experience focused on Japan, and an all-class interactive lesson that employed the document camera and smartboard, handouts from the history text, and small, manipulative paper Mayan calendar replicas. Work times as well as lessons were observed. While the attention to work and demeanor of students in Middle School at the CMP-SJ Carmichael campus demonstrated some issues with focus and respect, overall the Secondary communities at the CMP-SJ reflected Montessori norms, expectations, and teacher dedication.

### Montessori Learning Relationships

"I've met a lot of great people here." (Zack, 13) "I fully agree with that." (Madison, 11)  
There were many obvious examples of how the children worked together in the individual classrooms. It was easily observable that students were quietly helpful to their peers. One teacher uses a practice called "*Three before me*," where the student needing assistance must ask a First, Second and Third year student for help before the teacher's assistance is sought. In many classrooms a work checking system was in place whereby the students moved a magnet with their name on it under a label for "Help, please." or "Check." indicating what their needs were without having to interrupt a lesson, other students, or a teacher/aide on another task. Some classes had the students working silently and by themselves for up to forty-five minutes in the morning before they began working in pairs or small groups. CMP classes have a Lead Teacher, a Teacher

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Assistant and as appropriate, a One-on-One or additional support assistant. There is no difference in how these different adults are viewed by the students in the classroom and, at times, it was not obvious which role a particular adult held. There is equal respect and admiration for all of the adults in the environments. TAs the team spoke with feel supported by their Lead Teachers and by the CMP administrative teams.

Children in the Upper Elementary and Middle School environments were observed most often seated in groups at tables and/or in other seating. The groupings were sometimes based on projects being done together, and at other times seemed by choice or teacher-facilitated arrangement. Communication in Upper Elementary classrooms was generally held at whisper-level, whether with the teacher or among peers. Students worked both collaboratively and individually; peers assisted one another, questioned each other, or went about their business--all age-appropriate behaviors and learning approaches, and suited to a Montessori community. In Upper El classrooms, there were generally two adults present and both the teachers and the teacher's assistants worked in support and in instructional roles with students. The overall feeling in all three campuses' Upper Elementary communities was one of activity and respect, though in some cases, the level of quiet seemed rather exceptional for the age cohort of learners.

The Middle Schools vary more widely in tenor than other age-levels at the San Juan campuses. At the newer Secondary program at the Orangevale campus, students were all in 7th grade and the teacher was an experienced generalist, whereas at the other two CMP-SJ campuses, teachers both work as general educators and as specialists within a discipline. Rotations facilitate extensive contact with all teachers at the secondary level, and degrees of connection between the students and the adults working with them were evident. In each setting, students were able to be expressive and demonstrate interests, communication, and styles appropriate to their ages. At the same time, the importance of Middle School leaders having good support and training, and feeling comfortable guiding grace and courtesy, and focus on work, was clear and less-experienced teaching teams generally were more challenged with classroom management. Students and teachers were ready to share about what they were learning and doing; one teacher had brought family members in to facilitate her students' experience of Japanese culture and this also appeared to be an avenue towards building stronger rapport with students.

#### Montessori Spirituality

Many (though not all) classrooms observed had a peace corner available to the students. These often contained a Peace Rose, a framed photograph or peaceful affirmation, other symbols for peace, or even a softly gurgling fish tank. Observers witness the use of the peace corner for solving problems between classmates in several classes; this was especially captivating to observers from the WASC team who had never seen such interactions before. Many classrooms across the campuses had framed photographs of great peacemakers (Gandhi, Martin Luther, King, etc.), Tibetan peace flags, and the Three Be's (Be responsible. Be Respectful. Be Safe) prominently displayed.





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Working in the outdoor environment, either in classroom gardens, the Sensory Garden or the shared green spaces, provided students with opportunities to connect with nature, build community in real work, and honor their interdependency with Earth. Sacramento's recent bout of very wet weather was much lamented as it prevented children's work in the gardens.

In preparation for the upcoming school-wide Elementary Cultural Fair, students across the campuses are delving into continents and countries other than their own. The sharing of culture and customs, geographies and histories, food (of course), and fun opens one's heart to differences and similarities, and broadens everyone's perspectives. Again, interdependency, this time of humans with humans, can shape the spirituality of the CMP student.

The CMP school-wide focus on Expected School-wide Learner Outcomes (ESLO) should naturally coincide with Montessori philosophy and Peace Education. The ESLOs read:

California Montessori Project Students:

- Make Safe, Respectful, and Responsible choices for themselves and empower others to do so as well.
- Are Montessori Learners who work independently, demonstrate initiative, utilize the power of concentration, think critically, and are life-long learners.
- Are Ambassadors of Grace and Courtesy who celebrate the diversity in our global community.
- Agents of Change who have a strong sense of community, are socially responsible, connected to their environment, advocate for themselves and others, and are empowered to be problem solvers.

These outcomes were better understood by some constituents and at some campuses than at others. Other strategies included in developing strong social and emotional skills are an Anti-Bullying program, Love and Logic practices employed in some classrooms, as well as classroom discussions and activities that guide acceptance of self, acceptance of others and positive conflict-resolution practices.

Upper Elementary environments featured signs, artifacts and works that emphasized messages of respect, cultural diversity, and peace. Along with clear references to Dr. Montessori and her philosophy in every room for all ages, CMP-SJ campus classrooms and shared spaces, such as the libraries and hallways, included empowering messages; attention to people who have served in the cause of peace and freedom, such as African-American leaders, and artistic works by students and adults that communicate the importance of art and the environment in people's spiritual lives. Speakers are invited to share real-world experiences with the students; secondary students learn aspects of citizenship and civic engagement through their student business, job internships, field trips, and studies. At the various campuses, collaboration and support from older students with younger students is fostered through specific opportunities to serve as buddies and mentors, enhancing the cross-age philosophical emphasis of Montessori education and spiritual growth. Upper Elementary and Secondary students are also asked to do work in connection with current events, allowing them to become engaged with issues in the broader global context.

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### What the Montessori Teacher Is

CMP-SJ teachers are committed educators, holding California State and Montessori Teaching Credentials. As Montessorians, CMP-SJ teachers work at being the link between children and the prepared environment that is the gateway to learning. All teachers observed were nurturing, builders of trust, and creators of environments in which the students felt safe, secure and ready to learn.

A Montessori teacher is authoritative and trusts the productive interplay among the prepared environment, students, and teachers. Despite this, it was observed in many classrooms at CMP-SJ that the reliance on technology-based outside curricula seems to take precedence over hands-on, concept-building materials and the sequenced curriculum that scaffolds knowledge.

The teachers at CMP-SJ participate willingly and eagerly in professional development that reflects their dedication to life-long learning. Early release days are dedicated to providing on-going education for lead teachers and the teaching assistants often participate in Super Duper Saturday workshops that provide further instruction and training that benefits their classroom experiences.

In the communities observed, and in focus groups and conversations, it was clear that CMP-SJ teachers and TAs shared a common, committed belief in Montessori as a meaningful and important way to guide the growth and development of children. Their awareness of the role of the prepared Environment was highly evident in the notable aesthetics and atmosphere of classrooms; the commitment to learning environments that foster independence and collaboration, and that surround the students with beauty, at the age-appropriate, Montessori levels, was demonstrated. Teachers and TAs all expressed and showed genuine caring and authentic concern for their students.

At the Secondary level most strongly, the Montessori teachers seemed confident and articulate about the role and value they perceived of the Chromebooks, smartboards and other technology-based tools, a similar sense of across-the-board confidence in their value relative to their ubiquity was not as clear at other levels. As one teacher stated it, "It's up to us to put the heart into these programs," sharing a booklet she had made to accompany *Accelerated Reader* for her students because she wanted them to have a way to be more expressive and personal in their responses to books they had read. The Montessori CMP-SJ teachers all showed a belief in students and their growth. In order to meet important benchmarks for students' learning, they were implementing curricula and programs recommended and adopted by CMP leadership; the teachers' constructive attitudes showed the importance of flexibility and adaptation in a Montessori teacher.

### What the Montessori Teacher Does

"My favorite part is the kindness of the teachers and they help you." (Elliot, 11)

The teachers at CMP-SJ quietly moved about each of the classroom environments, as they performed their responsibilities of giving lessons, checking off work plans, promoting inquiry to small groups or individuals, and offering any needed assistance. The teachers prepared an environment that allows students to interact with it, instead of relying on a teacher relating



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information through direct teaching. The prepared work plans reflected the teachers' understanding that concepts can be explored, discovered, and learned by doing many different exercises and using a variety of materials. These work plans looked quite different both horizontally and vertically. While difference at the different levels served by the school were to be expected, marked differences from classroom to classroom, particularly at the Lower Elementary level, belied a belief and trust in intrinsic motivation and the ability of learners to choose appropriate work and focus energies on one area of the curriculum during a given work period without undermining their overall learning and achievements. While these work plans may have limited choice and potentially, higher level thinking, there were many examples of journal prompts that would certainly require students to explore their own thinking and expand upon it (E.g.: "What do you think exists but hasn't been discovered yet? What does it look like?")

CMP-SJ teachers are strong advocates of record keeping as a form of assessment for their students. Folders are complete with quantitative information; little qualitative assessment was observed. While "portfolios" are created and are passed from level to level, these seemed to be more a collection of assessment data and teacher notes than a student-selected, reflective body of work that shows student growth more organically than via test results.

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### **SECTION II: The Learner Outcomes**

As written in the self-study, “The California Montessori Project's student-centered, teacher-guided interdisciplinary educational program supports the academic, social and emotional growth of the child. CMP offers hands-on opportunities, integrating California Common Core State Standards with Montessori methodology, while promoting respect for self, others, and the environment. CMP empowers students to develop confidence, independent thinking, and teamwork essential for world citizenship.”

#### **Independence**

Beginning with the practical life “jobs” at the kindergarten level and advancing through individual work plans for elementary learners and internships for the oldest CMP-SJ students, growing independence in all learners is sought. The students moved around their classrooms independently. Following their work plans, they knew what to do, how to do it, what materials were necessary, and how to get any needed assistance. What was most observable, was how independently the students took care of their personal needs. Restroom facilities are all outside the CMP-SJ classrooms and with a clear sense of responsibility, the students would come in and out of their rooms, either to use the restrooms, choose to do an outdoor movement activity, or change classrooms for special learning groups; no adults were needed to accompany the students during these times. Classrooms had daily schedules visible on the dry erase boards so that children could plan their work time and organize their day. In lower elementary classroom there was no clock visible, which would make this harder, of course.

#### **Confidence and Competence**

With growing independence comes first confidence and then competence as children work independently and continue to grow skills and a conceptual base that increases understanding and skills. Quality Montessori schools encourage this by offering jobs and extensions that enable students to grow and explore freely. In interviewing CMP-SJ students, the visiting team learned that some Middle School students feel very well prepared for high school as they have learned to prioritize work, be organized, and take responsibility for their work. Other students, however, felt less well prepared and more nervous about moving on from CMP-SJ, an attitude not unlike that of many rising high schoolers everywhere. Work plans in use allowed students to work independently through their work time, planning their work and completing assignments. Systems in place for getting help and having jobs checked also contributed to students’ sense of competence.

#### **Autonomy**

“The classroom community establishes rules and procedures to define appropriate behavior. This provides a roadmap for self-regulated behavior, and minimal teacher intervention. Children regulate their work-time, manage their personal responsibilities, and care for the learning



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environment with few prompts from the teacher. Children identify their choice of work partners with guidance and tools gained from lessons on collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation skills.” Work plans played a role in increasing students’ sense of autonomy as well. Unless needing help or having a lesson, students were able to work independently of their teachers, making choices, getting help, retrieving supplies, and returning things to where they belong. Because of the physical layout of the CMP-SJ campuses, autonomy was required and so was enabled as children took care of their physical needs. Lavatories were not located in the classrooms and students “signed out” of the room via list or magnet, walked, in some cases, a little distance, to the lavatories, and then walked back again. Coats, backpacks, and other hangable personal items were hung neatly on hooks outside the classrooms. Anything needed from those items was collected out of eyesight of the teachers requiring good systems to be in place and implicit trust.

#### Intrinsic Motivation

“The natural beauty of the Montessori classroom and its materials intrinsically draw the children to engage in meaningful learning.” Indeed, the classrooms were replete with beautiful materials appropriately sequenced, and made attractively available. While materials were in use in all the classrooms we visited, there seemed to be wildly different approaches from the teachers in their use of work plans which in turn allowed for varying amounts of intrinsic motivation. Some work plans were blank, with only headings for subject areas allowing students to pursue their own interests. More often, the work plans were pre-written and delineated specific assignments in each subject area. Students remarked that, when they finished their work plans, all they could do was read, and “that gets boring.” Additionally, the assigned technology additions to the work plan required extra time which then requires time that could otherwise be used for additional exploration with the materials or the pursuit of one’s own topic of interest that is not an obvious part of the curriculum.

#### Social Responsibility

“Our purpose in being here is to be able to make good choices later in life.” (Madison, 11) Beginning at the lowest levels on all the campuses, classrooms have well-detailed job charts with expected roles for each student in caring for the classroom environment. Students were seen to clean up after themselves after they had had snack. During the “Care of Environment” time on the schedule, students used brooms to clean floors, stacked chairs, straightened shelves, looked after pets or plants, and organized their own school materials. This effort to responsibly care for the shared environment is the first step in learning social responsibility. There were many signs around the campuses and in individual classrooms encouraging pro-social behavior and peace corners in most classrooms designed to allow students a safe place to go for problem solving or just to experience solitude and peace. Most classrooms had “The Three Be’s” posted: Be respectful. Be safe. Be kind.

#### Academic Preparation

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“I was nervous to get a letter grade but it wasn’t a huge change in the end.” (Kendra, 13) California Montessori Project’s resources have been spent preparing the curriculum, materials, environments, systems and processes, and teachers so that students will have everything they need to be successful and achieve the expected learner outcomes advertised by the schools. (Though one student confessed that, “Those are in the back of the room, so I don’t really notice them.”) Summative and formative assessment data is used to determine individual and school-wide needs and the schools are vigilant about adjusting the curriculum and programming to meet the determined needs. Indeed, several of the school’s action items center on perceived curricular needs: writing, science, and math. Across ages, children interviewed were confident that they could get help whenever they needed either by asking another student or a teacher, and there was enthusiasm about learning and being in school. Students in the Middle School had mixed feelings about how well-prepared they were to move into high school in the coming year. Some felt that the “Montessori way” with additions of specialized classes would stand them in good stead whereas others expressed trepidation. This seemed to the team to be reasonable ends of the spectrum in a group of middle schoolers.

### Spiritual Awareness

The children moved carefully throughout their environments. Their movements did not seem controlled by external direction but instead by the sense of how they, their friends, and all the other components of their environment were a part of one community. Observed were children pausing to check on a classroom frog swimming, the bird chirping, and the service dog watching. When asked, a child remarked about “our” turtle, not “the” turtle. This reflects CMP-SJ’s commitment to the nurturing of spiritual awareness. Physical and cultural geography studies and the life sciences of botany and zoology, expand the children’s world view to see how they are included in their Earth’s community. Most of the classrooms had posted pictures of inspirational world figures such as Gandhi, King, and Montessori. While CMP-SJ has determined the need to improve student behavior, the visiting team saw many examples of students treating each other and their teachers with respect and the overarching feeling on all three campuses was one of regard for humanity all living things.

### Global Citizenship

Each CMP-SJ campus has a campus-wide theme: artists, sea creatures, or great parks. The classrooms each take on a representative of the campus theme (e.g. Van Gogh, Marlins, Denali) and student artwork and other images befitting the theme were on display in most classrooms. These help students make connections to the world beyond the schoolyard and help them internalize global interconnectedness. Preparations for a World Faire were underway what while the visiting team was on site. Classrooms had adopted a country and were developing ways to represent their country to visitors from other countries (classrooms). Middle school students participate in business-shadowing in their communities in an effort to prepare them for the workplace. These also give the intern first-person experiences in civics and citizenship.

**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**SECTION III: Strategic Plan**

The CMP Action Plan includes many Project-wide improvements to aid in student learning. These include updating the CMP Technology Plan, developing a comprehensive, across-level writing program, updating the math and science curricula in order to meet 21st-Century skills, enhancing the professional learning community system, and improvements to the visual and performing arts. The strategic plan is detailed and comprehensive and is designed to involve appropriate constituents and result in improvements that will enhance the learning and experience for all students.

The Visiting Team commends CMP-SJ for:

- the clearly articulated strategic plan designed with school-wide improvement in mind.

The Visiting Team recommends that:

- CMP add to the strategic plan specific, realistic time markers and funding sources, to make this a clear pathway for the organization as it moves forward.



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

**SECTION IV: AMS Standards and Criteria Dual Accreditation Verification Checklist**

<b><u>STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT—Strategic Plan</u></b> <b>The quality Montessori school promotes student learning and school effectiveness through strong governance and leadership and establishes, implements, monitors, and refines a strategic planning process to demonstrate continuous improvement.</b>	<b>STANDARD COMPLIANCE:</b>	
	<b><u>Fully Met</u></b> Substantially Met	Not Met
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school, including a system for short- and long-term sustainability of the governing body and school leadership.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative leader (head of school/principal/executive director) by delegating responsibility for the operations of the school to the administrative leader and ensuring that the administrative leader receives appropriate support, evaluation, and compensation.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
2.3 Provides an organizational chart that clearly defines lines of authority, relationships, and accountability to be included in employee handbook (see criterion 5.2).	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
2.4 Ensures compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, standards, and regulations. If the school is exempt from licensing or compliance, written exemption of current issue (within the last five years) verifying exemption from the appropriate federal, state, and/or local agency is necessary to show compliance. It is the school’s responsibility to be aware of all these laws and regulations and to take steps to be and remain in compliance. It is not the responsibility of AMS or the Visiting Team to verify compliance independently. Accreditation by AMS is not certification of a school’s compliance with applicable laws and regulations.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
2.5 Maintains on site all legal documents that define and describe the corporate status of the school (e.g., articles of incorporation, franchise agreements, proprietary registration, charter, and/or partnership agreements).	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO

**Leadership**

<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
2.6 Fosters a learning community through collaboration with all stakeholders.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
2.7 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO





**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

and school effectiveness.		
2.8 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.9 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.10 Manages curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.11 Seeks and responds to community concerns in order to establish appropriate community expectations and to maintain stakeholder satisfaction.	<u>YES</u>	NO

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – Strategic Plan

<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
2.12 Engages all constituents in a continuous process of improvement that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulates the mission and vision of the school</li> <li>• Maintains a detailed and current description of students, learner outcomes, program effectiveness, and the school community</li> <li>• Employs goals and interventions to improve learner outcomes</li> <li>• Documents and uses the results to inform goals</li> </ul> <p>...as outlined in a written 3- to 5-year Strategic Plan.</p>	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.13 Engages and supports stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.14 Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the mission and vision of the school and the expectations for student learning.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.15 Annually monitors, updates, and communicates the progress and results of improvement efforts to stakeholders.	<u>YES</u>	NO
2.16 Annually evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous improvement process as outlined in the Strategic Plan.	<u>YES</u>	NO

*NOTE: To mark the checkbox, double-click the checkbox. A window will appear and offer the option of “not checked” and “checked” (under “Default Value”). To check the box, select “checked” and click “OK”. If this does not work, then type in “X” next to the checkbox.*

**Impact Statement**

A quality Montessori school is successful in meeting this standard when its leadership advocates for the school’s mission and vision and implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving its educational programs and services and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

## **COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

### **Comments:**

CMP-SJ clearly shows a commitment to Montessori education, to all of its stakeholders, to implementation of quality Montessori environments, materials, and facets in its learning communities, to hiring and supporting Montessori-trained staff, and to the positive growth, ongoing learning, and social-emotional development of its students. The leadership carries out an continuing reflective process and engages constituents in that process. However, CMP-SJ has not articulated a clear vision statement that can be succinctly stated, understood, and exemplified. While CMP's expected schoolwide learner outcomes are laudable and their focus on cultural norms in their "Three Be's" are commendable, the lack of one anchoring vision statement contributes to a sense of multiple visions being articulated that could be better integrated and holistic. The curricular adaptations and resources in response, on the one hand, to the genuine necessity of continually improving student outcomes in mathematics, science, literacy, and writing, as evidenced in the California-required annual assessments, and on the other hand to the impetus to foster "21st Century skills" demonstrates a clear and ongoing commitment to school improvement. Yet it is also the case that with every adoption, reflection, and assessment of programmatic efficacy and authentic connection to Montessori education need be ongoing and involve those stakeholders so central to success: students, teachers, and staff.

### **Commendations:**

The Visiting Team commends CMP-SJ for

- the commitment to the fundamentals of quality Montessori education as evidenced by the beautiful environments and well-trained, dedicated staff.
- the clear roles delineated and practiced by the CMP Board, Central Administration, and individual campus leadership teams.
- continuing to revise and update the school improvement plan based on regularly-assessed needs of the students and the organization as a whole.

### **Recommendations:**

The Visiting Team recommends that

- in conjunction with its strategic plan, CMP-SJ engage in ongoing evaluation of the efficacy and use of multiple, technology-based learning and assessment activities, in deep connection with their teachers, to support the holistic focus on Montessori education.



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<b><u>STANDARD 3:TEACHING AND LEARNING – Educational Nature</u></b> <b>The quality Montessori school operates comprehensively within Montessori philosophy and provides a Montessori curriculum and Montessori instructional methods and materials that facilitate learning for all students.</b>	<b>STANDARD COMPLIANCE:</b>	
	Fully Met <b><u>Substantially Met</u></b>	Not Met
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
3.1 Develops and implements a Montessori curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities to explore application of higher-order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning.	YES	<b><u>NO</u></b>
3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data, research, and classroom observation in making curricular and instructional choices.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<p>3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research- and observation-based, meet student needs, and reflect best practice.</p> <p><b>Curriculum Design and Implementation of Instructional Programs</b></p> <p>The school provides a comprehensive Montessori educational curriculum based on the Montessori planes of development and implemented by Montessori-credentialed instructional staff as outlined in Standard 5. The school uses supplementary programs and materials that are deemed necessary to enhance the basic core curriculum for their student population. Activities in peace and cosmic education reflect the Montessori philosophy of peace and harmonious coexistence based on mutual respect that should be evident at all levels. The Montessori curriculum at all levels includes opportunities for community service within and beyond the school community, outdoor exploration and education, and experiences outside the classroom to expand learning (“going out”). To address the needs of the whole child, the curriculum promotes the students’ cognitive, physical, social-emotional, spiritual, and psychological development. Activities provide purpose, procedure, closure, and opportunity for success.</p> <p>Schools are expected to demonstrate the following curriculum planning and implementation indicators:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">3.4.1 <i>Infant/Toddler (Birth-3)</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Curriculum planning at the 0 - 36 month level is extremely dependent upon developmental characteristics. The teacher plans the daily activities and general program goals based on the capabilities and interests of the child. Learning cannot be separated from motor development at this age. The structure of the curriculum is based on six developmental areas: sensory and perceptual, cognitive, physical, gross and fine motor, self-help skills, and social/emotional development. Materials allow children to explore, absorb, and experience their environment through their senses and kinesthetically.</p>	<p>YES      NO</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>N/A</u></p>
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**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<p>3.4.2 <i>Early Childhood (2.5 – 6)</i></p> <p>Curriculum planning at the 2.5 – 6 year level integrates Montessori’s fundamental philosophy of the child with the core areas of Practical Life (including grace and courtesy and care of self, others, and the environment), Sensorial, Math, Language, Peace and Cosmic Education, and Cultural Subjects (including Geography, History, Botany, Zoology, Physical Science, Art, and Music). The learning environment is student-centered and designed to promote the development of order, coordination, concentration, independence, cooperation, collaboration, inner discipline, self-motivation, self-regulation, and respect for self, others, and the environment. Self-directed learning includes choice, learning from built-in controls of error, and completing cycles of work by choosing, completing, and returning materials.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO N/A</p>
<p>3.4.3 <i>Elementary I (6-9) and Elementary II (9-12)</i></p> <p>Curriculum planning at the elementary level considers that the student is entering a new plane of development characterized by tremendous imagination, critical thinking, critical questioning, a strong sense of morality and justice, and a strong need for peer relationships. Individually-paced academic progress allows students to explore their interests and acquire the mastery of basic skills and knowledge, including basics such as: numeracy and math facts, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, sentence analysis, creative and expository writing, and using technology for research and communication. In addition, the Montessori elementary learning environment offers activities that provide deeper educational experiences in the areas of: Mathematics (including Geometry and Algebra), Biological and Physical Sciences, Technology, Language Arts and Literature, History, Physical and Political World Geography, Civics, Economics, Anthropology, Peace and Cosmic Education, and areas of Art, Music, Additional/World Language, and Physical Education. Students have opportunities to plan, monitor and assess their own work, thereby enhancing their independence and responsibility for their own actions. The learning environment is student-centered and designed to promote the development of organizational and time management skills, conflict resolution skills, concentration, independence, cooperation, and collaboration.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO N/A</p>



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<p>3.4.4      <i>Secondary I (12-15) and Secondary II (15 – 18)</i></p> <p>Curriculum planning at the secondary level is a continuation of the Montessori curriculum at a deeper level. The curriculum at the secondary level increases students’ development in decision-making, problem solving, community building, and applying this learning to their lives and the larger community. Students expand on their cumulative experiences in the creation and care of the environment.</p> <p>Students have opportunities to plan, monitor, and assess their own work, thereby further developing their independence and responsibility for their own actions. The Montessori secondary curriculum includes opportunities for community service and career exploration, economic exploration, technology, activities in the humanities, peace and cosmic education, physical education, creative arts, outdoor education, and field studies.</p> <p>The secondary II (high school) curriculum continues to support the adolescent in valorization of the personality and stewardship of the Earth and humanity. These are essential aspects of a program for the older adolescent. This includes field experience and service opportunities. The curriculum expands on the work and elements in the Secondary I program, and prepares students for post-secondary education or careers through self-construction, extensive self-reflection, and opportunities for leadership and personal responsibility.</p>	<p><b><u>YES</u></b>      NO</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>3.5 Structures classes with multi-age groupings</p> <p>Multi-age grouping is an integral part of the Montessori philosophy at all levels. Philosophically, the rationale is that individuals learn from each other with opportunities to lead, share, and serve as role models for their peers. Students can accelerate or take additional time as needed to learn skills. AMS Teacher Education Programs prepare teachers to work with a 3-year age span and to have the expertise to support skills both above and below a developmental level.</p> <p>Age groupings must be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/Toddler: Children from birth to 3 years of age may be grouped in varying multi-age configurations. A stand-alone classroom serving only 3-year olds does not satisfy this Criterion.</li> <li>• Early Childhood: a 3-year age group within the range of 2.5 years to 6 years</li> <li>• Lower Elementary: 6 years to 9 years</li> <li>• Upper Elementary: 9 years to 12 years</li> <li>• or Elementary I-II: ages 6 years to 12 years</li> <li>• Secondary: the school must offer an age grouping of either 12-14, 14-16, 16-18 years of age or 12-15, 15-18 years of age</li> </ul> <p>Schools with multi-age grouping variances listed in the document “Grandfathered Multi-Age Grouping Variances 2014” (dated October 3, 2014) are grandfathered such that they may maintain the age-grouping(s) for which the variances were granted. The accreditation status of these schools must be noted in their listing on the AMS website and in all other AMS accredited school listings, as well in the schools’ own marketing materials. The exact wording that must be used is: “Accredited with non-traditional Montessori age groupings.” Failure of a school to comply with this language will result in revocation of AMS accreditation.</p>	<p><b><u>YES</u></b>      NO</p>



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<p>3.6 Maintains ratios and maximum group sizes as follows:</p> <p>The lowest ratio required by licensing or other accrediting agency supersedes AMS requirements for ratios and maximum group size. Where licensure or other accreditation standards do not specify ratios or group size, the following applies:</p> <p>The ratios of students to teaching staff, both Montessori-credentialed and assistant teacher/aide/paraprofessional, is appropriate for the age level:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Infants (Birth to 18 months):</td> <td>4:1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toddler (18-36 months):</td> <td>8:1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early Childhood (2.5-6 years):</td> <td>15:1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elementary (ages 6-12 years):</td> <td>20:1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary (ages 12-18 years):</td> <td>20:1</td> </tr> </table> <p>The school assigns no more than the maximum number of students to each Montessori credentialed teacher that is appropriate to the age level:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>Infants (Birth to 18 months):</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toddler (18-36 months):</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early Childhood (2.5-6 years):</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elementary (ages 6-12 years):</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary (ages 12-18 years):</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table>	Infants (Birth to 18 months):	4:1	Toddler (18-36 months):	8:1	Early Childhood (2.5-6 years):	15:1	Elementary (ages 6-12 years):	20:1	Secondary (ages 12-18 years):	20:1	Infants (Birth to 18 months):	8	Toddler (18-36 months):	16	Early Childhood (2.5-6 years):	30	Elementary (ages 6-12 years):	30	Secondary (ages 12-18 years):	30	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>
Infants (Birth to 18 months):	4:1																				
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Early Childhood (2.5-6 years):	15:1																				
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Elementary (ages 6-12 years):	30																				
Secondary (ages 12-18 years):	30																				
<p>3.7 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a dedication to equity, and demonstrates a commitment to diversity.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.8 Provides and follows a collaboratively-designed curriculum and scope and sequence, including benchmarks, across all program levels within the school; these are communicated to all constituencies.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.9 Allocates and protects 2- to 3-hour blocks of uninterrupted instructional time to support student learning. Schools schedule enrichment programs and transition times to accommodate these blocks.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.10 Provides accommodations and interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.11 Monitors school and classroom climate (including both indoor and outdoor environments) and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning and social/emotional growth.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.12 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional materials and tools, including technology where appropriate, based on school mission, and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				
<p>3.13 Maintains an environment that incorporates materials, structure, and leadership to best meet the needs of all students.</p>	<p><u>YES</u>      NO</p>																				



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
<p>3.13.1 <i>Facilities, Instructional Materials</i> Classroom environments in quality Montessori schools are equipped with a full range of fundamental Montessori materials, aesthetically displayed and easily accessible to students. Curriculum support materials to meet the needs of the children may be incorporated into the classroom. Schools inspect and evaluate materials regularly for completeness and good working condition and keep a school-wide inventory of all instructional materials and furnishings, including a repair and replacement plan.</p> <p>Classroom environments in quality Montessori schools are equipped with furnishings (tables, chairs, etc.) of sizes and quantity to meet the needs of students.</p>	<p><u>YES</u></p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>3.13.2 <i>Physical Environment</i> The environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is clean, orderly, neat</li> <li>• Has logical organization of materials/resources/activities, by level of difficulty and sequence of skill development</li> <li>• Is aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>• Is appropriate in size (follows licensing regulations)</li> <li>• Has adequate furnishings for size and ages of students</li> <li>• Has accessible, neat storage area for students' belongings</li> <li>• Has accessible, neat storage of teacher materials</li> <li>• Has a water source available</li> <li>• Allows for a variety of activities such as individual/group, floor/table, noisy/quiet, and active/sedentary</li> <li>• Accommodates different learning styles and different kinds of work</li> </ul>	<p><u>YES</u></p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>3.13.3 Provides for display of students' work</p>	<p><u>YES</u></p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>3.13.4 <i>Structure and Curriculum</i> Classroom schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages the student's spontaneous activity</li> <li>• Provides community building and leadership opportunities appropriate to each level</li> <li>• Allows for a balance of uninterrupted, self-directed, self-teaching, and collaborative activities with the presentation of individual, small, and large group lessons</li> </ul>	<p>YES</p>	<p><u>NO</u></p>





**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<b>CRITERIA:</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>3.13.5 Classroom leadership</i></p> <p>The teacher exhibits the following characteristics and abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans, implements, and keeps records of clear, meaningful individual, small, and large group lessons and activities</li> <li>• Monitors the overall environment during individual lessons and through general observations</li> <li>• Works with students to assess the quality of their work using developmentally appropriate guidelines and assessment tools such as portfolios (including samples of student work)</li> <li>• Facilitates regular, ongoing communication of student development through parent and/or family conferences as needed</li> <li>• Implements accommodations and interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning, with appropriate consultation with administration and parents</li> <li>• Uses a comprehensive record keeping system that accurately reflects the student's development</li> <li>• Uses an effective system for communication with parents, acknowledging parents' needs and offering a variety of means for communication, e.g. electronic, oral, written and/or online newsletters and notes</li> <li>• Shares knowledge of the students' development and concepts appropriate to each level with staff and parents</li> <li>• Recognizes and provides opportunities for students to participate in meaningful, age-appropriate leadership activities</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>YES</u></b>      <b>NO</b></p>



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

3.13.6	<p><i>Professionalism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher demonstrates knowledge and internalization of the core beliefs of Montessori philosophy, such as respect for the individual learner, preparation of self and the environment, fostering independence, order and concentration in the student, respect for and recognition of sensitive periods, planes of development, intrinsic motivation of the student, and the absorbent mind.</li> <li>• The teacher has a written plan for and documentation of continuing professional growth that includes evidence of personal reflection in preparation of self</li> <li>• The teacher has fundamental communication skills to support the social and emotional development of students and advisory skills appropriate to the age level</li> <li>• The teacher interacts appropriately, respectfully, and professionally with students, colleagues, and parents</li> <li>• The teacher develops and refines fundamental communication skills with parents about student’s social/emotional and academic progress</li> <li>• The teacher is guided by the AMS Code of Ethics</li> </ul>	<p><b>YES</b>      <b>NO</b></p>
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**Impact Statement**

A quality Montessori school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a Montessori curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process and students exhibit a joy in learning. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations.

**Comments:**

California Montessori Project-San Juan takes seriously its role as educator to all its students. Classrooms hold the requisite Montessori learning materials and teachers are attuned to the needs of the students in the classes. Team members saw children at work with materials, in one-on-one and small group lessons, working on computers, and collaborating on activities. Classrooms were well-prepared and learning relationships were strong.

**Commendations:**

The Visiting Team commends CMP-SJ for:

- the note-worthy aesthetics of the Montessori learning environments at all CMP-SJ campuses and at all levels; the care and attention to beauty, diversity, color balancing, lighting, and natural life in the form of plants and animals was impressive and the overall effect in each room was one that would speak to all stakeholders and observers about this fundamentally distinct feature of Montessori education.
- the commitment to success for all students.
- the genuine commitment to Montessori philosophy and to the CMP-SJ schools expressed by all Stakeholders; all constituencies showed loyalty, caring, and a child-centered outlook.



### **COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

- the work done by CMP teams to align Montessori to Common Core State Standards.
- the Art program at the Carmichael Campus which was outstanding; its impact was not only visible, but highly positive in humanizing the institutional nature of the buildings.

### **Recommendations:**

The visiting team recommends that:

- CMP-SJ lower elementary teachers collaborate to develop a work plan that will allow teachers to feel comfortable and trusting that their students are completing sufficient “jobs” to ensure growth, but that also offers opportunities for students’ spontaneous activity and interests to be incorporated thereby enabling intrinsic motivation to enhance students’ academic growth.
- CMP explore ways for more organization-wide collaboration either on early-release days or otherwise to increase cohesiveness across campuses throughout the community.
- CMP reassess the effectiveness of all leadership teams at all campuses. The connection of leadership to staff and vice versa was palpable at two of three campuses but was not observed at the third.



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<b>STANDARD 4: DOCUMENTING AND USING RESULTS – Learner Outcomes</b> The quality Montessori school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents outcomes and uses these results to improve learner outcomes and school effectiveness.	<b>STANDARD COMPLIANCE:</b>	
	<u>Fully Met</u>	Not Met
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
4.1 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for evaluating progress toward meeting the established expectations for student learning across age levels, which may include research-based assessment tools and/or alignment with common core and/or state standards.	<u>YES</u>	NO
4.2 Uses student assessment data in making decisions that impact continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes.	<u>YES</u>	NO
4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional effectiveness and uses the results to improve student learning.	<u>YES</u>	NO
4.4 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations.	<u>YES</u>	NO

As applicable to **Elementary** and **secondary** levels:

<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
4.5 Communicates the results of learner outcomes and school effectiveness to all stakeholders.	<u>YES</u> N/A	NO
4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of learner outcomes from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness.	<u>YES</u> N/A	NO
4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in learner outcomes.	<u>YES</u> N/A	NO

**Impact Statement**

A quality Montessori school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined outcome measures. The system is used to assess student outcomes on expectations for student learning, to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student learning. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information, both qualitative and quantitative, that is meaningful and useful to students, school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding learner outcomes, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

## **COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

### **Comments:**

CMP-SJ puts student achievement squarely at the forefront in every decision made. Formative and summative assessments along with teacher observations are evaluated and data-driven changes and additions are made to the curriculum and program. The Montessori curriculum has been aligned with

the Common Core State Standards in an effort to offer a quality, authentic Montessori program while also meeting the standards of the State of California. These regular reviews have led to strategic plan items designed specifically to review and enhance the curriculum offered by CMP. The commitment to all students' achievement is immediately obvious and laudable. Clear examples include the special education program, and the implemented English Language Learner and Response to Intervention systems. The fact that all are continuously reviewed and revised with the last being part of the strategic plan in an effort to further increase the efficacy of the program and therefore guarantee its success is further testament to the commitment.

### **Commendations:**

The visiting team comments CMP-SJ for:

- its thorough assessment techniques.
- continually growing their investment in obtaining, understanding, and rendering useful the data collected about learner outcomes; the overall CMP leadership involves ongoing sharing between the Executive Director, the Director of Program, and leads in technology and Special Education
- putting in place an RtI process to help support students' educational needs and the overall importance of peaceful, safe campuses with a coherent approach to discipline.

### **Recommendations:**

The visiting team recommends that CMP-SJ:

- seriously, strategically, and methodically review the technology plan with an eye to using technology to enhance student learning concomitant with Montessori rather than having it replace Montessori Methods, techniques, and lessons.



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

<b>STANDARD 5: PERSONNEL</b> The quality Montessori school provides for ethical, fair, and non-discriminatory practices for all employees, teaching and non-teaching.	<b>STANDARD COMPLIANCE:</b>	
	<u>Fully Met</u> Substantially Met	Not Met
<b>CRITERIA:</b>		
5.1 Provides written employment agreements for all school personnel annually, including written job descriptions, compensation, benefits, and terms of employment.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.2 Provides an employee handbook that includes a written non-discrimination policy.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.3 Ensures that all staff participates in a continuous program of professional development and documents teachers' plans for and participation in ongoing professional development.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.4 Provides opportunities for faculty and staff to provide input in decision-making.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.5 Ensures that the Head of School and at least 50% of credentialed lead teachers maintain active membership in the American Montessori Society.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.6 Maintains copies of lead teachers' Montessori credentials, licenses, teaching certificates, and transcripts and updates this information with AMS as changes occur.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.7 Implements an annual evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel and maintains records of all evaluations.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.8 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience).	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.8.1 Administrative leader (head of school/principal/executive director) has professional qualifications that meet state and local regulations, as applicable.  Emerging criterion effective July 1, 2020: Administrative leader (head of school/principal/executive director) holds a bachelor's degree and qualifies with the minimum number of points required in the Head of School Requirements Verification.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO
5.8.2 A school that employs more than one lead teacher shall designate an educational supervisor/coordinator who holds a qualifying Montessori administrator or teacher credential. The coordinator will oversee the consistency of educational quality and serve as a resource to other staff members.	<b><u>YES</u></b>	NO



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**

5.8.3	<p>Employs lead teachers who qualify with the minimum number of points required in the Teacher Requirements Verification and hold a Montessori teaching credential for the age level taught. Pre-1991 credentials must be from a non-distance learning Montessori teacher education program. Post-1991 credentials must be from an AMS, NCME, AMI teacher education program, or from a MACTE-accredited course. Note: All AMS teacher education programs are accredited by MACTE.</p> <p>*Emerging criterion effective July 1, 2020: Secondary teachers must hold a Montessori teaching credential for the age level taught from an AMS, NCME, AMI teacher education program, or a MACTE-accredited course.</p>	<u>YES</u>	NO
5.8.4	Elementary and secondary lead teachers must hold a Bachelor’s degree from a regionally-accredited institution or equivalent.	<u>YES</u>	NO
5.9	Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet criterion 3.6 and the mission and vision of the school.	<u>YES</u>	NO

**Impact Statement**

A quality Montessori school is successful in meeting this standard when it clearly states and adheres to roles and responsibilities expected of all employees and employs qualified personnel. The school states and follows fair and ethical employment practices for all employees.

**Comments:**

In every interview and conversation, it was made clear to the visiting team how highly-valued the staff on each campus is. Teachers spoke of each other with reverence. Parents were clearly appreciative of all that the teachers do for their children daily and only hoped that the teachers could be paid better. Other campus personnel were respected and valued. The personnel practices and expectations are well outlined and followed and make for a peaceful and cohesive staff. Representation on the Board by a teacher ensures that the teaching staff has a voice in the overarching decision-making at CMP.

**Commendations:**

The Visiting Team commends

- CMP-SJ’s program of support for all staff. Professional Development opportunities built into the monthly calendar and sending the entire staff to the AMS annual conference are two examples of this as are Super Duper Saturdays, which shows an important commitment to growth, understanding, and respect for Teacher’s Assistants; staff is shown that they matter.
- Leadership at the CMP-SJ campuses are generous with their time, thoughts, and communities; principals and deans of students show their care and concern for the quality of their schools and their processes of growth.

**Recommendations:**

The Visiting Team recommends that

- CMP continue to explore ways to increase teacher salaries. While the board has made strides in this area, the base salaries are still below that of surrounding area schools yet CMP-SJ teachers are required to have dual certification (Montessori and State of California)

## COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT

### SECTION V: Commendations and Recommendations

#### COMMENDATIONS

The AMS Accreditation On-Site Visiting Team commends the school for:

- the clear devotion to the Montessori Method, Philosophy, and Curriculum. This was clearly articulated by all constituencies--teaching staff, administration, Board, parents, and students-- and has resulted in evincibly devoted campus communities.
- the “Montessoriness” of the facilities. These otherwise unimpressive, old-school buildings have been lovingly rejuvenated as true Montessori learning environments with peaceful, beautiful, authentic, enviable classrooms.
- the commitment to the staff by Central Office and the Board. Opportunities for whole-staff professional development across campuses and individual growth of both lead teachers and paraprofessionals are plenty and valuable. The recent board decision to increase teacher salaries is further evidence of this commitment.
- the on-going, thorough review of learner outcomes and the resulting task-forces and work-groups assembled to use this data to improve the program.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The AMS Accreditation On-Site Visiting Team recommends that the Project:

- re-appraise and edit its current technology plan with an eye to revising it to reflect a more Montessori-centric sensibility. While technology may be used to expose students to information not otherwise accessible in the classroom, offer additional practice in new areas, and fill a niche not covered in the Montessori curriculum (e.g.: World Language), it should not be the de-facto fall-back option when learning gaps are discerned through assessment. Rather, CMP should exhaust all opportunities to fill these gaps with hands-on Montessori materials and Montessori lessons methodology before deciding that computer/technology options are best.
- current working groups and task-forces reviewing curriculum changes and enhancements do this through a Montessori lens to ensure that CMP will always be an example of authentic, quality Montessori for all of its students.
- revise the Strategic Plan to include specific time markers and funding sources.



**COOPERATIVE ACCREDITATION ON-SITE VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**SECTION VI: Self-Study Verification Checklist**

(Please mark each item as *Yes*, *No*, or *N/A* (not applicable). Any items marked as “No” must be addressed by the on-site team with a recommendation.)

- YES The school meets all Standards for American Montessori Society schools.
- 3.2, 3.13.4 The following criteria for American Montessori Society schools are not currently in compliance (for example, criterion 3.1):  
3.2, 3.13.4
- YES A recommendation has been made for any unmet standard. (Required)
- YES The self-study was comprehensive, organized and clearly a collaborative process.
- YES Profile of the School is in congruence with the self-study.
- YES The school’s Guiding Principles and Mission are in congruence with the self-study
- YES The Educational Nature of the school is in congruence with the self-study and includes all of the six essential characteristics of an American Montessori school. These are:
  1. Montessori Learning Environment - *Child-centered, responsive, adaptive with individually construed competence;*
  2. Montessori’s Learning Activities - *Materials, spontaneous activity, active learning, self-directed, freedom within limits, intrinsic motivation;*
  3. Montessori Learning Relationships - *Mixed-age grouping, social community setting, cooperation, collaboration not competition;*
  4. Montessori Spirituality - *The child as a spiritual and moral being;*
  5. What the Montessori Teacher Is - *Authoritative, observer, resource, consultant, role model;*
  6. What the Montessori Teacher Does - *Respectfully engages with learner, able to match learner with knowledge and materials, environment designer, organizer, and preparer*
- YES In the self-study report, The Educational Nature of the School discusses the school’s strengths as well as areas that need to be improved.
- YES The Learner Outcomes of the School is in congruence with the self-study and includes all of the nine essential characteristics of an American Montessori school. These are:
  1. Independence
  2. Confidence and Competence
  3. Autonomy
  4. Intrinsic Motivation
  5. Social Responsibility
  6. Academic Preparation
  7. Spiritual Awareness
  8. Global Citizenship
- YES The school has updated or written a strategic plan.
- YES The strategic plan contains goals, objectives, timelines, resources, and monitoring