

Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School 2017 Charter Renewal Proposal



The mission of Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School is to foster healthy human development and a life-long love of learning in our community by providing a holistic approach to education.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

PART 1:

- I. Renewal Proposal
 - A. Request for a five-year charter contract term
 - B. Request to increase the ADM charter rate for middle school students
 - C. Request for increasing current enrollment cap
 - D. Request to increase GBSD Special Education service hours

PART 2:

- II. A History of Success
- III. Value added to the District
- IV. School sustainability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the LCMCS Students, Staff and Board we are pleased to present our Charter Renewal proposal for your review.

It has been our honor to provide this program to our students, our District and our community. LCMCS has had a highly successful nine year history under our belt, and we improved our program each year to ensure the fully-implemented, high-fidelity Montessori program remains an option to the students and families in our community.

The LCMCS Board of Directors would like to thank everyone we worked with at the District for their help and guidance in preparation for this renewal and look forward to working with you.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or for more information.

Sincerely,

LCMCS Board of Directors

Matt Lee, Board Chair

April Geiger, Vice Chair

Rob Hendrickson, Treasurer

Pam Harkin, Secretary

Julia Tomes, Board Member

Camille Goldy, Board Member

Melissa Harbert, Executive Director

1. Renewal Proposal

LCMCS is pleased to be a valuable contributor to education options in the Gresham-Barlow School District, and honored to contribute to the District's mission of a world-class education for all students and to support the goal of preparing students for success.

A. Request charter term of five years

Lewis & Clark Montessori requests that Gresham-Barlow School District grant a fourth charter contract with a term length of five years. As we reach the end of our third charter contract, which has been five years in length, we believe we continue to be a collaborative partner with the district to provide an educational alternative for the children of GBSD and surrounding districts. Year after year, we are fully enrolled with a long wait-list of applicants, proving the demand for this program continues to be high.

The five year term has enabled the school to plan for the future and make more effective decisions about how best utilize resources and invest in our program and equipment that will last for years to come. The school has also been able to be more effective in fundraising efforts, including looking more attractive to funders with grants we've pursued, giving greater confidence that the organization that funders are supporting not only has a long term plan but a commitment from the GBSD to see that plan through.

B. Request gradual increase to 90% allocation of ADM for grades 7 and 8

Lewis & Clark's graduates are not only excelling in high school, but are proving themselves to be valuable assets to the school communities they join. Though just two graduating classes have launched into area public high schools, the students are making waves in academics, music and theater, and civic engagement. These are the kind of students GBSD can be proud of.

Preparation for such success in school begins at the younger grades at Lewis & Clark, and we note that in particular those who stay the program for the duration are fully prepared for what they encounter in the secondary schools. Thanks to a high retention rate across the school, most students graduating from our 8th grade have been at Lewis & Clark for most if not all of their school career.

Students in our middle school program learn through experience with higher-level thinking and problem solving in classes that use a more Socratic method of research and discussion. They go to the source when studying, examining original texts of the great thinkers and scientists through the ages. Students gain direct experience of civic participation

through micro-economies they themselves manage. They are exposed to real world problems and work to find possible solutions in their own cohorts. Students are encouraged to question, explore, and experience the world with the guidance of the specially trained adults around them.

This high level of instruction, though, means higher costs. The student to teacher ratio is much lower at the middle school level, ideally at 10:1. This gives growing minds both the contact with people with experience and knowledge to help guide them intellectually, as well as the kind of social safety net that an adolescent needs. The materials and texts used are more expensive than at the elementary level, and the cost of the trips into the civic and natural world to further their education can't all be borne by the parents.

We therefore request that the District consider an ADM increase of 2% per annum over the next 5 years, for a total of 90% by 2022, for the enrolled middle school students at Lewis & Clark. Referring to the growth plan, the program will reach a maximum of 80 students, out of the 375 proposed. This extra ADM will help Lewis & Clark continue to prepare its middle school students at its current level, without having to overburden the school's ability to increasingly raise funds through alternate means.

C. Request to increase enrollment cap

The original plan for LCMCS was to grow by one grade level per year until it reaches the end of middle school, or includes 8th grade, and the school has fulfilled that plan admirably, growing to 344 students in grades K-8 in this school year.

The current charter contract with GBSD includes a cap of 353 students. To complete our growth plan, continuing the growth of students added at the younger grades through middle school, the school will need an additional 22 spaces, for a cap of 375. This number will complete the growth cycle, and with the exception of adding fee-based programs for Pre-Kindergarten, will provide for school sustainability for the long term. The school has consistently had far more applicants than spaces available, and could grow to an even larger size, which the school leadership has resisted. The cap of 375 students will allow the school to responsibly serve the community as well as ensure its longevity.

1. The Lewis & Clark Montessori Growth Model

The growth plan in Appendix A illustrates how the school leadership envisions the school developing over the next 5 years. We believe that this model will best serve the needs of the school's community, allow the vision to be fully realized, and enable the school to be both robust and self-sustaining without over-reaching resources. This growth

plan assumes maximum growth at all levels to accommodate addition of students at the younger grades. The maximum would allow flexibility, though in any given year the full enrollment may not be completely populated.

- Flexible per class enrollment over time. Note that full enrollment in the Lower Elementary classrooms would include 33 students, but allows for a slight decrease over the five years. With 4 classrooms, the lower student number gives flexibility in staffing, curriculum, service opportunities for the students, and for populating the upper grades. In other words, the maximum of 375 may not be necessarily reached every year, but would allow for growth and sustainability at all levels without the pressure the school experiences with the necessity to fill all spaces during the year in order to simply meet budget. The plan will allow for some attrition, which will keep numbers of students with a history at Lewis & Clark more consistent.
- The Growth Plan also illustrates that there is a “bulge” of enrollment currently at 5th grade. This increase in students began several years ago, when increasing enrollment for school sustainability was a necessity, as well as decreased pressure on the burgeoning wait list. In order for those 5th graders to be accommodated by the middle school, the school must grow to 375. Otherwise, there would need to be a second lottery for entrance into the middle school program, which would necessitate excluding some students who had gone to Lewis & Clark for many years, fully intending to join and benefit the middle school program. Excluding those students would be doing them a great disservice.

Once the school reaches this size, with 375 students the growth plan will be complete. The LCMCS Board and Administration believe that it will best be financially viable and sustainable, as an enhancement to the GBSD as an educational alternative for many years to come.

D. Request to increase the GBSD Special Education service hours at Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School

Lewis & Clark personnel have very successfully collaborated with the GBSD Student Services team assigned to our school to identify and provide services for students with special needs. The collaboration began with formulating a pre-referral process for teachers to follow, a referral and SAT process that meets the needs of students and determining RTI over time, and cooperation with eligibility determination as needed. The GBSD team being on-site has made a decided difference in ability to access needed services.

However, over time, the need for services has grown. Not only has the school grown in size, but Lewis & Clark’s reputation for success in serving students with learning

differences has spread via word of mouth, so that need for services has risen disproportionately higher than the percentage of enrollment growth alone would determine.

The educational staff at Lewis & Clark is aware that the number of hours dedicated to serving the students at our school is less than adequate, putting undue pressure on numerous service, communication, and scheduling issues. The GBSD professionals themselves have requested additional hours or staffing be added, and some relief has materialized, but with our charter contract renewal we are requesting that further study of the needs and the assignments be undertaken to best serve our population.

See tables and discussion below:

**1. Students with academic/behavioral IEPs receiving services from
RMT assigned to LCMCS**

School year	LCMCS K-8 numbers	Number of grades	Number of classrooms	RMT caseload Fall/Winter/Spring
2016-2017	344	K - 8	15	16/19
2015-2016	304	K - 8	11	17/16/17
2014-2015	274	K - 8	9	10/ 10/ 13
2013-2014	240	K - 7	8	9/ 9/ 11
2012-2013	204	K - 6	7	3/ 5/ 9
2011-2012	177	K - 5	6	3

The RMT is contracted to work 20 hours per week, to be divided between two charter schools, which includes prep time and case management. With the case load at Lewis & Clark, the other charter school is reduced to one hour each week of service time, one hour of consultation and case management, and one hour most weeks for meeting times.

This leaves 14 hours per week scheduled at Lewis & Clark to provide all of the IEP services, as well as attend meetings and conduct evaluations. Many of the IEPs call for higher number of hours, so the reality has become that the RMT does many hours of planning and paperwork outside of contracted work hours from home. The RMT has stated to us and to the GBSD Student Services staff that she has tracked over 100 hours of LCMCS work outside of contracted work hours for the school year thus far.

Toward amending this situation, GBSD did hire an EA support to help with services for 3.5 hours four days per week, and that has relieved some of the extremity of the situation. We are grateful for that assistance. We do ask, however, that this matter be given closer study and attention, and that the students have the required time with the RMT without having to risk losing a very fine professional due to work overload and burnout.

**2. Students with Speech and Language IEPs receiving services from
GBSD SLP assigned to LCMCS**

School year	LCMCS K-8 numbers	Number of grades	Number of classrooms	SLP caseload
2016-2017	374	K - 8	15	18
2015-2016	304	K - 8	11	17
2014-2015	274	K - 8	9	11

The SLP is assigned to Lewis & Clark 5.5 hours per week, but uses extra hours when not at other assignment schools to assess our students, due to the high caseload.

2. A History of Success

A. Evidence program effectiveness

There may be no better evidence of the success of the Montessori program at Lewis & Clark than the very evident success of the graduates of the program as they go onto secondary school.

June of 2015 saw the first graduating class of ten 8th grade students from LCMCS, and 8 more graduated in June 2016. Most of the students had been with the school from the early elementary grades. The students and families researched area high schools and have chosen to attend Gresham High, Barlow High, Sandy High, Cleveland High, and the Springwater High School, as well as the Milwaukie Academy of the Arts. The students have all been frequent visitors to LCMCS events in throughout the school year, and the parents and students alike report a successful transition to high school from LCMCS. Families report that our graduates are fully engaged in AP classes, sports, drama, music, arts, and other clubs in their chosen schools. They are meeting academic success, with a reported 4.0 GPA for all 10 of the first graduates, and a similar success story thus far this year for the 8 who graduated in 2016.

The students themselves have stated that they felt well-prepared for high school, after some time of getting lost in the much larger buildings at first, and in fact felt they have a comparatively higher level of preparation both academically and socially than their peers: one former LCMCS student opined that “most of the other kids at my high school really could have benefited from a Montessori education” because she noted fellow students from other middle schools had a harder time adjusting to high school. A parent of another LCMCS graduate stated that her son “often gets mistaken for an older student because of his level of self-confidence”. Another parent reports that watching her oldest daughter adjust so easily to high school has made

her once again glad that she chose Montessori for all of her children. We will continue to track our graduates and report on their successes and challenges as time goes on.

B. Curriculum and Program Development

Montessori education provides a holistic curriculum which not only meets the Common Core Standards, but goes much beyond that, developing civic and social-emotional skills with greater emphasis than other education delivery methods.

Important to learning is assessment skill acquisition. Though our students' scores on the current Smarter Balanced/OAKS standardized tests appear to be lower than district or state averages, actual student knowledge of content area and ability to apply knowledge in a variety of settings continues to be high, as evidenced by progress over time on such measures as the Easy CBM. Additionally, the Montessori materials themselves provide daily hard evidence of student learning, progress of which is tracked by educational personnel.

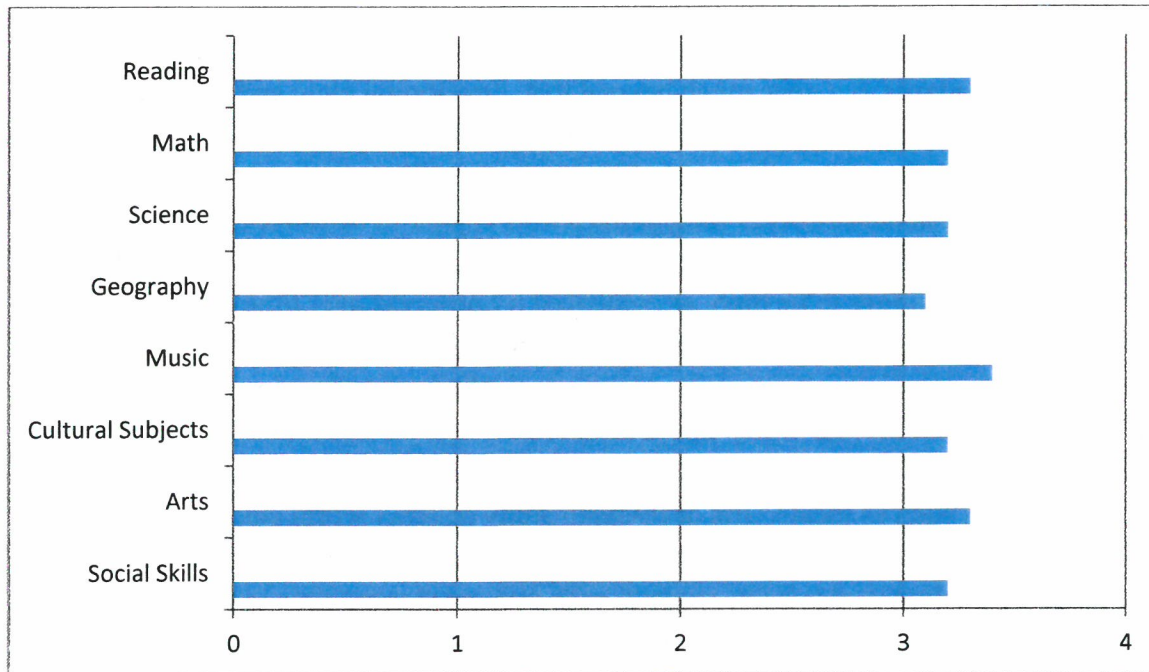
An innovation this year which has proven effective is the introduction of electives at the elementary level. While all students are required to participate in a music elective each year, other subjects such as theater arts or in-depth study of other world cultures are offered as a choice. Signing up involves conferencing with the teacher, which helps students make choices for more study, but also helps students who may need more time in the classroom with developing skills better evaluate whether that is a more suitable choice for them.

E. Parent/Community Satisfaction

Lewis & Clark's school leadership considers that the organization is community-based and seeks to improve programs and services in conjunction with evaluation of the feedback from its stakeholders. While school leadership recognizes that stakeholder feedback can vary widely and that it would be unwise to allow public opinion to strictly influence decision-making, input from the community is an important indicator of community satisfaction and program effectiveness. It also has the effect of helping community members feel heard and that there are venues for the expression of ideas.

The high retention rate of our families speaks well to the general satisfaction with the school. The results of the 2015-16 Parent Satisfaction Survey were shared in the Annual Report to GBSD in February. A new survey just concluded and in conjunction with our strategic planning process showed, among other results, the following:

Q: How would you rate our school's current quality in these subject areas?



3. Value added to the District:

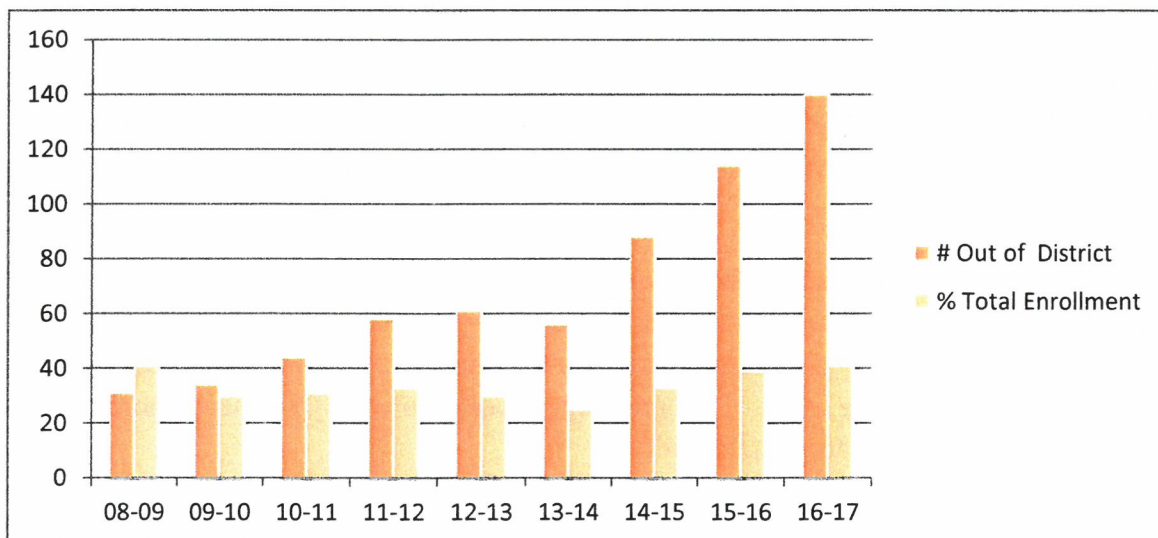
LCMCS is proud of its valuable contribution to the education options in the Gresham-Barlow School District. We are honored to support the District's mission of "every student prepared for success". Montessori education, similarly, can be described as "preparing students for life".

LCMCS provides measurable value to the Gresham-Barlow School District. Providing a high-quality Montessori option not available within the district or in most adjacent districts, this charter school enrolls students from 13 districts outside of GBSD, and even inspires parents to move into the district to enhance their chances of enrollment. The quality of the program at LCMCS promotes the District's reputation of a willingness to support innovative educational programs. The program also assists in retention of families that are seeking educational options for their child by providing an attractive option to home-school and private-school programs in our community.

Within the Portland environs as well as the national Montessori community, GBSD has received many commendations for sponsoring the first Public Montessori program in the Metro area. We work hard to emphasize that the success of LCMCS is due to a close working relationship with the District and a collaborative approach that seeks to provide the highest service to the student community.

Lewis & Clark has proven itself as a program of high demand in the extended metropolitan area and beyond. We are continually surprised by the level of interest beyond our community and how dedicated the out-of-district families in our school community are to LCMCS. They are thrilled to have gained successful enrollment in LCMCS and some travel a fair distance to attend the school. Increasingly, the word of the quality of education at LCMCS is spreading, and currently families travel from the western direction from Oregon City and West Linn, and the Mt Tabor neighborhood in Portland, from the east from Sandy and Welches, and drive from the south from as Molalla and Mulino. These are families that would otherwise be customers of other districts, and we are proud to include them on our ADM roles and support the provision of this additional revenue to the District.

B. In-district compared to out-of-district enrollment. The school enrolls students from thirteen different school districts in addition to the GBSD: Portland SD, Centennial SD, Parkrose SD, Reynolds SD, Oregon Trail SD, Oregon City SD, West Linn SD, Mollala SD, David Douglas SD, Estacada SD, and McMinnville SD, North Clackamas SD, Corbett SD, Evergreen SD, Tualatin SD. (140 out of district, or 41% of all enrolled students).



Through a variety of community service and other activities, LCMCS gives positive PR to the District through fundraising and forming organizational and business partnerships in our area, through news stories and a generally positive public image. The school administration is networked nationally and internationally to the wider Montessori community, which has come to view LCMCS as a model of what public Montessori programs can be.

LCMCS recognizes that the school would not be where it is without the assistance from the District. From providing experienced advice and recommendations to leasing the school facilities, GBSD has proven to be a true support, and LCMCS is grateful for the kind of assistance that helps the school's success.

4. School sustainability

Lewis & Clark must retain enrollment numbers of 350-375 if the school is to be sustainable. Research on charter school successes nationwide indicates a strong correlation with ability to grow to a sustainable size in order to be self-sustaining. Our consistently high wait list, in addition to the current ability to operate with all programs under one roof, has been insurance for the past three years that the school is sustainable.

Fundraising and development continues to be a focus of the school leadership, and though gains have been modest, growth will also allow the school to look at hiring additional administration, including possibly a Development Director, to assist with the increasing levels of alternate revenue streams that a sustainable future necessitates. The school is planning for permanent facilities, and will need to conduct a capital campaign to procure a permanent home. Foundation and governmental grants will continue to be pursued as options for funding, as will the development of resource streams such as expanding our fee-based programs, business partnerships and community involvement to assist underwriting of programs.

LCMCS has provided a three-year budget, with staffing levels indicated annually, to cover the proposed growth plan. Please refer to the three-year budget overview in Appendix B. The income indicated in each year was based on the minimum number of students needed to meet only the basics of the needs of the growing school each year. Obviously, more enrollment will result in greater sustainability.

The leadership team is undergoing a renewal of the school's Strategic Plan to reflect progress and to plan toward long-term goals, and to define short term action plans to meet the needs of the growing school. Financial planning is done in alignment with stated goals.

Appendix A

PROGRAM/LEVEL	GRADE	Current year, enrollment as of 1/2017 2016-17	In current facility, grow Children's House, grow MAC (natural growth from upper el) 2017-18	Move to new facility? Add Toddler Community, grow MAC, begin elementary class size reduction 2018-19	Grow Toddler Community, add 3rd Children's House, divide K's, continue reduction of elementary 2019-20	Grow 3rd Children's house class size, all else steady 2020-21	Maintain enrollment at this level 2021-22
Toddler (projected)				4	8	8	8
Preschool		28	36	36	48	54	54
TOTAL FEE-BASED		28	36	40	56	62	62
Kindergarten	K	47	45	45	44	44	44
Lower Elementary							
	1st	43	45	43	42	42	42
	2nd	45	43	45	42	42	42
	3rd	44	45	43	44	42	42
Upper Elementary							
	4th	43	44	43	40	43	42
	5th	41	43	42	43	40	43
	6th	31	41	42	40	41	41
Middle School							
	7th	30	31	41	40	40	40
	8th	21	30	31	40	40	40
TOTAL CHARTER ENROLLMENT		345	367	375	375	375	375
TOTAL ALL ENROLLMENT		373	403	415	431	437	437

Appendix B

Please see attached three-year proposed budget summary

Appendix C

Please see attached letters of community support

**LEWIS CLARK MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL
PROPOSED THREE YEAR BUDGET
2018-2020**

						2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Ordinary Income/Expense								
Income								
		2000-29 · ADM District Revenue				2,196,040	2,244,752	2,312,095
		3000-07 · Before & After School Care				56,650	62,315	68,547
		3000-08 - Community Learning Center				28,840	30,282	31,796
		3000-09 · Children's House				297,836	340,029	490,188
		3000-10 · Materials Fee				100,925	112,500	112,500
		3000-11 - Late Fee Income				500	500	500
		3000-12 - Misc Income				12,500	12,500	12,500
		3000-13 - Trip/Events Parent Paid				59,000	68,000	68,000
		3000-14 · Lunch Income				140,800	145,024	166,778
		3000-15 - Alternative Revenue Sources (including Annual Fund, Auction, Jogathons & MAC)				232,500	321,000	427,200
		Total Income				3,125,591	3,336,902	3,690,103
		Expense						
		100-100 · Salaries						
		100-110 · Regular Salaries						
		Total 100-110 · Regular Salaries				1,631,623	1,788,898	1,929,990
		100-120 · Non-Permanent Salaries						
		Total 100-120 · Non-Permanent Salaries				29,000	29,000	29,000
		Total 100-100 · Salaries				1,660,623	1,817,898	1,958,990
		200-200 · Associated Payroll Cost						
		200-210 · Employee Benefits						
		200-211 · PERS				363,178	397,574	531,278
		Total 200-210 · Employee Benefits				563,090	635,729	820,017
		200-230 · Other Required Payroll Cost						
		Total 200-230 · Other Required Payroll Cost				193,789	211,212	226,860
		Total 200-200 · Associated Payroll Cost				756,878	846,941	1,046,878
		300-300 · Purchased Service						
		300-310 · Community Learning Center Contractor				3,300	3,630	3,993
		300-320 · Property Services						
		Total 300-320 · Property Services (includes rent & maintenance)				124,425	128,056	131,796
		300-340 · Moving & Automotive Expenses						

										2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total 300-340 · Moving & Automotive Expenses										5,000	5,000	5,000
300-350 - Communications												
Total 300-350 · Communications										27,360	27,610	27,860
300-380 - Non-Instructional Services												
Total 300-380 · Non-Instructional Services										38,850	38,850	38,850
Total 300-300 · Purchased Service										195,635	199,516	203,506
400-400 · Program expenditures												
400-410 · Classroom Supplies										16,775	17,700	17,700
Total 400-410 · Classroom Supplies										16,775	17,700	17,700
400-420 · Montessori Materials										14,500	14,500	14,500
Total 400-420 · Materials										20,000	20,000	20,000
400-450 · Lunch Expenses												
Total 400-450 · Lunch Expenses										86,920	94,862	94,862
Total 400-400 · Program expenditures										146,695	157,762	160,182
500-500 - Capital Outlay												
Total 500-500 · Capital Outlay										29,000	29,000	29,000
600-600 - Operation Expenses												
Total 600-600 · Operation Expenses										27,500	27,500	27,500
800-800 - Student Trips, Outings & Events												
Total 800-800 · Student Trips, Outings & Events										59,000	68,000	68,000
900-910 - ARS Expenses												
Total 900-910 · ARS Expenses										13,000	13,000	13,000
Total Expense										2,888,331	3,159,617	3,507,055
Net Ordinary Income										237,260	177,286	183,048
Other Expense												
900-990 - Debt Service & Collection												
900-991 - Debt Servicing										2,744		
Total Other Expense										2,744		
Net Other Income										-2,744	0	0
Net Income										234,516	177,286	183,048

March 8, 2017

Gresham Barlow School District
1331 NE Eastman Parkway
Gresham, OR 97030

Dear Board Members:

Firstly let me congratulate you on the passing of the district school bond that I know consumed so much of your time and energy. I'm glad that your dedication to ensuring funding to provide high level education and safety to our students has been fruitful and look forward to all the improvements in store.

The focus of this correspondence is my continued support of Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School in requesting charter renewal. Our family has been a part of LCMCS since its inception and have 2 students who will be graduating from 8th grade this year. I cannot be more thrilled by the level of education provided by the school. LCMCS is actually more than a school, it is a community of learning.

I hope you each, at some point, have the chance to observe the Wisdom Day Ceremony at the beginning of each school year. The oldest students walk the youngest students into the building. It is a symbol of the elders welcoming the newest members and demonstrating that they are available to share their experiences and wisdom with the new students as they embrace their academic adventures, struggles and achievements. As the students sing songs of peace and carry flowers, they enter the school in single file - each shaking hands with and being welcomed by the administrators. This is such a beautiful representation of the school and its commitment to each and every member of its community.

There have been many challenges over the past 9 years, but LCMCS has evolved into a very well-rounded learning institution. From the classroom teachers to the fabulous kitchen staff; from the administrators to the parent volunteers; from the farm staff to the community learning organizers; from the directors of the Farmer's Market to the Sr. Citizen support volunteers; from the PTO members to the Board of Directors; it appears as if everyone shares the same goal of providing a healthy, safe learning center where each student is actively involved in the direction of their education and understands that they are supported and nurtured by their environment.

Over the years, I have seen an increase in teaching support for children with special needs and an increased focus on outdoor education. The music program is extensive and the children have increased exposure to foreign cultures and languages. The school hosts annual art and science fairs that many students look forward to participating in and attending. School communications to parents and families is frequent and detailed. A lovely newsletter keeps us informed about school activities and introduces us to staff members with whom we may not have immediate contact. There is a new position this year for Director of Development which shows the schools dedication to increasing funds and thriving financially. The school focuses a lot of attention on safely directing traffic around drop off and pick up at the school and the 2 bus stops in Gresham.

As more students are graduating from LCMCS and moving to local high schools, we are seeing how well they are performing both academically and socially in the public school environment. Many are thriving. I have heard several students state how well LCMCS prepared them for

managing their academic schedules. Many of us parents are proud to hear of their achievements and accomplishments. It is a testament to the strong community of LCMCS that the graduated students often return to LCMCS events to revisit old teachers, staff and friends.

I am extremely grateful to the Gresham-Barlow School District for initially approving our charter and working with us in the past through all of our growing pains. I am extremely grateful for your support with facilities and know that when my children are adults, they will truly come to appreciate the amazing facilities and grounds that they got to experience every day. I humbly seek your continued support for the school and hope that generations of children can experience the gift of community that is LCMCS. Together we are providing amazing opportunities for children and adults to thrive. I hope you are proud of the achievements we have accomplished together. I look forward to seeing what comes next.

Sincerely Yours,

Leah Yamaguchi

(Loving parent of two 8th graders and a 5th grader.)

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Roger Robinson
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Gresham, OR 97080
Eastwind.computers@comcast.net

03/09/17

Regarding Lewis and Clark Montessori School

As a small business in Gresham since 1997, we have been able to work with many businesses and individuals over the years, and few have been more pleasurable to work with than Lewis and Clark. Because of their connection to the community, they reached out to us, a small, local business for their IT needs rather than use the larger companies like Dell and HP as much of our local schools/government do. That relationship began many years ago and has continued to grow as their needs have grown. When they brought us computers last summer that they thought they needed to completely replace, we were able to save them a lot of money by upgrading just a few pieces instead of starting all over. And when they needed computers for a special project and didn't have the resources for new ones, we were able to provide them with two laptops that had been recycled here at the shop. We also upgraded many older apple laptops so that they could be used for a couple of more years, rather than going out and buying new ones. This shows me that they not only support their local community, but they also care about the environment by being resourceful rather than wasteful when it comes to their IT needs.

Melissa, Mishawn, and the rest of the staff at Lewis and Clark have always been great to work with and it is clear that they are passionate about the kids lives and the work that they do. Having places like Lewis and Clark, that plug into our community and compliment our existing school system, are very important for the different needs and learning styles of our ever growing and more diverse population.

As the parents of three daughters who attended a private, Christian school, my wife and I were grateful to have a charter school as an option for our girls to continue their educations in a smaller, more hands-on environment. They also, at different points in their education, attended public schools in the Gresham/Barlow district and were able to have the experience and perspective of both and we believe this greatly influenced the well rounded, contributing individuals that they each have become.

We look forward to a continuing relationship with Lewis and Clark Montessori for years to come and support their great work in our community.

Sincerely

Roger Robinson
Owner/Partner
Eastwind Computers



Melissa Harbert <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

For the district

1 message

Melissa Hendrickson <mduchess@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 9, 2017 at 2:10 PM

To: mharbert@lcmcs.org

My husband and I moved to Oregon about 18 months ago. For my husband it was a return to Oregon where he was born but it was new for me and our two boys. As we looked at where we wanted to live In Oregon we were thrilled when we found this Montessori charter school and helped cement our decision to live in Gresham. We had been looking at West Linn and Lake Oswego where my husband had attended school as a child but this school swayed that decision and we are proud parents of two children now at this school.

I feel this school and this method is a wonderful option. My oldest, age 8, is flourishing. He is gifted academically and a traditional school might bump him into another class, older class. Montessori does that not do that. While he may be intelligent he is still very much an eight year old boy and needs to be with kids his age. My youngest, only four, is also doing well. Montessori not only teaches my son to read and write but how to put on his shoes, his jackets and other living skills.

At a doctor's appointment for myself my doctor and I started talking about what school my sons attended. I discovered my doctor's children had attended a private Montessori. We discussed the advantages and how well his kids, all 20 or more, flourished. His kids transitioned beautifully as they went to a traditional high school, to college and some advanced schooling beyond that. Each child is a successful adult. His youngest however, did not get the full Montessori experience. This child too has become successful but has had a harder time of things.

All that to say, I truly believe in this school, in this form of teaching both first hand and from examples like this. I hope this district will do all that it can to fully support our school and my boys.

Thanks,

Melissa Hendrickson

Sent from my iPad

ALEX EARL & KIM MCCOY

24010 NE Treehill Drive • Wood Village, Oregon 97060 • USA
M (503) 913-3337 • alex.s.earl@gmail.com • www.linkedin.com/in/alexanderearl

March 7, 2017

Melissa Harbert
Executive Director
Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School
15600 SE 232nd Drive
Damascus, Oregon
97089

RE: Letter of Support for 2017 Charter Renewal

Dear Melissa:

As parents of Zander Earl who is a Grade 1 student in the Pacific Classroom with Marilyn Dunham (and who was previously a Children's House and Kindergarten student with Andy LeTourneau), we are honored to express enthusiastic support for the 2017 charter renewal for Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School (LCMCS). When we first returned to the Portland metro area in 2014 from time away we were determined to continue our son's Montessori education and we were very fortunate to be warmly welcomed into the amazing world of LCMCS.

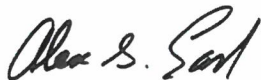
On the edge of the 'Silicon Forest,' surrounded by spectacular Pacific Northwest mountains, we found this one of a kind educational institution. Guided by visionary leadership, in partnership with a highly educated and seasoned staff and inspired students and parents, LCMCS creates a world-class Montessori experience.

Students are surrounded by and immersed in commitments to organic food and lunches; organic farming and local distribution, including participating in the local Farmers' Market; the environment; community engagement; a global perspective; student diversity; economic diversity; outdoor, music, and foreign language education; and enriching after school care and extra-curricular activities. These commitments are forged from the principles of social entrepreneurship and innovation to generate broad positive returns for society which will ripple across coming decades.

Together these elements converge into 'lightning in a bottle' to create a truly unique and holistic education that represents an ongoing evolution of the Montessori philosophy. With the rise of the information economy and globalization, the LCMCS experience is the education of the future. Parents in the Portland metro area, across the country, and internationally have also taken notice of this cutting-edge institution which is a credit to the Gresham Barlow School District, the State of Oregon, and the United States. Countries with top-ranked education systems, like Finland, have also taken notice and are incorporating many Montessori principles into their school curriculums.


There are few things more important to parents than the quality of their child's education and knowing that they are cared for and nurtured while they are at school and in someone's care other than your own. When we say "education," we mean more than academics (although academics are certainly important). We want an environment that nurtures the whole child and helps to shape children who are kind, respectful, self-reliant, and community-oriented citizens of the world. We want to know that when our child goes to school in the morning, he is looking forward to the day ahead, not dreading it, and that when he comes home, he will enjoy telling us all about the book he read that day or the seed he planted or his after-school yoga class. LCMCS inspires all these qualities in children and so much more. We feel incredibly blessed that our son attends such a wonderful school, run by extraordinary staff and teachers who genuinely care about the whole-person development of each individual student.

Sincerely,



Alex Earl

Sincerely,



Kim McCoy, JD

Teresa Noe
PO Box 1130
Gresham, OR 97030
503-516-8483

March 17, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

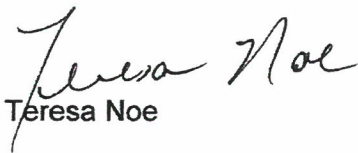
As a grandmother of one of the Lewis & Clark Montessori school children, I am eager to express my support for this school and the Montessori learning methods.

The school's location is certainly conducive to the needs of the children that attend and the bus routes have helped to make the school accessible for those parents that commute outside of the Gresham-Barlow district.

When my daughter was a child, she attended a Montessori school which helped her to achieve individual academic skills far beyond the public school systems. I was excited that she selected Lewis & Clark for my granddaughter's education because I truly believe the learning methodology helps young minds get a firm grip in life that will benefit them all their years.

In my experience, Lewis & Clark does a wonderful job involving children and their families in not only the operations of the school but the learning process as well.

I do hope the charter is continued and the facility continues to support the growth of the school and all the families involved.


Teresa Noe



Melissa Harbert <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

Letter for school board meeting

1 message

Crystal Phillis <CPhillis@pyramidheating.com>
To: "mharbert@lcmcs.org" <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

Wed, Mar 8, 2017 at 10:20 PM

To Whom this may concern,

Last year we moved into a new home in a new district with two children. Our oldest was to enter into kindergarten and we had a decision to make regarding which school to enroll him in. We researched our local public school, nearby private schools and a charter school less than a mile from our home. It wasn't until February that we went to an open home at a school we knew nothing about and a style we knew even less of. Lewis and Clark Montessori touched our heart from the moment we walked into the perspective parent night. We sat through the evening imagining not just our kindergartener starting in this school but also switching our preschooler into this school. We immediately rushed home and dove into researching this "Montessori" school concept. The more we learned the more we wanted this opportunity for our children.

We enrolled each of our children and they were both accepted into the school this last July. From their first day to today we are more impressed with the school, the parents and especially each of their teachers. Teacher Andy is amazing and our daughter has developed so much. As the youngest in his class we are so impressed with how much she loves school and wakes up early every day asking to go to school. Even on weekends! Teacher Katy has been more than we could have imagined! Originally we envisioned the Montessori style a better fit for our daughter but it has been our son that has seen the biggest benefit. Katy has identified some challenges our son has in fine motor skills and has encouraged him into lessons that are helping him develop those skills. She has also been supportive with us on providing us helpful tips to support her efforts in the classroom by reinforcing efforts at our home.

I personally was absolutely won over at the "Runtober" event where my wife and I volunteered to assist with the snacks and refreshments. There wasn't one child of any age that didn't say thank you for the snacks and water. I was blown away by the respect each child had. The community effort this school endorses is amazing. Teachers are very engaged, parents are involved and volunteering and the events are incredible. The community feel is priceless.

My wife volunteers every other week in the kitchen and helps prepare food for the day. The meals are so fresh and healthy it has raised the bar at our home! Our daughter has expanded her food choices and makes better decisions on what to eat because of it. At home we see other benefits of the teaching at school, our children are more prone to assist with chores and in many cases ask to assist. They always take off their "outside" shoes at the door and place them in their spot.

We personally recommend anyone to learn more about our Montessori school and have encouraged many friends to enroll their children at Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School.

Nathan and Crystal Phillis

Heather Battle

14345 SE Mountain Ridge Ave
Happy Valley, OR 97086
[503-855-3208](tel:503-855-3208)
heathercbattle@gmail.com

March 8, 2017

Dear Gresham-Barlow School Board members,

My name is Heather Battle, I am the Communications Officer on the LCMCS PTO board, and my husband and I have two sons that currently attend Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School: Cole is in his second year in primary (Sea Otter classroom), and Ryan is a first year (Columbia classroom). This is our second year at LCMCS.

Our oldest son, Ryan attended a private Montessori preschool program. We knew a little bit about Montessori before he started there, but quickly grew to love the Montessori method, and all that it encompasses. As much as we love Montessori, though, we knew that as family with three children an ongoing private education for all of them, especially through 8th grade, just wouldn't be financially feasible. Enter: LCMCS. When our oldest was offered a place at Lewis and Clark we felt like we had hit the jackpot. We truly "love this place" and the opportunities it provides our boys.

LCMCS is a unique learning environment that is based not only on the children's needs, but also fulfills their curiosity and desire to choose. Our boys are happy and excited to go to school each day because they are free to focus on the work that interests them, while at the same time being offered lessons from their guides that challenge them and introduce new concepts and materials. The opportunity for independence is something that is such a gift, and will serve them well as they grow into well-rounded, capable adults.

Beyond the learning environment, LCMCS has such a warm, engaged, and thriving community. The teachers and administration have become like family to us. We are so grateful for the chance to attend a school that includes individuals from all backgrounds, that come to school from a wide variety of locations around the Portland area. It makes our school a beautiful and diverse place, and is something that is not provided by our neighborhood school.

Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School is such a special place. We are so grateful for the opportunity for our children to learn and grow there, now and for the years ahead. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Heather Battle



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3/6/17.

Gresham/Barlow School district,

My wife and I absolutely adore Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School. We believe it is a blessing to have such a transcendent school available to our 3 children. Each of our kids loves their school and is excited every day to get up and go to class. Really! Zoe 7th grade, Jon 5th grade and Gracie age 4yrs are all very different learners but each are absolutely thriving at LCMCS. We are constantly impressed by the professionalism, caring and creative approach that the staff brings to teaching our kids. It is a fun and vibrant place to learn. I believe all of our kids will be uniquely prepared to succeed at the next big levels once they leave LCMCS.

Thank you to all the teachers, staff and administrators for doing such a truly great job with this school.

Greg & Darlene Walczyk
Greg.walczyk@gmail.com
503-407-9859

March 6, 2017

To whom it may concern,

My daughter attended LCMS school last year, before we moved out of the area, and we loved it there. More importantly, she loved it there. My husband and I were very impressed at orientation prior to her attendance and were thrilled when she was accepted. We found that the communication with parents, the involvement and dedication of the teachers/staff and the education our daughter received was well above the expectation. The school has a community feel to it where everyone knows everyone. Staff and parents look out for other children, we didn't feel like just another family. I would love to see the lunch program modeled to other schools. The staff makes all the food, buys organic and local, with little to no sugar. The students are encouraged to try new and healthy foods that are not only delicious but leave the children satisfied and there are no sugar highs. Another very impressive trait of this school is the consistent encouragement of how to communicate effectively with other students, parents and staff. They learn how to resolve conflict, express their feelings, be accepting and non judgemental and learn how to respect each other.

Children who attend Lewis and Clark Montessori School not only walk away with a great education but great life skills, healthy bodies, positive attitudes and good communication skills.

Sincerely,

Tina Lyon



Melissa Harbert <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

Letter to school board

2 messages

Susan Hammond <susanhammond.cpc@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 8, 2017 at 8:22 PM

To: "mharbert@lcmcs.org" <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

I am the proud parent of a kindergartner who attends Lewis and Clark Montessori charter school. This is our first year at this school and we love it. I brag to anyone who listens the positive influence this school has had on my child and the sense of community not found in most schools.

First, I truly believe in the Montessori structure. By having three age groups in one class, my child is challenged but not pushed to learn more. I do not have to worry about whether there will be enough special funding for talented and gifted children or be torn by having to decide whether to advance my child a grade level or have them remain in the same grade but sacrifice their education. To my husband and I, Math and Reading are the two most important subjects and our child is excelling at both. Not many parents can say their kindergartner is doing multiplication or division and reading chapter books. Not to forget to mention, by having three age groups in one class it encourages and teaches leadership skills.

-Susan Hammond

Please excuse the grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. This was sent from my iPhone 

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Sent from Gmail Mobile. Feel free to call me at 541.409.6644, Susan

Melissa Harbert <mharbert@lcmcs.org>

Thu, Mar 9, 2017 at 10:18 AM

To: Susan Hammond <susanhammond.cpc@gmail.com>

Thank you so much, Susan, this is lovely!

Best,
Melissa

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Melissa Harbert, Executive Director
Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School
503.427.0803

Visit us at LCMCS.org

"Let the beauty of what you love be what you do" ~ Rumi

Gresham Barlow School District
1331 NW Eastman Parkway
Gresham, OR 97030

Attn: School Board Members

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in regards to the upcoming charter renewal for Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School. I have four children who attend Lewis & Clark and we couldn't be happier with the education they are receiving there. I am proud of our school and of the Gresham Barlow district for having such a terrific, high quality program available for students.

We specifically sought out a public Montessori program for our kids and I am happy to have found it in Damascus. The academic quality, well trained staff and level of community engagement are such a draw that I am happy to drive 30 minutes from West Linn twice a day for the 4th year in a row to be a part of the Lewis & Clark family and by extension the GBSD family.

Our school has put together one of the best staff teams I have experienced. They work so well together. There is a cohesiveness, a complete lack of the in-fighting present in so many work teams, which is evidenced by the staff's willingness to collaborate, lift each other up, shift and share resources, support each other and their students and generally work together in a holistic way for the betterment of all the kids. When I am observing in the classrooms, the feeling of harmony is remarkable.

The Montessori method is a great fit for my children and I am thrilled with the progress they are each making. One of the things I appreciate most about Lewis & Clark is that the teaching staff have a method that supports children learning at their own pace. The three year age groupings allow my kids to experience the inspiration that comes with learning from other children as well as the compassion of being the leaders in helping the younger kids.

Overall, we love the program that Lewis & Clark offers. We appreciate the level of community engagement fostered through the Food for Seniors program, Farmer's Market and the Parent Teacher Organization. The lunch program is nutritious, delicious and my kids love it.

We look forward to this charter renewal with joyful expectation that we will be able to continue on for many more happy years as part of this school and proud members of this school district.

Warm Regards,
Marcella Martinson
Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter
Parent