

**South Carolina Department of Education
CHARTER SCHOOL
2017 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Charter School Submission Deadline to
Sponsor: December 31, 2017**

**Sponsor Submission Deadline to SCDE:
January 31, 2018**

School Name: East Cooper Montessori Charter School

Sponsor: Charleston County School District

Date of Submission to Sponsor: 12/20/17

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-140(H), the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has developed this annual report template for charter schools to use in reporting to their sponsors. A charter school is required to submit, at least annually to its sponsor, a report that shall include the following, at a minimum:

- (1) the number of students enrolled in the charter school from year to year;
- (2) the success of students in achieving the specific educational goals for which the charter school was established;
- (3) an analysis of achievement gaps among major groupings of students in both proficiency and growth;
- (4) the identity and certification status of the teaching staff;
- (5) the financial performance and sustainability of the sponsor's charter schools; and
- (6) board performance and stewardship including compliance with applicable laws.

The report shall provide all other information as required by the charter school sponsor and the SCDE.

In turn, sponsors are required by law to annually evaluate the following conditions that warrant the nonrenewal or revocation of a school's charter:

- the commission of a material violation of the conditions, standards, or procedures provided for in the charter application;
- failure to make or meet reasonable progress, as defined in the charter application, toward pupil achievement standards as identified in the charter application;
- failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; and
- violation of any law from which the school was not specifically exempted.

This annual report template is designed to elicit a comprehensive picture of a charter school's recently completed academic year as it relates to the school's performance in those areas impacting charter school accountability: academic achievement, compliance, operations/governance, and financial viability.

II. ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Annual Report Submission: The annual report shall be due on **December 31** following each full school year in which the charter school is in operation. The board of trustees of a charter school should make the annual report available to the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the charter school. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-140 (H), the charter school shall submit an annual report to its sponsor, and the sponsor shall compile the annual reports of all of its charter schools into a single document that must be submitted to the SCDE by January 31. Insofar as the sponsor of a charter school is the charter school's local education agency (LEA), the charter school is advised to submit its annual report to the sponsor's superintendent.

Submission Requirements:

Charter School: Please confirm with the sponsor of the charter school the desired format for submission (paper or electronic); the annual report is due to the charter school sponsor no later than **5:00 p.m. on December 31.**

Charter Sponsor: An electronic copy of the annual report is due to the SCDE no later than **5:00 p.m. on January 31.** The electronic copy should be submitted to: charterschools@ed.sc.gov. In the subject line include the **sponsor’s name/school’s name/2017 Annual Report.**

Format: All schools must use the provided Annual Report template and appendices templates. Each question in the application template that requires a written response includes a page limit. Answers should stay within those guidelines. Contact the SCDE Charter Schools Program at 803-734-2781 or at charterschools@ed.sc.gov if you have any questions regarding the provided templates.

Annual Report Review: All reports must be clear and fully complete in order to be evaluated by both the sponsor and the SCDE. The SCDE will review annual reports upon their submission.

III. ANNUAL REPORT QUESTIONS

1. GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

In the table below, provide the following general school information:

1. General School Information	
Name of School	East Cooper Montessori Charter School
Year School Opened	2003
Charter Renewal Date	2024
Grade Level(s)	PreK-8
School Address(es)	1120 Rifle Range Road, Mount Pleasant SC
School Website Address	www.montessoricharterschool.com
Name of School Leader	Jody Swanigan
School Leader’s Phone Number	843-216-2883
School Leader’s E-mail	jody@montessoricharterschool.com
Name of Board President	Jennifer Gresham
Board President’s Phone Number	803-719-3442

Board President's E-mail	jennifergresham@montessoricharterschool.com
Name of Sponsor/Local Education Agency	Charleston County School District

2. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

In the table below, provide the following information regarding school enrollment for grade levels applicable to the school:

Grade Level	Maximum Enrollment at Charter School	135-Day Count 2016-17	45-Day Count 2017-18
Pre-K	34	34	32
K	14	14	16
Grade 1	59	59	55
Grade 2	59	59	60
Grade 3	59	59	56
Grade 4	33	33	54
Grade 5	36	36	34
Grade 6	29	29	29
Grade 7	14	14	26
Grade 8	16	16	14
Grade 9	0	0	0
Grade 10	0	0	0
Grade 11	0	0	0
Grade 12	0	0	0
Total	336	336	376

3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In the following sections, please reflect on the educational program, student performance data, academic goals, and progress towards the academic goals.

3.1. Academic Performance

3.1.A. ESEA/Federal Accountability Rating System

At this time, ESEA/Federal Accountability Rating System information is not available for the 2016-2017 school year. No information is required in this section at this time.

3.1.B. Academic Performance Narrative (LIMIT YOUR RESPONSE TO THREE PAGES)

Using applicable data from the past school year's SC READY, SCPASS, ACT WorkKeys®, ACT®, and End of Course test scores, provide a narrative, beginning on the next page, in which you:

- describe the school's statewide assessment results
- provide an analysis of achievement gaps among major groupings of students in both proficiency and growth
- provide an explanation of how the school will close gaps and maintain or improve results.

Type your narrative for item 3.1.B beginning on this page

Note: All goals taken directly from the 2015 agreement between East Cooper Montessori Charter agreement document and Charleston County School District as the authorizer and the South Carolina Department of Education.

East Cooper Montessori Charter School (ECMCS) was first chartered in 2003 and was composed of two classrooms and 44 students in grades 1-3. The school has grown both in population and academic offerings exponentially every year. ECMCS partnered with Charleston County School District in 2015 to move our program into an empty CCSD building to reduce overcrowding, provide comparable Montessori seats in District 2 and have a program in their building rated excellent on day 1. The larger spaces in year two of the three-year CCSD renovation program has provided the community with expanded Montessori seats and the school has been able to increase its offerings despite a significant budget cut in January of 2016.

ECMCS Montessori teachers are required to be Montessori certified in addition to being SC State certified and highly qualified in the area taught. ECMCS also requires all lead classroom teachers to be gifted and talented endorsed. The Montessori model utilizes at least one lead certified teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom. The 14 classrooms served 336 students in grades PK-8 during the 2016-2017 school year and is serving 376 students in grades PK-8 in the current school year..

ECMCS spends approximately \$8,868 per pupil as compared to the district average of \$11,404. There are many structural and environmental factors that influence the success of individual students in a Montessori environment and are outlined in the last part of this section. It is important to consider those factors while considering the depth and breadth of a Montessori program. The points outlined describe some of the key factors but it is not an exhaustive list of the Montessori practices that separate it from traditional practices and the supporting research validating its use.

The 2017 State School Report Card communicates the academic results of the SC Ready assessment given to students in grades 3-8 in Spring 2017 and the SC Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SC PASS) given to students in grades 4-8 in Spring 2017. The SC Ready assessment focuses on the areas of mathematics and English. The SC PASS covers the areas of science and social studies. These testing measurements demonstrate trends in a school's application of curriculum over time. More than one data points are needed to make data-driven decisions and as such ECMCS understands the State School Report Card is an important part of the assessment process but it cannot be used in isolation to make decisions about individual student performance.

The school's continued achievement and growth for each of the last three years demonstrates academic performance that exceeds the standards toward the 2020 SC Performance Vision. While schools have not be given a state rating for accountability purposes 2015-4-2015, ECMCS' SC Ready & SC PASS results demonstrate a high level achievement serving a high percentage of a gifted population (50% of students in grades 3rd-8th) as well as a higher percentage of children with disabilities than other Mount Pleasant schools but there are not breakouts of other subgroups due to the low number of students in

each of the subgroupings. The state report card shows ECMCS serves a 28 % gifted population as compared to approximately the district average of 21.8%. ECMCS serves 8.8% with disabilities as compared to 9.8% in the Charleston County School District.

The 2017 SC Ready that was given to students in grades 3rd-8th in Spring 2016 shows consistent strong success in the area of ELA as has been shown over the past years at ECMCS. ECMCS added a media center and a media specialist last year with the move into the new space. In addition, the school implemented a leveled library program and put significant resources into the special education and RTI areas of the program. The school has exponentially more access to print material than ever in the history of the school.

The 2017 SC Ready that was given to students in grades 3rd-8th in Spring 2017 shows consistent strong success in the area mathematics. Mathematics continues to be an area Montessori students demonstrate lower scores over other areas while still above district and state percentages. ECMCS is working with Montessori leaders across the state to design a SC and Montessori aligned pacing guide. ECMCS also began an initiative training all teachers in OnGoing Assessment Project as well as place significant resources in classrooms to support individualized innovative mathematics instruction. The school is also using a blended learning approach with students in RTI. The teachers also received new math materials including additional word problem work at all levels and continued professional development in the area of mathematics.

The SC PASS in the area of science was administered to 4th-8th graders. Student's scores as assessed by the SC PASS test showed an increase in achievement both years since the addition of a science position with a focus in STEM. The STEM educator worked with teachers during the first year and in year two supported lower el through curriculum development and in upper elementary and middle school through face-to-face classroom instruction. The next phase will include sharing our work with other Montessori programs.

The SC PASS in the area of social studies was administered to 4th-8th graders. Students again demonstrated great growth. The Montessori educators work closely to provide a multidisciplinary curriculum across all areas of the curriculum. E teachers are concluding the second year of work toward blending the Montessori expectations with state standards in a way that applies content with the Montessori pedagogy. The approach has been incredibly successful and this is an area the school scores very highly.

ECMCS continues to build partnerships with Montessorians across the district and nationally to support the Montessori learning programs. ECMCS educators are writing curriculum to be disseminated in mathematics, STEM and ELA. ECMCS continues to host workshops for teacher professional development and parenting education classes as well as present research and curriculum developments at state and national conferences. ECMCS continues to lead the charge in Montessori expertise and is recognized as a highly achieving school with expert educators, innovative curriculum, access to cutting edge technology and a full complement of related arts programming including art, music, Spanish, P.E., technology, gardening, STEM and theater even though the state report card reports opportunities in arts at ECMCS as being Good. ECMCS is fortunate to have strong community partnerships, unwavering parental support, solid governance and consistent leadership as well as long history fiscal responsibility and success. In order to fully speak to the topic of our academic

achievement, the environmental factors that influence achievement are also acknowledged below. We are excited to welcome new families, expand enrollment and provide Montessori classroom spaces conducive to the Method in the upcoming year with the continued renovations of the building as part of our greatest partner and sponsor, Charleston County School District.

The research of Dr. Maria Montessori and her educational approach continue to guide the practices of ECMCS while also incorporating the latest research in curriculum development, child development and brain research. Students in the multi-aged classroom are able to have curriculum tailored to their exact developmental level and thus increased engagement. There are natural peer-to-peer learning opportunities and even peer tutors within the model. The extended time students spend in the same peer grouping also lends to safe and deep peer relationships rooted in trust and compassion also making way for a safe environment to take risks and embrace learning challenges. Montessori educators are experts of the three years of content and teachers are prepared to work with students socially and emotionally as they grow. Teachers have the same students for three years giving them incredible insight into the developmental needs and milestones of each student. The prepared environment lends well to exceptional learners and especially twice exceptional learners. There are thousands of pieces of material to relate to every learner. The GT training of teachers allows GT curriculum to be delivered within the Montessori environment while also supporting the needs of struggling students. The uninterrupted work time allows students to use the work plan to make a plan for the use of their time deciding which task to start with instead of being dictated by a teacher. Often materials are self-correcting allowing students to reflect on their mistakes and correct them giving Montessori students constant practice honing their executive functioning skills. While not an exhaustive explanation, these unique features and the fidelity of their implementation are important in considering any Montessori program.

3.2. Academic Goals and Performance

Identify the **academic** goals set forth in the school’s current charter. For each academic goal use the tables below to describe the goal, the measure or metric to be used, the target for the goal and describe the success of students in achieving the specific educational goals for which the school was established. For goals not met, explain why and what steps the school is taking to progress towards goal attainment.

Academic Goal 1	
Goal	Students will demonstrate success in the area of English.
Measure/Metric	2017 administration of the SC Ready Assessment in the area of English.
Target	70% of students will meet or exceed grade level standards.
Actual Outcome and Explanation	83% of students met or exceeded expectations as measured by the SC Ready State Assessment in the area of English. The percentage is up from 70.9% last year.

Academic Goal 2	
Goal	Students will demonstrate success in the area of mathematics.
Measure/Metric	2017 Administration of the SC Ready Assessment in the area of mathematics.
Target	60% of students will meet or exceed the grade level standard.
Actual Outcome and Explanation	78% of students met or exceeded expectations as measured the SC Ready State Assessment in the area of Mathematics. The percentage is up from 55.6% last year.

Academic Goal 3	
Goal	Students will demonstrate success in the area of science. Only 4th-8th graders are tested.
Measure/Metric	2017 administration of SC PASS in the area science.
Target	80% of students will meet or exceed the state grade level standard.
Actual Outcome and Explanation	80% of 4 th and 97.2% 5 th graders met or exceeded state grade level standards in the area of science. The percentage is up from 79.5% of 4 th graders and 88.9% of 5 th graders last year.

Academic Goal 4	
Goal	Students will demonstrate success in the area of social studies.
Measure/Metric	2017 administration of the SC PASS in the area of social studies.
Target	80% of students will meet or exceed grade level state standards in the area of social studies.
Actual Outcome and Explanation	95% of 4 th graders and 97.2% of 5 th graders met and exceeded the expectations as measured by the SC PASS in the area of social studies.

Academic Goal 5	
Goal	ECMCS provides a quality education.
Measure/Metric	Teacher and Parent Survey of all ECMCS families and staff.
Target	80% Satisfaction from each group.
Actual Outcome and Explanation	97.4% of parents agree ECMCS provides a quality education. 95% of teachers agree ECMCS provides a supportive learning environment.

4. SCHOOL STAFF

In its discretion a charter school may hire non-certified teachers in a ratio of up to twenty-five percent of its entire teacher staff; however, if it is a converted charter school, it shall hire in its discretion non-certified teachers in a ratio of up to ten percent of its entire teacher staff. Part-time non-certified teachers are considered pro rata in calculating this percentage based on the hours which they are expected to teach.

Use the template titled “Instructional Staff Information Appendix” to provide the requested information. Save the completed template as “Instructional Staff Information Appendix” and attach it to this report.

4. School Instructional Staff			
Name	Certification #	Area(s) of Certification	Course(s) Taught

5. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Attach as appendices to this report:

- the school’s audited FY2017 report on financial statements
- the FY2018 approved school budget

6. BOARD PERFORMANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

6.1. Board Member Information

Use the template titled “Board Member Information Appendix” to provide the requested information. Save the completed template as “Board Member Information Appendix” and attach it to this report.

6.2. Board Compliance

In the table below, provide the information regarding Board of Trustee Compliance.

6.2. Board Compliance	
Board of Trustee Compliance	Response
Number of board members required per charter.	7
Date of most recent board election.	May 15, 2017
Link to website where meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are published, if published online. If not, provide the address of the office where they are maintained.	https://eastcooper.ccsdschools.com/about_us/governing_board
Number and name of active committees.	Development Committee, Education Committee, Finance Committee, Facilities Committee, HR Committee, Enrollment and Diversity Committee, Community Relations Committee

7. Accreditation

Is the charter school seeking SCDE Charter School Accreditation? SELECT A CHOICE BELOW

Please see

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/school-choice/charter-schools-program/charter-school-accreditation/>

for more information

Yes No

Please indicate any and all accreditations that the charter school holds, if applicable:

(AdvancED, American Montessori Society, etc.)

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE SPONSOR

The Sponsor is permitted to request additional information as part of this annual report. Such additional information should be included in this section and submitted to the SCDE with the sponsor's annual report.