



ECMCS STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

Planning for Consistent Reflection, Refining
and Revitalizing





MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the East Cooper Montessori Charter School is to provide a rigorous Montessori education guiding children toward academic excellence, lifelong learning, and stewardship of the greater community. Our students will become independent critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and will be prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life.



OUR SCHOOL

By the Numbers

Primary - 50

Lower Elementary - 175

Upper Elementary - 100


Middle School - 100

Governing Board Members - 7

Amazing Staff Members 60

Benefits to the Charleston Community 

Progress has not always been easy, but the school's leadership has persevered with unshakeable determination, encouraged by parents and community members who continue to support the vision and mission of ECMCS. We have received the distinction of being awarded the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards every year since inception.



The School You Choose
with Your Head & Your
Heart



OUR EVOLUTION

2003

ECMCS Established
44 students and two
portable classrooms



1



2007

Built our First Building
in l'ON



2



2015

Moved to Old
Whitesides with 250
students. Rechartered
for 10 years.



3



2021

Serving 450 students
ages 3 yrs-8th grade



4

OUR GOVERNING BOARD



Abby Kazley, Chair



Kristin Rising



Deirdre Ostrander



Jody Swanigan, Principal



Merissa Ferrara



Brooke Johnson, Teacher
Member



Dj Barnhill, Treasurer



Denise Runza, Vice Chair

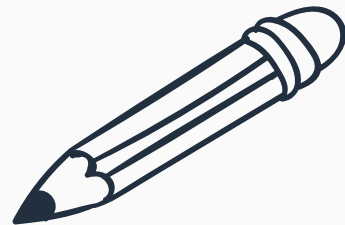


Abe Gutting



Billy Koll, Financial Director

GUIDING PRINCIPLE



Consistent improvement & accountability are key at ECMCS, encompassing every level of our organization: students, parents, faculty, administration, and board of trustees.

It is not only a requirement for maintaining our charter, but also a basic responsibility as a public Montessori school.

Montessori education has rightfully gained an outstanding reputation over the last 100 years, and there is a growing body of research to document its effectiveness. By demonstrating our success empirically, East Cooper Montessori reinforces Montessori as a public school model.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Planning Process

Who, How, What

02

ANALYSIS

SWOT/Guiding Questions

04

Areas of Concentration

Big Picture

05

Goals

Where are we Headed?





Strategic Plan Process

Who, How & What





STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Who	How	What
Stakeholders	Faculty/Staff Survey	Use of Data to predict future and make decisions for the school
Teachers	Focus group with Curriculum leaders (KISS)	
Staff	Student input from Student Council Leaders	Development of a strategic plan with buy-in from all stakeholders
Administrators		
Board	Survey of Families	Measurable outcomes
Families	External Trend Identification and Extrapolation with Board	Continue our commitment to excellence
Students		





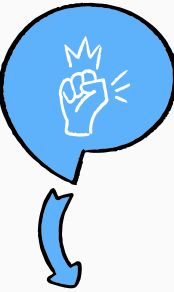
ANALYSIS

SWOT/Lessons Learned



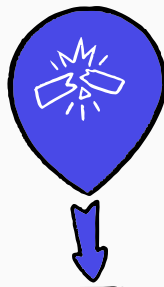
SWOT Analysis

SWOT



Strengths

Educational Programming & philosophy, student, achievement
Location, facilities, faculty, leadership, & long standing relationship with the community.



Opportunities

Growth in the community, untapped funding development, expansion of equity and inclusion practices, systematic growth for middle school.



Weaknesses

Changing needs of families, dependance on the district, wrap around services for students, competition, constant change in technology.



Threats

Location, political position of charter schools cost of living for teachers and staff, downturn in economy.





GUIDING QUESTIONS



Parents

What does the school do well?
What do you think will be the biggest challenges for ECMCS in the next 5–10 years?
What should ECMCS stop and start doing?
What are top strategic priorities?
Rank school 1–5.
Open ended.

Teachers

What does the school do well? What are the biggest challenges ECMCS will face in the next 5–10 years?
What should we stop and start doing?
What should the top strategic priorities be?
Rank school 1–5.
Open ended

Curriculum Leaders

KISS– Keep, Improve, Start, Stop

Students

What changes would you suggest to make ECMCS even better than it is now?





What we learned from the surveys

Parents

Overall love the ECMCS experience
Desire more Interaction/community
Want teacher consistency and excellence

Teachers

LOVE being part of this school
LOVE the leadership
Want to continue facility improvements and focus on outdoor learning and activities

Curriculum leaders

Like STEM inclusion
Like choice of work
Want new Montessori teacher training
Want more integration with arts, etc

Students

Want more playground equipment!
Want school based sports
Want more arts and performance
Want more clubs and opportunities

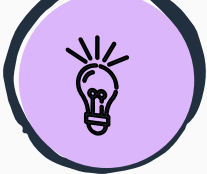




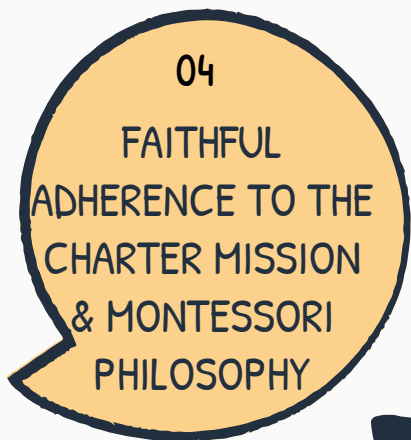
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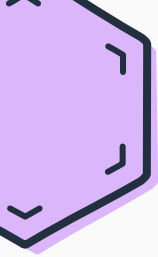
Areas of Concentration

Big Picture



Areas of
Concentration





Charter Contract

Organizational Viability



Academic Achievement



Social Emotional Learning

Adherence to the unique aspects of the charter through the lens of the Montessori Philosophy





Goals → Strategies

Where are we headed?

1. Academic Achievement

Charter schools inherently innovate in ways that keep education relevant and dynamic. ECMCS must continue to respond to the changing needs of world and continue preparing students to be successful in a complex world. Our program will include strong academic achievement, including not only traditional subject areas but also critical thinking, creative problem solving, and global experiences which are all encompassed in the profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Key Strategic Goals

	Goal Area	Measurement	Timing
Goal 1	Ensure all students have access to equitable classroom resources, curriculum and professional development across all levels.	Annual professional development plan, asset management plan & tagging with completed budget.	21-23
Goal 2	Teacher access and development of high quality data pathways with referral process for student continued achievement (learning loss & learning acceleration planning)	100% of teachers accessing and using Performance Matters (combination of all assessments available) to evaluate classroom success	21-23
Goal 3	Leverage technological advances thoughtfully and intentionally, as tools for enhanced teaching and learning. Development of a technology replacement cycle for budgeting technology replacement.	80% of students accessing digital content show mastery & teachers are able to use the data to drive in-person instruction	Fall 2021
Goal 4	Support a robust arts program that recognizes the value of arts and performance as a pillar of academic instruction.	Annual plan that supports a growing artistic school community; increased number of students auditioning for artistically GT.	Fall 2022



Goal 1

Equitable access to curriculum resources and professional development.

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Development of scope for STEM/Engineering	Develop innovative STEM curriculum for each level (Google Site)	2021	Stem Coordinator
Continue Mathematics Professional Development: OGAP, Bridges, Illustrative including a plan for new teachers.	Contract services and allocate PD time in the teacher work schedule.	2021–2023	Instructional Coach
High quality Montessori training through Lander with teachers receiving a masters degree upon completion.	Contract with Lander University to Provide Montessori Training	2021–2026 Completed	Principal
Increase engagement and achievement in ELA & writing, transforming instruction with a concentration of pedagogical understanding to an ELA Comprehensive deep dive – consider EL, Orton Gillingham, shift from F&P.	3–year plan for the shift in ELA Professional Development	2023–2026	Read to Succeed

Goal 1 - Continued

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Creation of Cultural Competency Task force.	Cultural Competency task force development of the Cultural Competency Handbook. The activities must address learning for Governing Board, teachers, students, families.	2022	Board Chair/Principal
Consider additional courses including Geometry, advanced math placement and development of English I course for credit	Research findings for high school success applied to the ECMCS course offering guide.	2022–2023	MS Lead
Identify additional areas of enrichment (world peace project, Mission trip, MMUN, gardening)	Post Covid consideration of all enrichment programming for all levels by the leadership team.	2023–2024 Post Covid	Leadership Team

Goal 2

Equitable access to high quality data tools across all levels of ECMCS.

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Expand MTSS Team approach to include school level, classroom level, and individual student support.	Apply MTSS approach to classroom level data dive as well as school data dive.	2022–2024	Admin Team
Implement Performance Matters No longer available	Cross section of student data powered by Powerschool analytics	2023	Principal
Host data conferences with families and stakeholders.	Parent/Teacher conferences share results of new data analytics	2023/complete and ongoing	Principal
Staff access to up-to-date equipment	School rollover tech plan	2023/complete and ongoing	Instructional Technology

Goal 3

Leverage technological advances thoughtfully and intentionally, as tools for enhanced teaching and learning.

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Seamless transition to digital learning during school closures.	Needs assessment of tools that have been effective since the shutdown	2023–2024 Completed	Instructional Technology
Explore developing and funding a position to assist teachers with instructional technology initiatives as well as track, issue, evaluate, manage, and maintain technology devices.	Position has been hired	2022–2023 Completed	Instructional Technology
Use the media cart to produce in-house videos.	Training for teachers	2021–2022 Completed	Instructional Technology
Seamless integration of digital tools to enhance instruction, support the profile of the Sc graduate and	Coaching cycles to support teacher learning. Require student access to	2021–2022	Instructional Technology

Goal 4

Robust arts programming and performance as a pillar of academic instruction.

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Development of unique electives in performing arts (Musical Theater) Identify a two –year scope of shows and performances.	Post Covid utilization of performance audio and visual equip to grow the fine arts	2022–2023	Fine Arts Team Lead
Identify integrated opportunities for cross learning/deliverables across content areas(PBL)	Collect the curated and original works created in the last three years toward this initiative	2023–2026	Assistant Principal
Develop technology supports such as recording studio to create communication channels and support avenues for the arts	As performance grows, so will our need to record our work to share electronically	2023–2025	Fine Arts Team Lead

2. Organizational Viability

East Cooper Montessori strives to provide a strong and reliable infrastructure to support the school's learning community in both the short and long term. Charter school often need to be creative in their use of funding as well as their strategic planning in order to meet local, state and federal guidelines. The measure of the school's organizational viability encompasses the sustainability of educational vision of mission, sound financial practices, strength of board leadership, parent satisfaction, ability to attract and maintain high quality faculty, and a constant cycle of assessment and accountability.

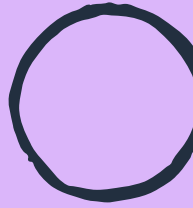
Key Strategic Goals

	Goal Area	Measurement	Timing
Goal 1	Leverage financial resources such as fundraising from the private donations to support larger initiatives available through one-time fund sources such as the Recovery Act and ESSER to support overall mission and vision goals.	Creation of a long range plan encompassing the support and funding	2021-2026
Goal 2	Continue to attract and maintain a highly motivated and highly qualified faculty through great recruiting practices and adult learning and leadership opportunities.	Annual Report detailing the professional development goals and high staff retention data	2021-2026
Goal 3	Development of strong board leadership through expert guidance and sound data driven policy assessment.	Creation of a board manual and succession planning for leadership	2021-2026



Goal 1 - Financial

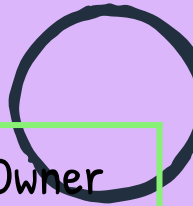
Leverage financial resources to support overall mission and vision goals.



Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Develop a 5-year & 10-year budget for the purpose of planning toward addition of building or gym.	Systematic process projecting current expenses and applying to to future school structure.	2021-2022	Financial Director/ Treasurer
Develop a culture of giving through a board-led fundraising committee to achieve annual fundraising goals.	6-8 members to fundraising committee annually, seek to increase to 50% of families give to annual fund	2020/2021	Lori Gleaton and Board Member
Seek corporate partnerships & funding opportunities.	1-3 corporate sponsors per year	Spring 2021	Fundraising Committee



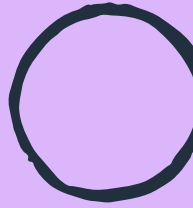
Goal 2 - Financial Cont.



Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Seek financial security for ECMCS by growing and maintain 3-6 months operating expenses in reserves	Have 6-12 months of reserves	Ongoing	Billy and Jody
Identify areas where costs could be cut as needed in event of a recession	Identify 1-3 cost saving strategies per year	Ongoing	Billy
Secure enough reserves to allow for big dream purchases/investments (gym, training center)	Have 12 months of operating expenses in reserves	2025	Development Team



Goal 1 - Financial Cont.



Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Investigate new fundraising opportunities including a 5 K	The new driveway summer of 2022 planning	2022	Fundraising Committee
Comply with requirements for forgiveness of PPP loan	PPP loan forgiven	2023	Principal & Financial Director
Plan for facility enhancement	Project replacement plan developed	2022	Principal & Financial Director



Goal 2

Attract and maintain a highly motivated and highly qualified faculty.

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Maintain and improve appeal of ECMCS as a workplace for staff	Conduct teacher survey to identify factors that influence job satisfaction	Annually	Board Chair/Teacher Board Member
Maintain high retention of teachers	Goal 80% of staff retention Utilize data from teacher survey to maintain and enhance appeal of ECMCS	Annually	Admin Team
Identify new opportunities for local/regional/national recruitment of teachers	Identified recruitment tools to include social media and virtual recruitment fairs	Annually	Admin Team
Increase ECMCS on Social Media to build awareness/recognition	1-3 posts per week, # followers	Ongoing	Merissa

Goal 3

Strong board and strong leadership

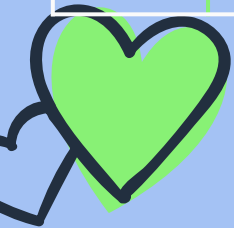
Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Continue to annually assess the board's success	Develop board assessment tools/board manual	2023	Board Chair
Board continues to support the charter thorough training	Attend national charter board training	2024	Board Chair
Board of trustees that provides appropriate stewardship of the school	Strategic goals are accomplished annually	2024	Board Chair
Develop CEO Assessment Tool	Board to support and grow the CEO position	2023	Board Chair

Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a cornerstone of the Montessori pedagogy and while it's always been an important aspect of school life for children, it has never been more important for educators to recognize the necessary layers of SEL supports. Our SEL framework will include the areas of classroom climate; schoolwide culture, practices and policies as well as authentic partnerships between families, specialized professionals and caregivers.

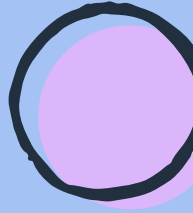
Key Strategic Goals

	Strategy	Measurement	Timing
Goal 1	Develop framework for school wide social emotional support for faculty & students that includes classroom climate.	Framework becomes part of the Google Site	2024-2026
Goal 2	Develop framework for school wide social emotional support for faculty & students that includes schoolwide culture, practices and policies	Framework becomes part of the Google Site	2023-2025
Goal 4	Develop framework for school wide social emotional support for faculty & students that includes authentic partnerships between families, specialized professionals and caregivers.	Framework becomes part of the Google Site	2022-2023



Goal 1

Schoolwide social emotional support

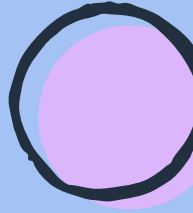


Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Guidance Counselor develops proactive lesson planning for school classrooms (2nd Steps)	School counselor meets with classrooms periodically to develop rapport and to hear student needs	2022-2023	School Counselor
Access to a mental health professional as part of the MTSS process	Signed contract	2020	Principal



Goal 2

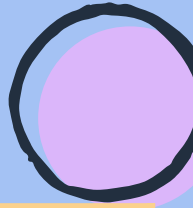
Learning Opportunities for Students



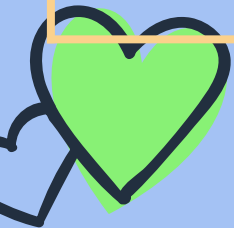
Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Train teachers in Second Steps Curriculum	Curriculum purchased for all levels	2022-2023	School Counselor



Goal 3 - Learning Opportunities for Parents/Community



Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
School Parent Education re: emotional supports and or challenges over tech	The school strives to be the partner with parents bringing to them the answers and parents education they crave	2023-2024	School Counselor
Parent Book Clubs for Cultural Competency or other topics	As a networking tool, the school could provide book club discussions on topics that parents request	2023-2024	School leadership team



Adherence to the Unique Aspects of Montessori & Charter

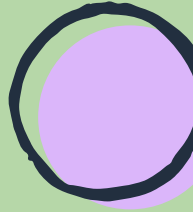
East Cooper Montessori's mission is to provide an authentic and complete Montessori program within the public sphere. It is also to integrate global and regional history, culture, technology and ecology into the learning process, so that students become aware of both the larger world beyond school and their places in it. This, in turn, is key to the last part of the school mission, which is preparedness for future schools, careers, and civic life.

Key Strategic Goals

	Strategy	Measurement	Timing
Goal 1	Continue to foster East Cooper Montessori Charter School as a model for public Montessori programs.	Leadership presence among Montessori organizations and other professional organizations .	2021-2026
Goal 2	As part of the charter school's partnership with the community and families, ECMCS provide a robust student life	80% of students favorable response to the Annual School Climate Survey	2021-2026
Goal 3	As part of the charter school's partnership with the community and families, ECMCS provide a robust parent life experience.	80% of families favorable response to the Annual School Climate Survey	2022-2026

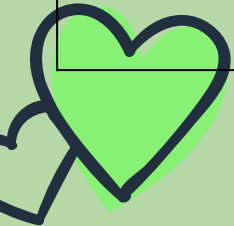


Goal 1

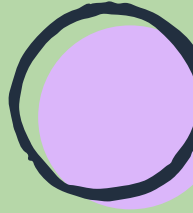


East Cooper Montessori Charter School as a model for public Montessori programs

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Increase awareness and exposure to Montessori Training	Offer Montessori training/exposure to students in teaching majors	2023–2026	Assistant Principal
Ensure a qualified and trained Montessori workforce	Develop student teaching opportunities as an avenue for recruitment	2023–2026	Principal and Assistant Principal



Goal 2

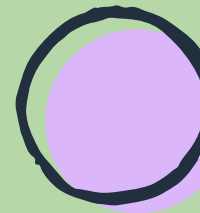


ECMCS provides a robust student life

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Sports	Add additional school sports opportunities each year	2021–2026	PE Coach
Enrichment	Continue to offer and expand opportunities in enrichment	2022–2026	After School Coordinator
Extended day and transportation	Assess parent needs for services at least every other year	2022–2026	After school coordinator/Principal

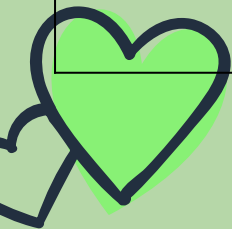


Goal 3



ECMCS provides a robust parent life

Initiative	Approach	Timing	Owner
Parent social events on and off campus	Host 2–3 parent events each school year including educational sessions, coffee sessions, and family events	2022–2023	Board Committee
Educational travel experiences	Consider programming outside the schoolday/schoolyear	2023–2026	





Strategic Plan



AWARENESS

Publish results to parents, community and stakeholders



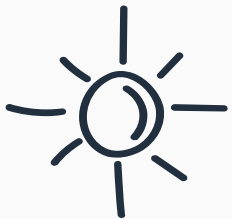
Annual Consideration

Annual ECMCS Board consideration of revision



Annual Report to Families

ECMCS Annual Report from Board disseminated to families





Check back
soon to see how
we are doing!

