



Rising Sun Montessori School

Charter Renewal Petition
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030

Respectfully submitted to the
Buckeye Union School District
October 16, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intent of Charter Schools Act of 1992.....	1
Affirmations and Declaration	2
Introduction	5
Charter Renewal	8
Element 1: Educational Program.....	14
Element 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes.....	68
Element 3: Methods of Assessment	82
Element 4: Governance Structure	89
Element 5: Employee Qualifications.....	95
Element 6: Health and Safety	115
Element 7: Student Population Balance.....	118
Element 8: Admission Policies and Procedures.....	120
Element 9: Annual Financial Audit	123
Element 10: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion	125
Element 11: Staff Retirement System.....	143
Element 12: Public School Attendance Alternatives.....	144
Element 13: Employee Return Rights.....	145
Element 14: Dispute Resolution	146
Element 15: School Closure Procedures.....	149
Required Supplemental Information	
Financial Plan	151
Facilities.....	153
Impact on Charter Authorizer.....	154
Administrative Services.....	155
Legal Issues.....	155
Conclusion.....	157

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Finance Budget Plan

- 1A Budget Narrative
- 1B 5-Year Operating Budget
- 1C 5-Year Cash Flow
- 1D FCMAT Apportionment Assumption

APPENDIX 2: Educational Program

- 2A Sample Assessment Portfolio Data Sheets
- 2B Sample Six-Week Lesson plans (K-8)
- 2C School Calendar
- 2D 504 Policies
- 2E 504 Forms
- 2F MTSS Notices and Tracking Sheets

APPENDIX 3: Employee Handbook

APPENDIX 4: Family Handbook

APPENDIX 5: Governance

- 5A Articles of Incorporation & Amendments & Business Entity Details
- 5B Bylaws of Rising Sun Montessori School
- 5C Conflict of Interest Code

APPENDIX 6: Local Control and Accountability Plan

APPENDIX 7: Lease and Landlord Assurances for 4940 and 4958 Robert J. Mathews Parkway

APPENDIX 8: 2023 Dashboard and Prior 3 Years CAASPP Results

APPENDIX 9: Approval from LaTrobe District to Operate within Latrobe District Boundaries

INTENT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS ACT OF 1992

It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting the Charter Schools Act of 1992 (the “Act”), to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- (a) Improve pupil learning.
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanding learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- (e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- (f) Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
- (g) Provide rigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

The Charter Schools Act requires each charter school to have a charter that includes a reasonably comprehensive description of fifteen (15) elements. The following provisions of this charter meet the requirements of the Act.

AFFIRMATIONS AND DECLARATION

As the authorized lead petitioner, I, Karl Zierhut, hereby certify that the information submitted in this petition for renewal of a California public charter school named Rising Sun Montessori School (“Rising Sun,” “RSMS,” or the “Charter School”), located within the boundaries of (and with written permission from) the Latrobe School District, and authorized by Buckeye Union School District (“BUSD” or the “District”), is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I understand that if awarded a charter renewal, the Charter School will follow any and all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- The Charter School will meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
- The Charter School declares that it shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of Rising Sun Montessori School for purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(c)(6)]
- The Charter School will be non-sectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]
- The Charter School will not charge tuition. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]
- The Charter School will admit all students who wish to attend the school, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case it will hold a public random drawing process to determine admission. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(e)(2), admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or that student’s parent or legal guardian within the State. Preference in the public random drawing shall be given as required by Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(i)-(iv). In the event of a drawing, the chartering authority shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the growth of the Charter School in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(C). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(A)-(C)]
- The Charter School will not discriminate on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(1)]

- The Charter School will adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEA”), Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”).
- The Charter School will meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11967.5.1(f)(5)(C)]
- The Charter School will ensure that teachers in the Charter School hold the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (“CTC”) certificate, permit, or other document required for the teacher’s certificated assignment. The Charter School may use local assignment options authorized in statute and regulations for the purpose of legally assigning certificated teachers, in the same manner as a governing board of a school district. Teachers employed by charter schools during the 2019–20 school year shall have until July 1, 2025, to obtain the certificate required for the teacher’s certificated assignment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605(l)(1) and 47605.4(a)]
- The Charter School will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
- The Charter School will, for each fiscal year, offer at a minimum, the number of minutes of instruction per grade level as required by Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(1)(A)-(D).
- If a pupil is expelled or leaves Rising Sun without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the Charter School will notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and will, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including report cards or a transcript of grades and health information. If the pupil is subsequently expelled or leaves the school district without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the school district shall provide this information to the Charter School within 30 days if the Charter School demonstrates that the pupil had been enrolled in the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(3)]
- The Charter School may encourage parental involvement, but shall notify the parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the Charter School. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(n)]
- The Charter School will maintain accurate and contemporaneous written records that document all pupil attendance and make these records available for audit and inspection. [Ref. Education Code Section 47612.5(a)(2)]

- The Charter School shall adhere to each of the conditions in Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A)-(D), including: (A) not discouraging a student from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the Charter School for any reason; (B) not requesting a student's records or requiring a parent, guardian, or student to submit the student's records before enrollment; (C) not encouraging a student currently attending the Charter School to disenroll or transfer to another school for any reason; and (D) providing a copy of the California Department of Education ("CDE") notice regarding the requirements in Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A)-(D) to a parent/guardian or student if the student is 18 years of age or older: (i) when a parent/guardian or student inquires about enrollment, (ii) before conducting an enrollment lottery, or (iii) before disenrollment of a student. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A)-(D)]
- The Charter School will on a regular basis consult with its parents and teachers regarding the Charter School's education programs. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)]
- The Charter School will comply with all laws establishing the minimum and maximum age for public school enrollment. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47612(b) and 47610]
- The Charter School shall comply with any applicable jurisdictional limitations to the locations of its facilities. [Ref. Education Code Sections 47605 and 47605.1]
- The Charter School will comply with all applicable portions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA").
- The Charter School will comply with the California Public Records Act, Government Code Section 7920.000, *et seq.* ("CPRA").
- The Charter School will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g, 34 CFR Part 99 ("FERPA").
- The Charter School will comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act, Government Code Section 54950, *et seq.* ("Brown Act").
- The Charter School shall comply with Government Code Section 1090, *et seq.*, as set forth in Education Code Section 47604.1 ("Section 1090").
- The Charter School shall comply with the Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 81000, *et seq.* ("PRA").
- The Charter School will meet or exceed the legally required minimum number of school days. [Ref. Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 11960].

Karl Zierhut
Head of School
Rising Sun Montessori School

Date

INTRODUCTION

Rising Sun Montessori School is a public charter school that serves Transitional Kindergarten ("TK")/Kindergarten ("K") through 8th grade students. The Rising Sun Montessori School is based on the Montessori model of education, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, Ph.D. In 2013, the Rising Sun Montessori School was granted an initial three-year charter term from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017, by its authorizer, the Buckeye Union School District. In 2017, the charter was renewed by BUSD for the term from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022. The term of that charter was extended for three additional years by Education Section 47607.4. By this submission, Rising Sun Montessori School seeks a five year renewal term from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2030.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission and Vision

The Mission of Rising Sun Montessori School is to provide an authentic Montessori school that embraces the diversity of our students, parents, and teachers. Our school community will nurture the individual needs of each child in a learning environment that encourages students to be self-directed, avid learners who are prepared for a diverse world.

The Vision of RSMS is to implement an effective educational program that will sustain the Charter School's mission for continued generations of RSMS students and families. To achieve this, we envision a school that has:

- **High Standards:** Students are expected to adhere to high standards of student behavior and academic achievement; life-long guidelines are directly taught and modeled by staff. Students are expected to demonstrate these values in their schoolwork as well as their interactions with peers and adults.
- **Significant Student Support:** Smaller class sizes, and strong academic, social, and intervention support programs.
- **Talented Staff Sustained by Extensive Professional Development:** Our staff will improve their performance with a high emphasis on professional development goals, training and evaluation tools.
- **Parent and Community Involvement:** Parents will support their children and the Charter School by encouraging studying and reading at home, supporting good behavior at school, and participating in school activities and committees. Parents will be valued and included members of the school culture. Parental input will be actively solicited. The school will continue to develop meaningful community partnerships to help sustain and deliver its educational mission.

Rising Sun Montessori School is committed to strengthening the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of all students and to encouraging an atmosphere of inquisitiveness and interaction, collaboration, entrepreneurship, communication and global awareness—all essential for the globally competitive, 21st century student.

History

The founding team of Rising Sun Montessori School, comprised of parents, educators, and professionals: Robin Saia, Brenda Rios, Margarita Rivera, James Stoops, Kelly Regan, Jonathan Wolff, Tannah Gentilcore, and Sandy Kearney, saw the need to provide families in the community with equal access to quality Montessori education. They found that the Montessori method could be successfully delivered through a public charter school. In August 2014 they were granted an initial three-year charter with the Buckeye Union School District, and opened the school that fall with 75 students. In the intervening charter terms, the Charter School has witnessed exciting growth from the 75 students originally enrolled in 2014 to an anticipated 160 in the Fall semester of 2024.

Leadership

The Leadership team of Rising Sun Montessori School brings dozens of years of combined experience in teaching and curriculum development, school administration and parent relations, social entrepreneurship, community development, governance, and management.

Karl Zierhut, Head of School

2025 brings Mr. Zierhut's 30th year in the field of education with 16 years of classroom teaching experience and 14 years as a school administrator. During this time, he has enjoyed working in diverse school settings; large and small, private and public.

Karl has led Rising Sun Montessori School, in his role as Head of School, continuously from August 2014 when RSMS first opened its doors to students. He has been instrumental in ensuring RSMS' fiscal solvency, providing a safe, secure campus and facilities, monitoring and ensuring student academic progress is being met, creating and implementing annual Local Control and Accountability Plan ("LCAP") goals, supporting RSMS teaching faculty in their professional development, connecting families with the Charter School's community, developing Strategic Plan goals with the RSMS Board of Directors ("Board"), and communicating this information regularly with the Buckeye Union School District, keeping with the agreements in the current Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU").

Karl continues to work toward the Charter School's goals of educational excellence and program growth for Rising Sun's current and future students.

Greg Fuson - Board Chair

Greg is the proud parent of two creative, inquisitive, Rising Sun-educated children. He is a conference planner with 25 years of experience designing educational events infused with art, music, drama, emotion and entertainment. Because, to paraphrase Maya Angelou, within a short time people won't remember specifically what you told them—but years later they'll recall with perfect clarity how you made them feel. Greg has served on the Rising Sun board since 2020.

CHARTER RENEWAL CRITERIA

Pursuant to the amendments made to Education Code Section 47607, and the creation of Education Code Section 47607.2 by Assembly Bill 1505 (2019), at the time of charter renewal, a chartering authority shall consider the performance of the charter school on the state and local indicators reported on the California School Dashboard (“Dashboard”), and, in some circumstances, the performance of the charter school on assessments deemed to be verified data.

In addition to the shift toward assessing Dashboard data, Assembly Bill 1505 also created a three-tiered system of evaluating charter schools’ performance based on Dashboard data and metrics as compared to the state average for all students and subgroups. Each of the three tiers has unique qualifying criteria.

The three performance categories are as follows:

- High Performing – Presumptive renewal if the charter school meets the established renewal criteria—Education Code Section 47607(c)(2).
- Low Performing – Presumptive non-renewal if the charter school meets the non-renewal criteria, unless the chartering authority makes a finding to approve for a two-year term—Education Code Section 47607.2(a).
- Middle Performing – Renewal unless closure is in the best interest of students, evaluated using the California School Dashboard and Education Code Section 47607.2(b).

For the first time since 2020, the CDE has published a list of high-, middle-, and low-performing charter schools. RSMS is pleased to have been deemed a middle-performing school by the CDE and is thus entitled to a default renewal standard, for a five-year term.

Due to the suspension of the Dashboard in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, charter schools could not be placed into performance categories as contemplated by AB 1505, for those years.

For 2022, the CDE could only display the most current year of data (also known as Status) on the 2022 Dashboard. The 2022 Dashboard used one of five Status levels (ranging from Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low) for all state indicators based on the 2021-22 school year data.

The state indicators include the following:

- Chronic Absenteeism: kindergarten through grade eight
- Suspension Rate: kindergarten through grade twelve
- English Learner Progress: grades one through twelve
- Graduation Rate: high school only
- College/Career: high school only (Note: The College/Career Indicator was not reported on the 2022 Dashboard)
- Academic: grades three through eight and grade eleven – English language arts (“ELA”)/literacy and Mathematics

Accordingly, Rising Sun Montessori School fits into the middle performing category, as determined by law and the California Department of Education, and as clearly demonstrated by the evidence, meets the criterion for charter renewal for a term of 5 years, as shown below.

Dashboard Performance Renewal Criteria – Middle Performing

For middle-performing charter schools, Education Code Section 47607.2(b) mandates that the District consider the performance, schoolwide and for all student subgroups, of RSMS on the state and local indicators on the Dashboard. The District shall provide greater weight to measurements of academic performance, which include the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) ELA and math assessments, the English Learner Progress indicator (“ELPI”), and the College/Career indicator (“CCI”).

Further, in addition to the state and local indicators on the Dashboard, the District shall also consider clear and convincing evidence, from the assessments deemed verified data by the State Board of Education (“SBE”), showing measurable increases in academic achievement (at least one year’s progress for each year in school), or showing strong postsecondary outcomes (college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers).

A. DASHBOARD PERFORMANCE

The following tables display the Charter School’s schoolwide Dashboard state indicators and, for comparison purposes, the State’s, for the 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023 Dashboards.

1. Rising Sun Montessori School Dashboard State Indicators, 2018-2023

Dashboard ELA Performance					
	2018	2019	2020 and 2021	2022	2023
RSMS	Green	Green	Unavailable	Very High	Green
• Distance from Standard	+9.7	+17.8	Unavailable	+51.7	+34.6
State	Orange	Green	Unavailable	Low	Orange
• Distance from Standard	-6.0	-2.5	Unavailable	-12.2	-13.6

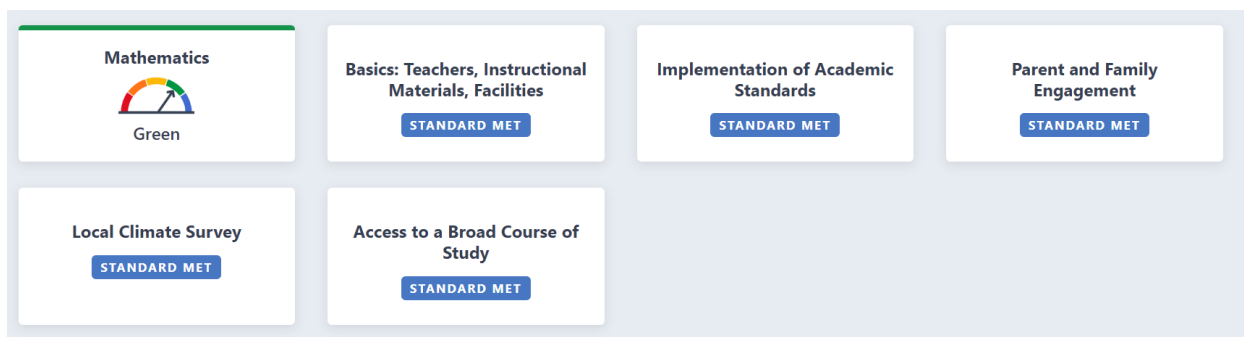
Dashboard Mathematics Performance					
	2018	2019	2020 and 2021	2022	2023
RSMS	Yellow	Green	Unavailable	High	Green
• Distance from Standard	-20.8	+7.9	Unavailable	+1.6	+5.2
State	Orange	Orange	Unavailable	Low	Orange
• Distance from Standard	-36.4	-33.5	Unavailable	-51.7	-49.1

As demonstrated above, the Charter School consistently performs better than the State in both

English Language Arts and Mathematics. Further RSMS continues to build upon its own success, increasing its performance over the state standards year after year. In 2022, RSMS was in the highest performance category in ELA and the second highest performance category in math. RSMS is proud to have merited the green performance indicator in both ELA and math in 2023, two levels above the state.

2. Rising Sun Montessori Dashboard Local Indicators, 2023

The Charter School is pleased to have met all Local Indicators on the Dashboard, for 2023.



B. MEASURABLE INCREASES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The law also gives middle-performing charter schools the opportunity to provide data showing measurable increases in academic achievement, via verified data:

In addition to the state and local indicators, the chartering authority shall consider clear and convincing evidence showing either of the following:

(A) The school achieved measurable increases in academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school.

(B) Strong postsecondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers.

(4) Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) shall be demonstrated by verified data, as defined . . .

“Verified data” is defined in statute as “data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced.” (Education Code Section 47607.2(c)(1).) In November 2020, the California State Board of Education approved the criteria to define “verified data” and the list of valid and reliable assessments and measures of postsecondary outcomes as required by Education Code Section 47607.2, and supplemented the list in May 2023. From the SBE-approved list of reliable assessments, the Charter School currently utilizes CAASPP and Renaissance Star (“STAR”) assessments to meet the verified data

requirement.

1. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress Data

The table below shows Rising Sun Montessori School students' performance on the CAASPP over the course of the past charter term. We believe this data makes a strong case for the renewal of the Charter School and demonstrates measurable increases in academic achievement. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, RSMS has made steady improvement in meeting ELA standards. RSMS's CAASPP results also show little to no learning loss in Mathematics between the 2018-19 and 2022-23 school years.

RSMS CAASPP Results: Percentage of Students Met or Exceeded Standards

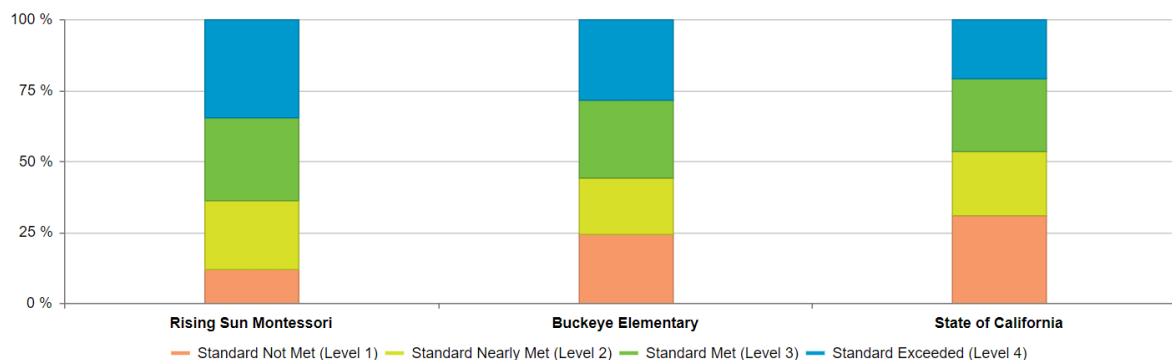
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
ELA	55.07%	62.44%	Unavailable	68.52%	75.44%	63.79%
Math	48.89%	51.43%	Unavailable	64.15%	51.79%	51.72%

2022–23 Overall Achievement - All Grades Results for All Students

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

▼ Data Detail - All Students (accessible data)

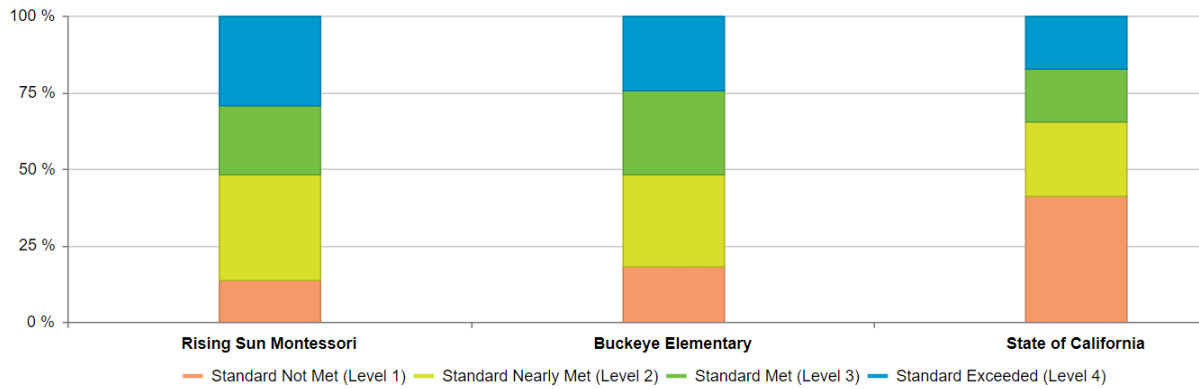
2022–23 Achievement Level Distribution - All Grades



MATHEMATICS

▼ Data Detail - All Students (accessible data)

2022–23 Achievement Level Distribution - All Grades



Rising Sun has also reviewed its aggregate scores from the 2023-24 CAASPP administration with school-wide results as follows:

Grades 3 - 8 ELA Standard Exceeded: $21/64 = 32.8\%$

Grades 3 - 8 ELA Standard Met: $25/64 = 39.1\%$

Grades 3 - 8 ELA Standard Met or Exceeded = 71.9%

Grades 3-8 Math Standard Exceeded: $16/64 = 25.0\%$

Grades 3-8 Math Standard Met: $23/64 = 35.9\%$

Grades 3 - 8 Math Standard Met or Exceeded = 60.9%

As demonstrated above, RSMS outperforms the state in both ELA and Mathematics, and outperforms the District in ELA and virtually matches it in mathematics, with greater than half of its students meeting or exceeding Math standards and more than 60% of its students meeting or exceeding ELA standards.

2. Internal Assessment Data: Verified Data

Description:

Rising Sun administers the Renaissance Star assessment for both Reading and Math to each student in grades 3-8 at least four times per year to determine a baseline and growth over each trimester. To determine growth, the school measures a student's percentile rank in both reading and math. If a student begins the year with reading scores which are at grade level (example if a student is assessed at the beginning of the year and their score is in the 50th percentile, and finishes the year at the 50th percentile, then the student is continuing to read "at grade level" but has not demonstrated any growth beyond what is expected in their

chronological age development).

Rising Sun uses percentile growth as a key metric because it identifies the growth rate *beyond what is expected* for a typical student to achieve as they age and progress through the curriculum.

Analysis:

Rising Sun is pleased to report that when taken as a whole in the 2023-24 school year, students in grades 3-8 **increased their national percentile rank by 10.8% in Reading and by 7.1% in Math**. These increases indicate that students at Rising Sun, on average, are growing in their reading and math skills significantly beyond what is expected from the average student from Fall to Spring. Like the CAASPP scores, these percentile growth averages include all student subgroups, including unduplicated students and students with Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) and 504 Plans.

C. CONCLUSION

As clearly demonstrated by the evidence above, the Charter School meets the renewal criteria for a middle-performing school and should be granted a renewal term of five (5) years from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2030. We deeply appreciate our history of partnership and trust with parents, the community, and the District, and we look forward to the shared work ahead.

SUCSESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PRIOR CHARTER TERM: 2017-2025

Rising Sun has been operating under its current charter for the past eight years. In this time, RSMS has grown to about 160 students and relocated to a new campus in the business park. Our current campus location will allow us to grow to our projected enrollment of approximately 200 students by 2030.

In 2022, RSMS received full initial accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (“WASC”), through 2025.

Rising Sun was also able to successfully navigate the Covid-19 pandemic while remaining open for in-person instruction when most schools were closed for the majority of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. In doing so, RSMS demonstrated that we were able to provide in-person instruction in a manner which was consistent with the Montessori methodology in a manner which allowed student safety and well-being to remain the top priority. As such, the majority of RSMS students were able to see strong and consistent academic growth over the same two year period which saw so many public school students lose ground academically, socially and in many cases experience challenges with their mental health.

Academically, RSMS is ranked in the top 10% of public charter schools state-wide in ELA, and in the top 20% in Math based on the 2022-23 school year's CAASPP results. Fiscally, RSMS has maintained a budget surplus each year and has over 100 days of cash on hand while offering salaries and benefits to its employees which are comparable to similar sized charter schools in the area.

High staff retention rates have created a strong foundation for Rising Sun Montessori School's success over the course of the prior charter petition. The average staff member at Rising Sun has been with us for five years. Rising Sun has a thoroughly developed and implemented plan for ongoing professional development of staff, and a flourishing faculty culture has grown over the years with teachers meeting regularly to share information and resources. Rising Sun continues to set aside a portion of its budget for staff development. In addition Rising Sun has offered the Teacher Induction Program for the past five years, mentoring several beginning teachers.

As part of a formal review process each year, the Head of School presents annual goals to the RSMS Board of Directors, who then reviews the information each year to see those goals are met and to create new goals for subsequent years. The Head of School continues to connect with the faculty and parents to strengthen the home-to-school ties. This in turn is communicated to the governing school board, who remains actively involved in the continued growth and development of Rising Sun.

The governing board and school leadership has solid experience in the fiscal management of the school. In partnership at regular board meetings, items reviewed include Scope of Program; Faculty Professional Development; Student goals (picture of the graduating child); Parent-School Involvement; Depth of Programs; Board Composition/Succession. This team also covers Management Goals and Objectives which include: Administrative Support Teams; Technology Plans; Facilities/Outdoor Space planning.

Rising Sun Montessori School has fully equipped classrooms, utilizing authentic Montessori materials and a Montessori-based curriculum that aligns to Common Core State Standards to implement comprehensive academic development, as well as individual access to computers at all grade levels.

In addition to core academics, RSMS seeks to address the education of the "whole" child, including social development and character education through the Montessori peace curriculum and the cultivation of an environment of respect through grace and courtesy.

Classrooms at Rising Sun Montessori School are full inclusion. Students identified by their teachers as needing additional support are evaluated by a student study team made up of the students' teacher(s) and the Head of School. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports ("MTSS") is implemented, and parents are informed of the plan and the progress of that plan on a trimester basis. Should the student require additional assessment for support, parents are brought in to participate in discussions around formal assessments and an assessment plan is developed with educators, parents, administrators and, when appropriate, the student. Once a determination

has been made, and an Individualized Education Program is in place, the Charter School provides services to meet the needs outlined in the plan. Special Education students are served in both “push-in” and “pull-out” environments, at the determination of Charter School special education staff. Specialized Academic Instruction and other pull out services are provided in the Learning Center.

Rising Sun also offers a complete student library with several hundred books that families donated, along with teacher curriculum resource materials. The library also serves as a work and study area, and is also used for parent meetings when appropriate. Board meetings are held in the instructional lab, where students also have access to Chromebooks as well as multimedia resources for presentations.

In front of the school has a circle driveway which parents use to safely and efficiently drop off and pick up their TK-K students. There are also two dedicated parking lots for visitors as well as faculty and staff.

Beginning in 2021, Rising Sun invested thousands of dollars to increase the security of our campus including heavy duty locking gates, communication devices for staff, increased lighting outside the buildings, upgraded security and fire systems, and security cameras surrounding the perimeter of the campus and the outside play areas. Rising Sun also incorporates annual training for staff and leadership on school safety, from threat identification to practicing emergency procedures. Rising Sun is grateful for their strong professional relationships with both the El Dorado Hills Fire Department and the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department.

Over the past 10 years of operation, Rising Sun Montessori School has been able to meet the standards outlined in the Ten Steps to Montessori Implementation in Public Schools, developed by David Kahn, the Executive Director of North American Montessori Teachers’ Association (“NAMTA”). They are:

1. **Do a total Montessori program.** Montessori cannot be done piecemeal; the curriculum is integrated and sequential and full benefits can only be achieved if the total program is understood and implemented by a **Montessori-trained** teaching staff.
2. **Provide Montessori-trained teachers and quality teacher assistants.** Montessori teacher training is intensive and includes Montessori child psychology, educational theory, material demonstrations, supervised practice with Montessori apparatus and observation of Montessori classrooms, supervised practice teaching, and extensive written and oral exams.
3. **Progress slowly and phase in each progressive level.** The elementary curriculum builds as the children move through the program one year at a time.
4. **Use multi-age groupings.** This is an **essential** component of the Montessori education model. Multi-age groupings enhance the Montessori dynamic by reducing competition, maximizing curriculum options available to any one child, providing a family atmosphere, which plays a

vital role in socialization.

5. **Purchase the full complement of Montessori materials.** Materials include practical life set-ups, handmade materials, Montessori apparatus, consumable supplies, and a small classroom library.
6. **Hire a Montessori coordinator with curriculum knowledge and authority.** The program leadership must have experience and Montessori training. The curriculum coordinator supervises the ordering and preparation of Montessori materials, parent education, expanding levels of Montessori, staff development, program evaluation, and curriculum implementation.
7. **Build a consensus among staff regarding curriculum goals in relation to pupil progress.** Teachers need to come to a common understanding of their lesson planning and curriculum scope and pace. Expected levels of student achievement should be developed school-wide.
8. **Use of Montessori-specific progress reporting mechanisms.** The Montessori program utilizes a unique approach to education that defines specific skill objectives. Parents and teachers need a reporting and record keeping system that accurately reflects the child's progress within a Montessori environment.
9. **Involve parents and the community.** Community events for increasing Montessori parent education keep parents involved. Parent volunteerism is vital to school fundraising and other school-related projects. Research confirms that academic achievement is directly proportional to parent involvement.
10. **Align assessment techniques with Montessori curriculum.** Montessori students historically score well on standardized tests, however with the increasing availability of alternative assessment instruments, better alignment of assessment and Montessori curriculum can be attained. Assessment should seek to also measure external conditions such as parent satisfaction, parent participation, as well as intrinsic Montessori standards and values.

ONGOING AND FUTURE GOALS

As Rising Sun continues to grow and assess the needs of our students, we continue to refer to our Strategic Plan and LCAP goals each year to ensure that we are maintaining progress toward these goals and what adjustments, if any, need to be made. Rising Sun has also increased its systems of support for students who are struggling with regular school attendance or who are at risk for chronic absenteeism.

Part of RSMS' Management Goals and Objectives was to hire additional office support. This year we have added three additional office support staff to assist teachers, provide curriculum support, and support the Head of School with various administrative needs. Hiring of the additional staff has enabled the office to expedite the processing of students upon enrollment

and properly classify and place students in appropriate programs. Home Language Surveys are noted for English Learner (“EL”) students, and our certified English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (“ELPAC”) coordinator administers the ELPAC within the first 30 days of enrollment.

Rising Sun administrators continue to streamline the admission procedures to ensure that each incoming student file is checked thoroughly and contact with parents is made very early to determine if the transferred file information is accurate, in particular with students who have an IEP or 504 placements.

Rising Sun has a thoroughly developed Multi-Tiered System of Supports program, and teachers will continue to receive ongoing training on how to initiate and follow through with the MTSS process. All incoming students are assessed immediately and if students are determined to be at risk, the MTSS process is initiated.

CHARTER ELEMENTS

Element 1: Educational Philosophy and Program

“The educational program of the charter school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom the charter school is attempting to educate, what it means to be an “educated person” in the 21st century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(A)(i)

“The annual goals for the charter school for all pupils and for each subgroup of pupils identified pursuant to Section 52052, to be achieved in the state of priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, and specific annual actions to achieve those goals. A charter petition may identify additional school priorities, the goals for the school priorities, and the specific annual actions to achieve those goals.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(A)(ii)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At Rising Sun Montessori School our ultimate goal is to create a learning community that reflects our mission of providing an authentic Montessori school that embraces the diversity of our students, parents, and teachers. Our school community will nurture the individual needs of each child in a learning environment that encourages students to be self-directed, avid learners who are prepared for a diverse world.

To achieve these goals, Rising Sun Montessori School shall operate under the guidance of four key fundamental principles:

- High standards
- Significant support
- Talented staff
- Parent and community involvement

High standards

Students are challenged with a vast and comprehensive curriculum in academic and non-academic subject areas. Students are expected to adhere to high standards of student behavior and academic achievement; life-long guidelines are directly taught and modeled by staff. Students are expected to demonstrate these values in their schoolwork as well as their interactions with peers and adults.

Significant support

Students benefit from smaller class sizes and strong academic, social, and intervention support programs.

Talented staff sustained by extensive professional development

Our staff shall improve their individual performance with ongoing professional development goals, training, and evaluation tools. Staff shall carry out their responsibilities in full alignment with the Charter School’s mission and with the highest level of integrity.

Parent and community involvement

As valued members of the school culture, parent input shall be actively solicited. Parents shall be given ample opportunities to support their children and the school through active involvement in school activities and committees.

STUDENTS TO BE SERVED – TARGET STUDENT POPULATION

Rising Sun Montessori School shall serve families that are seeking an alternative public Montessori education for their children in grades TK/K through 8. Rising Sun’s classrooms follow the authentic model of the Montessori three-year mixed-age classroom, therefore, classes are grouped with students as closely as possible to three grade levels per class: 1-3, 4-6, and two grade levels in TK/K and 7-8. We believe the 3-year mixed age cycle is the best model in providing students an optimal learning environment, with opportunities for students to learn from their older student peers, and older students being provided leadership/mentor roles.

Current Student Population (2024-25 unless otherwise noted)											
	Grade TK # / %	Grade K # / %	Grade 1 # / %	Grade 2 # / %	Grade 3 # / %	Grade 4 # / %	Grade 5 # / %	Grade 6 # / %	Grade 7 # / %	Grade 8 # / %	Totals
Total Enrollment (RSMS)	24 15%	35 22%	15 10%	18 12%	12 8%	11 7%	11 7%	11 7%	8 5%	10 6%	155 100%
2023-24 Total Enrollment% (BUSD)	4%	8.7%	9.1%	9.9%	9.3%	9.7%	10.3%	9.6%	9.7%	9.5%	4255 100%
RSMS Students who reside in BUSD	4 17%	10 29%	2 13%	5 28%	2 17%	6 54%	4 36%	3 27%	2 25%	0 0%	38 25%
Out of District	83%	71%	87%	72%	83%	46%	64%	78%	75%	100%	117 75%
2023-24 EL	TBD	9	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8%
SPED	1	1	3	3	2	0	3	4	0	2	12%
2023-24 Free or Reduced Price Meal ("FRPM")	1	3	4	1	1	3	6	3	3	3	18%

Foster	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<1%
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RSMS shall offer open enrollment to all students who wish to attend the Charter School. RSMS shall offer families a strong sense of community, multi-age classrooms and the opportunity to learn in a multi- sensory environment.

School Year: August – May **Days:** 175-182

Bell Schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Grades Served: TK/K-8

Proposed Total Enrollment: 275

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment	Year Round
2024-25	TK/K-8	160	No
2025-26	TK/K-8	170	No
2026-27	TK/K-8	175	No
2027-28	TK/K-8	180	No
2028-29	TK/K-8	190	No

See **Appendix 1E: Student Input** for budgeted enrollment detail. Budget reflects conservative estimates

Student Population and Demographics of Targeted School Community

We aim to serve families residing within the boundaries of the Buckeye Union School District and beyond. The cities served by BUSD include Shingle Springs, El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park. We expect our population demographics to be similar to that of the Buckeye Union Elementary School District. Rising Sun’s 2022-23 student demographics as compared to BUSD are shown in the table below:

	Rising Sun Montessori School	Buckeye Union Elementary School District
Hispanic or Latino	(28) 20.7%	(575) 16.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	(3) 2.2%	(15) 0.4%
Asian	(34) 25.2%	(338) 9.8%
Filipino	(2) 1.5%	(56) 1.6%
African American	(1) 0.7%	(39) 1.1%
White	(57) 42.2%	(2180) 63.1%
Two or More Races	(6) 4.4%	(248) 7.2%
<i>Students with Disabilities</i>	(17) 12.6%	(496) 14.4%

<i>English Learners</i>	(13) 9.6%	(125) 3.6%
<i>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</i>	(42) 31.1%	(669) 19.4%
TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT	135	3,456

Source: CDE website

At Rising Sun Montessori School, we are committed to enrolling a diverse student population. Part of the Mission and Vision for Rising Sun Montessori is to create a school community that reflects the diversity of our greater community. For details on how we plan to achieve diversity in our school community, refer to **Element 7: Student Population Balance**.

In addition to encouraging greater ethnic diversity, RSMS will strive to serve families from a variety of linguistic and economic backgrounds. The inclusive and comprehensive educational program at Rising Sun Montessori is designed to meet the needs of students learning English along with native English speakers. Our support system for EL students is detailed in the **Special Learners Section** of this charter.

THE NEED

Rising Sun Montessori School has continued to see growth year over year. The school opened its doors in August of 2014 and served 75 students in grades 1-6. Today, Rising Sun serves approximately 160 students in grades TK-8th. Our students come from a wide variety of local school districts, with 75% of our students living outside our chartering authority's district boundaries. Rising Sun provides these families with a small school environment which is dedicated to implementing an authentic Montessori learning environment in a tuition free public school setting.

The Founding Team of Rising Sun recognized that families were looking for Montessori education that spanned from elementary into middle school. These families were often going outside of their cities of residences, as well as outside of their school districts of residence, specifically looking for Montessori education. While there are other Montessori charter schools within the surrounding school districts, many of them are at or near capacity. Families are put on a waitlist for these schools, oftentimes resulting in the children not being admitted.

In addition, nearly all of the elementary and middle schools in Buckeye Union School District are located on the northside of US Hwy 50, with few elementary or middle schools in operation to the south of US Hwy 50. RSMS is to the south of US Hwy 50.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

What it Means to Be an Educated Person in the 21st Century

RSMS believes a well-educated person and community leader in the 21st century shall be:

- **Proficient in all subject areas:** Rising Sun students shall be proficient as readers and writers of the English language, in mathematical skills and content, science concepts and scientific thinking, and social studies practices and content as well as critical thinking skills.
- **Technologically literate.** Rising Sun students shall have knowledge and use of digital tools to collaboratively design and research projects and experiments and make the final presentations that are the natural culmination of their studies.
- **Culturally and globally aware.** In a world that is rapidly becoming connected via information technology, the resulting globalization of communications and business has increased the importance of global cultural literacy. Our students need to be aware of, understand, and have tolerance for other cultures and beliefs.
- **Able to demonstrate “the 16 Habits of Mind”¹** These Habits are derived from studies of what successful “intelligent” people do when confronted with problems to solve, decisions to make, creative ideas to generate, and ambiguities to clarify. These Habits are consistent with the skills necessary to prepare students to be self-motivated, lifelong learners. They include: persisting, managing impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly, metacognition (thinking about thinking), striving for accuracy, questioning and posing problems, applying past knowledge to new situations, thinking and communicating with clarity and precision, gathering data through all senses, creating, imagining, innovating, responding with wonderment and awe, taking responsible risks, finding humor, thinking interdependently, and remaining open to continuous learning.

Montessori students learn to learn for themselves. They are encouraged to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions. Montessori teaches students to think, not simply to memorize, repeat, and forget. They literally learn how to learn, discovering that the process of learning can, and should, be as natural as breathing. Rather than present students with all the “right answers,” Montessori teachers ask the “right questions,” and challenge students to find new solutions or discover the answers on their own. This is another element of the Montessori program that prepares children to succeed in the real world of ideas, enterprise, and challenging perspectives. Students come to realize that, while learning the right answers may get them through school, learning how to learn will get them through life!²

¹ Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success by Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick.

² The Montessori Way. An Education for Life: Montessori for the Elementary Years by Tim Seldin & Paul Epstein, Ph.D.

Characteristic Behaviors of Intelligent People

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	MONTESSORI SUPPORTS CRITICAL THINKING
PERSISTANCE	Uninterrupted work period of 90 minutes – 3 hours allow students to develop their concentration. Repetition of work is allowed until the student feels satisfied and is ready to move on.
LISTENING WITH UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY	Students are taught at an early age to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful manner. Peace education is incorporated into curriculum with grace and courtesy lesson modeled daily.
THINKING ABOUT YOUR THINKING (Metacognition)	Students are provided opportunities to think, reflect, problem-solve, and make decisions on what they have gathered.
QUESTIONING AND POSING PROBLEMS	Students are given ample time to observe, explore, and master materials, answering any and all questions they have about a concept that is introduced.
THINKING AND COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY AND PRECISION	The Montessori teacher is a classroom facilitator, creating an atmosphere that empowers students to speak up in front of groups and share their ideas.
CREATING, IMAGINGING, AND INNOVATING	Emphasis is placed on individuality; students have the freedom to move around the classroom to discover new concepts and explore them at length.
TAKING RESPONSIBLE RISKS	Students are given freedom within limits, to discover and build confidence in an environment that supports healthy self-esteem. Intrinsic motivation aides in developing good work ethics.
THINKING INTERDEPENDENTLY	Mixed-age classrooms provide optimal conditions for children to teach and learn from each other. Classrooms are designed to create an atmosphere of family.
MANAGING IMPULSIVITY	The carefully prepared class environment sets a calm tone for the student to organize their thoughts and work in a methodical manner, encouraging self-discipline.
THINKING FLEXIBLY	Students progress through materials at an individual rate; they can recognize their own errors and troubleshoot the possibilities to arrive at another solution.
STRIVING FOR ACCURACY	Students spot their own errors, in an atmosphere free from shame, and supports error-making as a tool for further learning. Repetition of work internalizes a student's feelings of success.
APPLYING PAST KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS	Students discover a multitude of possibilities with many materials that offer extension to lessons and concepts that were previously mastered.
GATHERING DATA THROUGH ALL SENSES	Multi-sensory materials through the classroom allow students to enjoy awakening their senses through physical, hands-on exploration of real-world concepts.
RESPONDING WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE	Children are engaged through Great Lessons, point of interest, hands-on experiments and exploration. Montessori teachers encourage a child's natural sense of wonder.
FINDING HUMOR	The classroom is an environment of "work as play." Teachers bring in new concepts and materials to engage a student's curiosity and imagination in a fun and challenging way.
REMAINING OPEN TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING	Children are encouraged to view learning as a life-long habit, realizing there is always room for improvement and growth.

Critical Thinking Skills from Arthur Costa's paper *Teaching for Intelligence* 1988

How Learning Best Occurs

Rising Sun Montessori School will honor the individual potential of each child by providing them a method of education that has been shown in research³ to give students the optimal conditions for meaningful learning to take place. The Montessori Method of Education provides a model of best teaching practices: providing students with a curriculum that is hands-on, in an environment that is conducive to the young child's needs. Rising Sun believes learning best occurs when children are given the opportunity for:

- **Kinesthetic Learning**
- **Student interest**
- **Intrinsic reward**
- **Collaborative learning**
- **Meaningful curriculum**
- **Caring adult guides**
- **A carefully prepared environment**

Kinesthetic Learning: Children learn best when they are given freedom to move, manipulate, and do things, rather than simply watch and listen to lessons. In Montessori classrooms, children use hands-on learning materials that are readily accessible for their exploration and discovery. Additionally, children tend to learn more and become more emotionally mature and well balanced when they have a sense of freedom, choice, and control over their daily lives. Freedom of movement and choice of activity are basic concepts of Montessori education.

Student interest: Children learn best when they are interested in what is being taught. Montessori teachers follow their students' interests and nurture their curiosity and imagination, while ensuring essential skills are mastered.

Intrinsic reward: Tying extrinsic rewards to learning—such as giving high grades for doing well on a test, or paying children for getting good grades -- tends to backfire. Montessori education cultivates children's intrinsic motivation; our assessment approaches are holistic, and student competition and/or comparison is unnecessary.

Collaborative learning: When students have the opportunity to work with other students, it tends to facilitate the learning process. In the mixed age Montessori classroom, students are faced with the real world scenario of collaborating with children in different age groups, working and learning from, and with, each other.

Meaningful curriculum: Learning situated in meaningful contexts is often deeper and richer than learning in abstract contexts. Students learn by delving into a subject hands-on, exploring all

³ Research conducted by Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard, former Montessori student, author: *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*,

angles of the subject until a sense of self-mastery and/or satisfaction with the subject is achieved. From the materials used in the classroom, to class discussions, learning is situated in real world applications and contexts.

Caring adult guides: Particular forms of adult interaction are associated with more optimal child outcomes. Montessori’s authoritative approach is highly structured and consistent, while being warm and empathic. Kind, courteous, responsible behavior is constantly modeled.

Prepared environment: Order in the environment is beneficial to children. Montessori classrooms are carefully prepared and organized to aid children in their long-term development.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Curriculum

Rising Sun Montessori School includes curriculum and materials in the following content areas: Home Economics, Math, Language Arts, Creative Arts, Geography, History, Civics, Technology, Leadership, Science, Government, Economics, Nutrition, and Movement. Montessori Scope & Sequence lessons are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, English Language Development (“ELD”) standards, History-Social Science Framework and State Standards in all other subject areas (collectively “State Standards”) and presented to the students within the framework of the Montessori Method of Education to make them more accessible, hands-on, and meaningful to the backgrounds and lives of our students. Instruction is designed to foster the student’s lifelong love of learning, and to encourage students to become contributing members of our global society.

The Montessori curriculum is organized as an interconnected group of systems rather than as separate categories of knowledge. For example, students learn that the natural world on Earth developed chronologically by engaging in Timeline of Life studies, which address the development of the physical universe and Earth, as well as that of flora, fauna, and mankind. Montessori lessons are introduced simply and concretely in the early years and then reintroduced many times in successive years at increasing levels of abstraction and complexity. There is an early emphasis on the comprehensive vision of knowledge as a whole before proceeding to its parts as points of reference. For example, math concepts are introduced before math facts are memorized; the Earth’s globe is studied before countries are named. The sequencing of materials and curriculums, an interdisciplinary approach, and integration of curriculum areas are all part of a Montessori teacher’s daily planning.

The use of materials for learning in the Montessori classroom is an integral part of the model from pre-school through the middle school years. Based on a belief that children learn by doing, lessons for math, sciences, language arts, and all subject areas include hands-on materials for student use. Educational materials are carefully selected to meet the needs of the range of students in each class and to meet the learning goals of the program. The curriculum integrates many subject areas into the lesson at hand. This enables students to use their knowledge and skills in context and to see the “whole picture.” Students are not left dependent on materials,

however, but practice using the materials until concepts have been mastered and internalized, making the use of the materials no longer necessary.

Activities are both student-initiated and teacher-initiated according to ability and learning style. Student efforts are scheduled and recorded using a work plan, which contains a combination of student-selected lessons and activities and teacher-initiated lessons, activities, and requirements. From Kindergarten on, students design contracts or individualized work plans with the teacher to guide the students' required work, to balance their general work, and to teach them to become responsible for their own time management and education.

Due to the multi-age classroom, freedom of movement in both indoor and outdoor prepared environments, and the use of research and real-life materials, the Montessori classroom has great relevancy to the world beyond the school building. Teachers expose students to the connections among and between subjects. On the most obvious level, science and mathematics fit together, as do English and social studies. Students often make connections independent of those the teacher points out; making these connections exercises all facets of higher-order thinking. Curriculum constructed around themes, directed at answering fundamental questions, or aimed at generative issues, readily lends itself to integrative education.

In addition to in-class learning, field trips are an integral part of RSMS' instructional program, as is environmental education, and creative art. We concentrate on character education through lifelong guidelines, promoting good citizenship and a healthy lifestyle.

We offer a small community where families, students and faculty are given opportunities to become familiar on a more individualized basis. Through engagement in the community, students are provided leadership opportunities.

The curriculum at RSMS is designed to address the education of the whole child; physical, emotional, cognitive, and social, which allows children to develop the critical-thinking skills and intellectual curiosity that fuels success in the classroom and beyond.

Personalized Learning

Rising Sun Montessori School will provide an innovative, standards-based curriculum where teaching focuses on the individual child's needs by building sequential, developmental learning at each grade level. Student achievement data shall inform instructional decisions. Student academic and behavioral growth shall be monitored through multiple measures including, Transparent Classroom, a comprehensive progress monitoring and communication system that aligns the Montessori curriculum to State Standards. Teams of teachers collaborate to develop a program that best meets each student's needs, capitalizing on teachers' specialties and allowing students to work on skills appropriate to their achievement level. Attendance shall be taken daily using Transparent Classroom and PowerSchool systems. In addition, attendance shall

be recorded in an office log-in binder for late arrivals and early dismissals.

Subject Areas

Our course of study is an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. Lessons hold the student's interests and have relevance in real world applications and context.

Language Arts

In Montessori education, the process of learning to read and write almost always comes naturally and begins with the child's first interest. Children begin with the phonetic sounds of the alphabet, grow their knowledge to read and write increasingly complex words and sentences, which then creates an "explosion into reading."⁴ Parents are often amazed when one day their child is first stringing words together, to the next day when they are reading more advanced text, seemingly overnight. This then leads to a quick jump from reading and writing single words to sentences and stories. Vocabulary, spelling rules, and linguistics are now introduced, along with the functions of grammar and sentence structure. Before long, students learn to write naturally and well.

At RSMS, students shall be provided a comprehensive curriculum that includes daily opportunities to practice and improve reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Reading

Through reading, RSMS will develop in the minds of our students the concept that written words are actual thoughts set down on paper.

Students are provided early exercises to practice reading and to gain the concept of a noun: labeling objects with written name tags, mastering increasingly complex words, naming things that interest students, such as dinosaurs, the parts of a flower, geometric shapes, the materials in the classroom, etc.

Listening comprehension is an important component for overall reading comprehension. Montessori students develop and practice their listening comprehension skills from a young age by listening and responding to spoken word, including informational texts (non-fiction, articles, definitions, etc.) read aloud. An important part of overall comprehension is creating visual images and determining what is important. Students demonstrate an ability to create images in their minds when they are able to recall important facts from information they have heard. A more complex task is selecting main ideas from an informational text and creating a summary.

Rising Sun Montessori School's reading program will consist of:

⁴ A Montessori Curriculum Scope and Sequence, by Tim Seldin, Ph.D.

- STAR reading program, which provides Instructional Reading Level, Grade Level Equivalent, and Estimated Oral Reading Fluency data.
- Multiple pre-reading exercises which include introduction to phonetic sound, and word-building, with progression towards earlier readers.
- Reading specially selected or prepared small books on topics that really interest the child, such as in science, geography, nature or history.
- Interpretive reading for comprehension at ever increasing levels of difficulty.
- Use of the library and reference books on a daily basis for both research and pleasure.
- An introduction to the world's classical children's literature at increasing depth and sophistication.
- Understanding elements of stories. This is an important skill for reading comprehension. Elements of stories are introduced to children first through "read-alouds." The reader of the story points out important basic features of stories such as the setting and characters. As children become more and more skilled at listening to and responding to stories read aloud, the reader points out more complex features such as problem and solution, major events, transitions in the story (beginning, middle and end) and central themes. In these lessons children continue thinking about the importance of setting to the idea of setting. The setting answers the questions of "where" and "when" in stories. Authors' descriptions of setting are important in creating images in readers' minds. Identifying and noticing changes in settings is important in overall understanding of the plot of stories. More experienced readers will gain insight into the overall message and the subtle inferences in literature when they analyze the word choice used to describe settings. They also compare and contrast descriptions of one setting with another within the same piece or different pieces of literature.
- Developing fluency. Fluency is an important component of reading. A fluent reader processes text at an efficient speed while maintaining a strong understanding of the content. Reading aloud with expression that matches the meaning and reading at a reasonable pace are also components of fluency. From an early age, children learn how to read aloud with a group. This is one of the strategies that will be used to help students develop and practice their fluency skills.
- Use of inquiry circles. Inquiry circles are small groups of children reading and constructing meaning from texts through discussions. Children naturally want to talk to other children about new information or facts they have learned from reading. Inquiry circles provide a motivating and engaging format for children to engage in the real world skills of

discussing, collaborating, and learning from each other.

- Older students will prepare for discussions by reading informational texts ahead of time, in line with the child's agreed-upon assignment. They will follow guidelines created by the group for discussions about topics of inquiry. Students will be able to ask and respond to questions and make comments that clarify and/or add to the meaning of the discussion. They will make conclusions after reviewing the ideas shared in a topic of inquiry discussion. Students review the main ideas discussed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing after a topic of inquiry discussion.

Handwriting

The young student uses the Montessori material "Moveable Alphabets," made up of easily manipulated plastic letters, for the early stages of phonetic word creation, the analysis of words, and spelling. The Moveable Alphabet facilitates early reading and writing tasks during the period when young children are still not comfortable with their own writing skills.⁵

Handwriting is first introduced to the young writer by tracing letters in sand, later by writing on special tilted, upright blackboards; unlined, wide-lined, and narrow-lined, followed by writing on special writing tables, as the student becomes comfortable with script.

Cursive writing and word processing are normally started early in the elementary grades, with specialized writing, such as Calligraphy, introduced when the student shows an interest.

Composition

At an early age, before handwriting has been mastered, students compose sentences, stories, and poetry through oral dictation to adults and with the use of the Moveable Alphabet. Once handwriting is fairly accomplished, the children begin to develop their composition skills. They continue to develop over the years at increasing levels of sophistication.

Creative and expository composition skills continue to develop as the children advance from level to level. Students are typically asked to do journal writing on a daily basis, composing short stories, poems, plays, reports, and news articles.

Lower elementary through middle school classrooms have many opportunities to use elements of the writing process to grow as writers. Students participate in community experiences such as brainstorming discussions, shared writing, or peer conferencing and also complete steps of the writing process independently. Often writing activities are linked to real world purposes, such as describing a shared or individual experience for a newsletter, or writing a poem for a class anthology to be given as a gift. In this lesson, students use various steps of the writing process to create rich and vivid sensory descriptions in their shared or independent writing.

⁵ *Id.*

The proofreading/editing stage of the writing process is focused on correcting all potential errors associated with the basic mechanics of writing. At this step, it is important to use a discerning eye to check for proper punctuation, spelling and grammar. Peer-conferencing is a wonderful approach at this step, as having a "fresh set of eyes" view the writing can be very helpful.

In addition, peer-conferencing gives students a valuable experience in collaboration to produce a final piece of writing. The "Six Traits of Effective Writing" are continuously referred to as part of the writing process.

Students will explore the following areas of composition and writing:

- Six Traits of Effective Writing
- Using a Writer's Notebook
- Defining Audience and Organizing Thoughts
- Understanding and Applying Strategies (Graphic Organizers, Listing, Brainstorming Mind-Mapping, Free-writing)
- Drafting: Developing a Thesis Statement, Summarize Research Findings, Forming Sentences and Paragraphs, Conclusion, Citing Sources (Footnotes and Bibliography)
- Revising: Independent/Peer-Conferencing, Sentence Fluency, and Word Choice
- Producing and Publishing: Read Aloud to a Group, Printing in digital format
- Writing: Descriptive, Narrative, Expository, Persuasive
- Narrative Writing: Setting, Character, Plot, Conflict, Resolution, Personal Narrative, Biographical Narrative, Fictional Narrative
- 4 E's - Examples, Explanations, Evidence, Elaboration
- Essays: Procedural, Informational, Compare/Contrast, Opinion, Problem/Solution
- Research Skills: Research Projects (Reports, Presentations, etc.), Identifying and Accessing Sources of Information (Using Encyclopedias, Text Features, Tables of Contents, Index, Glossary, Internet, Multiple Sources, Cross Referencing)
- Creative Writing
- Letter Writing: Informal and Formal Letters, Thank You Letters,
- Poems (Haiku, Cinquain, Diamante, Rhyming)

- Product Review (Book, Movie, Toy, etc.)
- Plays
- Digital Newspaper, Newsletter or Magazine

Spelling

Students begin to spell using the Moveable Alphabet to sound out and spell words as they are first learning to read. They ‘take diction’—spelling words called for by the teacher—as a daily exercise. The sequence of spelling, as with all language skills, begins much earlier than is traditional in this country, during a time when children are spontaneously interested in language.

RSMS students learn spelling by:

- Sounding out and spelling simple phonetic words;
- Learning to recognize and spell words involving phonograms, such as ei, ai, or ough;
- Developing their own “personal dictionary” list of words they can now spell;
- Learning to recognize and spell the “puzzle words,” or “sight words” of English: words that are non-phonetic and are not spelled as they sound;
- Studying words: compound words, contractions, singular-plural, masculine-feminine, prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms.

Grammar

The study of grammar begins almost immediately as students begin to read, during the sensitive period when the child is spontaneously interested in language. It continues over several years until mastered. The idea is to introduce grammar to the young child as he/she is first learning how to put thoughts down on paper, when the process is natural and interesting, rather than waiting until the student is much older and finds the work tedious.⁶

The function of the parts of speech are introduced to the student one at a time through many games and exercises that isolate the one element under study. Montessori has assigned a geometric symbol to represent each element of grammar. There are 15 different symbols, each representing a specific part of speech. For example, verbs are represented by a large red circle. Students analyze sentences by placing the symbols for the appropriate part of speech over each word and then recording this work in a language journal. Once students have mastered the concrete symbols for the parts of speech, they perform more advanced exercises for several years with grammar boxes set up to allow them to analyze sentences by their parts of speech.

Students continue to study language from the mid-elementary years onward, reviewing as well

⁶ *Id.*

as engaging new concepts and skills: tenses, moods, irregular verbs, person and number, the study of style, and the study of grammatical arrangements in other languages.

Speaking & Listening

Individual expression is encouraged and nurtured in the Montessori classroom. Students are given lessons on: how to speak in groups; how to get someone's attention to be able to speak with them; and how to logically request or explain something. Opportunities occur throughout the child's day to engage in this activity.

Students shall use and understand new vocabulary in conversation and summarize information that has been heard, asking relevant questions when the meaning is unclear.

Students shall also take into account the perspectives of others and the audience when speaking. They shall have the ability to sustain a conversation with a variety of audiences (teachers, friends, parents), and listen respectfully and learn to take turns speaking.

Students shall learn the skills necessary for presenting information (essay, report, idea, etc.) orally to a group or individuals.

Rising Sun Montessori School's Speaking Lessons consist of:

- Reporting on a topic or text, telling a story, or recounting an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes.
- Reporting on a topic or text or presenting an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes.
- Presenting claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts and details to accentuate main ideas or themes.
- Using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.
- Delivering well-organized oral reports.
- Reporting about a topic or text, telling a story, or about an experience with relevant facts and descriptive details.
- Speaking clearly at an understandable pace
- When telling stories, uses appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details.

- Speaking audibly in complete sentences.
- When telling stories, uses appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, organized to support a theme.
- Using a tone and style that is appropriate for the task.

Mathematics

Perhaps, of all the Montessori apparatus, the Math Materials are the most glamorous. They are beautiful, and in their simplicity are supremely intelligent. They give the children a sensorial experience of the abstraction that is mathematics, allowing them to store concepts so that when the time comes to deal with exclusively abstract terms, the understanding is already there. With the Montessori math materials, every piece isolates one concept, and these isolated concepts integrate to form the basis for a further step in the development of the child's mathematical understanding.

Students use the specially designed Montessori Math materials to perform a number of mathematical functions including: introduction to problems involving tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and millions; practical application problems; solving word problems, money (units and exchange); interest (real life problems involving credit cards and loans; principal, rate, time); computing the squares and cubes of numbers: cubes and squares of binomials and trinomials; basic data gathering, graph reading and preparation, and statistical analysis.

One example of the beautifully crafted, intelligently designed Montessori Math material is the "Golden Bead Materials." With the Golden Bead Materials students can perform a variety of mathematical functions.

- Students as young as four learn the decimal system in units, tens, hundreds, thousands, showing the decimal hierarchy in three-dimensional form: units=single beads, tens=a bar of 10 bead units, hundreds=10, ten bars fastened together into a square, thousands=a cube ten units long, ten units wide, and ten units high. Students learn first to recognize the quantities, then to form numbers with the bead or cube materials through 9,999 and to read them back, to read and write numerals up to 9,999, and to exchange equivalent quantities of units for tens, tens for hundreds, and so on.
- The Golden Bead materials aid in the student's lessons on linear counting: learning the number facts to ten (what numbers make ten, basic addition up to ten); learning the teens (11=one ten + one unit), counting by tens (43=four tens + three units) to one hundred.
- Students work with the Golden Bead materials as they develop their concept of the four basic mathematical operations: addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication.

Students build numbers with the bead material, and perform mathematical operations concretely. Work with this material over a long period of time is critical to the full understanding of abstract materials for all but a few exceptional children. This process tends to develop in the child a much deeper understanding of mathematics.

- Development of the concept of “dynamic” addition and subtraction is done through the manipulation of the Golden Bead materials. (Addition and subtraction where exchanging and regrouping of numbers is necessary.) Gradually students learn memorization of the basic math facts: adding and subtracting numbers under 10 without the aid of the concrete materials.

After being introduced to the processes of the decimal system using the Golden Bead materials, students further develop abstract understanding of addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication with large numbers through use of the Stamp Game (a manipulative system that represents the decimal system as color-keyed “stamps”). In the Stamp Game, the quantity and symbols of the decimal system are combined and are represented by each “stamp.”

Another Montessori Material, Beaded Chains, is used to teach skip counting. (Skip counting with the chains of the squares of the numbers from zero to ten (e.g. counting to 25 by 5’s). Students begin this concept by first understanding the “square” of a number. Students perform skip counting with the chains of the cubes of the numbers zero to ten (e.g. counting to 1,000 by ones or tens), after first developing the understanding of the concept of a “cube” of a number.

Development of the concept of long multiplication and division is done through concrete work with the Bead and Cube materials. The student develops a more abstract understanding of “short” division through more advanced manipulative materials, such as the Division Board; movement to paper and pencil problems, and memorization of basic division facts.

The study of fractions normally begins when students using the short division materials find that they have a “remainder” of one and ask whether or not the single unit can be divided further. The study of fractions begins with very concrete materials (the fraction circles), and involves learning names, symbols, equivalencies, common denominators, and simple addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication of fractions up to “tenths,” and continues on to smaller denominators. Additional materials are used to demonstrate how fractions are converted to decimals and percentages.

The development of still more abstract understanding of “long” multiplication is done through highly advanced and manipulative materials, such as the Multiplication Checkerboard. When students are ready to learn the more abstract understanding of “long division,” work is performed through highly advanced manipulative materials, such as the Test Tube Division apparatus.

Beginning the “passage to abstraction,” the child begins to solve problems with paper and pencil

while working with the concrete materials. Older students:

- Understand and apply the order of operations for solving problems as PEMDAS; solve numerical expressions involving multiple operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, numerical expressions involving exponents, and involving multiple operations and exponents.
- Apply the distributive property to numerical equations.
- Understand and are familiar with algebraic terminology including: variable, coefficient and constant, and are able to identify the various terms in an equation, standard algebraic nomenclature, and the usage of variables to represent unknown values in an equation.
- Evaluate and solve algebraic expressions involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and exponents.
- Apply the distributive property to algebraic expressions.
- Review inverse operations.
- Use algebraic expressions for one variable, same variable multiple times, equivalent expressions, dependent and independent variables.
- Solve story problems with one variable and the same variable multiple times.
- Understand inequalities: compare equations with multiple operations, solve an inequality (finding all possible solutions), number lines.
- Learn squares of numbers and polynomials.
- Create squares of numbers up to 10.
- Learn square roots: of numbers and polynomials, understand square roots as the inverse of squaring, simple squares, extracting binomial roots, identify simple and binomial square roots, 3-digit perfect squares, 4-digit perfect squares, 5-digit perfect squares, the Square Root Algorithm for Binomials, extracting a trinomial root, the Square Root Algorithm for Trinomials.
- Learn cube roots: numbers and polynomials, cube roots as the inverse of cubing, extract cube roots of units with cubing materials, extract cube roots of binomials with cubing materials, extract cube roots of trinomials with cubing materials.
- Understand exponents and scientific notation.
- Understand power of Two Cube.

- Explore powers (solving unknowns).
- Learn about negative exponents.
- Convert large whole numbers.
- Convert small decimal fractions.

Geometry

Young students are introduced to Geometry functions early in their Montessori education. Students have sensorial exploration of plane and solid figures, learning to recognize the names and basic shapes of plane and solid geometry through manipulation of special wooden geometric insets. They then learn to order by size or degree.

Students study the basic properties and definitions of the geometric shapes, with more advanced study of the nomenclature, characteristics, measurement and drawing of the geometric shapes and concepts such as points, line, angle, surface, solid, properties of triangles, circles, congruence, similarity, equality, and equivalence, the history of applications of geometry, the theorem of Pythagoras, and the calculation of area, perimeter and volume. These studies continue in upper elementary and middle school in repeated cycles where older students add, subtract, multiply, and divide angles, identify angles, order pairs on the coordinate plane, identify coordinates of points, find distance between two points, generate coordinate graphs and work with story problems.

Science

The scope of our science curriculum includes an introduction to botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, geology, geography, and astronomy. Older students' curriculum will encompass the traditional life and physical sciences, with more advanced courses in biology, chemistry, physics, earth science, geography, anatomy and physiology, and marine biology. Dr. Montessori passed a deep love and fascination for the world of nature on to thousands of students through a program of outdoor education and gardening experiences.⁷

At RSMS we want our students to continue this fascination with the universe and to enjoy the process of discovering its secrets and interrelationships. RSMS students will observe, analyze, measure, classify, experiment, and predict—all with a sense of curiosity and wonder.

During field trips and experiments, students learn how scientists go about their work, and respond with delight to gathering data, precision of measurement, classification, and prediction.

RSMS students will explore the areas of science with regard to physical, life, and earth science, as well as the investigation and experimentation processes into the areas of these sciences.

⁷ *Id.*

Life Science

Students will explore the following areas of life science with thematic units, projects, portfolios, and experiments:

- How to differentiate between living and non-living things.
- How to differentiate between animals and plants, learning basic characteristics of both.
- Observation of animals in nature.
- Identifying, naming, and labeling the parts of plants, trees, leaves, roots, and flowers (Botany).
- Identifying, naming, and labeling the external parts of human beings, insects, fish, birds, and other animals (Zoology)
- Introduction of the families of the animal kingdom, and identification and classification of animals into the broad families. Introduction to the basic characteristics, lifestyles, habitats, and means of caring for young of each family in the animal kingdom.
- Advanced biology study: the names and functions of different forms of leaves, flowers, seeds, trees, plants, and animals. This usually begins with considerably more field work collecting specimens or observing.
- Study of the internal parts of vertebrates: limbs, body coverings, lungs, heart, skeleton, reproduction.
- The plant kingdom: study of the major families of plant life on the Earth and classification by class and phyla, and the advanced study of plants in class and garden: experimenting with soil, nutrients, light, etc.
- Life cycles; water, oxygen, carbon-dioxide, and nitrogen.
- More advanced study of the animal kingdom: classification by class and phyla.
- Animal behavior: detailed observation.
- Anatomy: Systems of the animal and human body.
- Health and nutrition.
- Ecology: Advanced study of the interrelationships of life forms.

Physical Science

Students will explore the following areas of physical science with thematic units, projects, portfolios, and experiments:

- Study of evolution and the development of life on the Earth over the eons.
- Introduction to chemistry.
- The three states of matter: liquid, solid, gas.
- Basic atomic theory.
- How elements are created through stellar fusion
- Elements and compounds
- Mendeleev's Periodic Table of the Elements
- Basic molecular theory: Building atomic models
- Physical and chemical changes
- Research into the elements and continued study of the periodic table
- Introduction to chemistry lab experiments
- Development of skills in careful observation, recording and describing, and use of increasingly sophisticated techniques of measurement.
- Development of skills using common scientific apparatus: microscopes, telescopes, hand lens, collecting field specimens, preparing displays.
- Development of field science skills: tracking, listening, observing.
- Development of scientific inquiry skills: forming hypotheses, designing experiments, recording results.
- Study of the great inventions; machines and technology and their effect on society throughout history.
- Study of the great scientists.
- Introduction to the physical sciences.

Earth Science

Students will explore the following areas of earth science with thematic units, projects, portfolios, and experiments:

- Geology and mineralogy
- Meteorology

- Geography
- Astronomy and cosmology
- Elementary physics: light, electricity, magnetic fields, gravity, mass
- Preparing and analyzing all sorts of graphs and data displays; basic statistics.

In their Geography studies, students from Transitional Kindergarten through third grade use globes of land and water, world parts, and continents found throughout the classroom to study how land and water are shown, and the corresponding shapes of the continents. The globes give the students a sensorial impression with sand surfaces representing land and smooth surfaces representing water. Students also use special Land & Water Forms (molded three-dimensional trays) to understand basic land and water formations such as island, isthmus, peninsula, strait, lake, cape, bay, archipelago, etc.

Through sensorial activities with Puzzle Maps, students begin to build their knowledge of world geography. Puzzle Maps are specially made maps in the forms of intricate, color-coded, wooden jigsaw puzzles representing the continents, the countries of each continent, and the states of the U.S. The maps contain carefully designed knobs positioned on the location of the capitals of countries and states. They are presented to the students at an early age so that students become familiar with the nations of North and South America, and Europe, along with the states of the U.S. As soon as the children can read, they begin to lay the puzzle pieces out and place the appropriate name labels to each piece as a reading and geography exercise.

As students get older, transference maps are used to introduce written names and various forms of maps, along with early study of the flora, fauna, landscapes, and people of the continents.

Maps and compasses provide an introduction to longitude and latitude, coordinate position on the globe, the Earth's poles, the magnetic poles, history and use of the compass, topographic maps, global positioning satellite devices, etc.

Students receive an introduction to humankind's search to understand how the Earth was formed, from creation stories to the evidence of contemporary scientific research: origins, geologic forces, formations of the oceans and atmosphere, continental drift and tectonic plates, volcanoes, earthquakes, the ice ages, and the formation of mountain ranges.

Students study the hydrosphere: oceans, rivers, lakes, the water cycle, and the coasts and land reliefs: hills, mountain ranges, volcanoes, valleys, plains, etc. with respect to their formation, animal life, and effect on people.

As a component of their geography studies, students explore geography on a cultural level. Families and the community are encouraged to bring awareness to their specific culture with festivals and assemblies held at the school to focus on a variety of diverse cultures and to celebrate life together: an example being Chinese New Year, when the entire school might study China, prepare Chinese food, and learn special Chinese cultural dance and customs. Students

have thematic units and group discussions for detailed study of one nation at a time. Focus moves over the years from one continent to another, as the student's interest leads them. All aspects of the nation are considered: geography, climate, flora and fauna, major rivers and lakes, cities, mountains, people, food, religions, etc.

History/Social Studies

Our goal is to develop a global perspective, and the study of history and world cultures forms the cornerstone of our curriculum. Younger students study the emergence of the first civilizations and the universal needs of humanity. Older students begin their formal study of early humans, ancient civilizations, and early American history. In the upper grades we study history, geography, government, current events, economics, and cultural studies. Students follow a three-year cycle of thematic study.

Students study whichever themes are being presented that year, regardless of their age. In year 1 of the cycle, the focus will be on the creation of the universe, formation of the earth, evolution of life, and early human civilizations. Students will go into considerably greater depth and prepare increasingly sophisticated projects and research reports as they move through the upper grades. Continuing the three-year cycle of thematic history study, in year 2 of the cycle, focus will be on ancient civilizations, including the Mesopotamian cultures, Greece, Rome, ancient China, Byzantium, ending with an introduction to the Middle Ages.

In the third year of the three-year cycle, the class will focus on American studies, including an introduction to the history of the United States, American folk culture, technology, children's literature, government, and geography. The class will also consider Pre-Columbian Central and South American cultures, the Native American people of North America, the age of exploration, and the immigrant cultural groups who came to America from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Thematic unit lessons focus on:

- Natural resources of the Earth.
- Production: How natural resources are used by humankind.
- Imports and Exports: the interdependence of nations.
- History and needs all people share; fundamental needs of man: food, shelter, clothing, defense, transportation, culture, law, religion or spiritual enlightenment, love, and adornment. Following a group discussion on the lesson, students may do a collage art project to display their understanding of the basic needs of man.
- The concept of time and historical time is developed through many activities and repeated at deeper complexity.

- Along with the concept of time, and time-telling, students produce various timelines: a timeline of their life, and members of their family; timelines showing the activities of a day, week, month, year; a timeline of the Earth's history; a timeline from 8,000 B.C. to 2,000 A.D. to study ancient to modern history.
- The story of the evolution of the planet and its life forms over the eons, along with an overview of human history. This is repeated throughout the curriculum in increasing depth of study.
- Each year the student continues to study and analyze the needs, culture, technology, and social history of various periods in history. The trends of human achievement are charted, such as the development of transportation, architecture, great inventions, and great leaders.
- Students begin their study of the earliest humans, ending with an introduction to the first farmers. They consider early societies in terms of how they organized themselves to meet the common needs of all people.

Physical Education

Students at RSMS shall be exposed to a variety of physical movement activities that suit a variety of learning styles and skills and that are aligned to the State Standards. Physical education ("PE") takes place during weekly PE lessons. PE activities develop a range of physical and athletic skills, as well as form habits of teamwork, cooperation, and fair play. Students shall also be educated on human anatomy (example, which muscles are exercised during certain activities), and health and nutrition to support their physical growth and development. RSMS instructors, as well as specialists and community members shall be called upon to provide physical education instruction for our students. Currently, Rising Sun students participate in 80 minutes of PE per week.

Creative Arts

Visual and performing arts are integrated throughout the curriculum. The arts provide multi-sensory, multi-modality ways for students to access and interact with core subjects. Students are encouraged to use the arts as a way to communicate their understanding and learning.

Students have weekly lessons in creative arts. RSMS employs the culminated talents of the teaching staff, as well as bringing in creative arts specialists and members of the community to present these lessons through programs like "Meet the Masters." Students will experience multiple ways of communicating through art, music, and drama. Students will be encouraged to express their creativity, feelings, and imagination through the various art forms.

Technology

Students will learn to use the computer, the Internet, and other multimedia devices as learning and communication skills. Students will have access to technology for research, analysis, communication, skill building such as keyboarding, and self-expression. They will have

opportunities to learn how to handle the vast and varied information available when conducting research using the internet. Students learn how to approach this resource with a question in mind, conduct effective searches and narrow their results. Students also learn how to determine the source of information found on the web and determine if a bias exists. It is also essential that students learn how to keep themselves safe when using various tools on the internet. They can be confident in their own abilities to keep themselves safe when they understand the dangers, know warning signs and when to seek help. Currently, students in every classroom have access to desktop computers, iPads for assessments, and high-definition digital projectors. As the Charter School grows and develops, we will continue to assess the schools needs in developing our technology plan.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Educational Theory and Foundation of the Model

Montessori is an educational philosophy rooted in the scientific observations and research of Dr. Maria Montessori, the first female physician in Italy. Dr. Montessori specialized in pediatrics and psychiatry, often coming into contact with the children of the working class and poor. These experiences convinced her that intelligence is not rare and that most children come into the world with a human potential that is barely revealed unless adults create environments specifically designed for children to exercise their learning capabilities.

Many elements of modern education have been adapted from Montessori's theories: the open classroom, the role of the teacher as a guide, multi-age classrooms, developmentally appropriate and individualized education, and the use of manipulative learning materials.⁸

Montessori teachers are trained to observe each child's individual needs, interests, and developmental level. The teachers prepare the classroom so that each child may choose his/her independent work throughout the work cycle. Based on his/her observations, the teacher creates an individual lesson plan and schedule for each student and presents lessons to the children from a variety of subject areas. Lessons are given individually, in small groups, and to the entire class, depending on the lesson and a student's ability to attend during a group lesson.

Children are encouraged to choose and repeat these lessons independently. Many Montessori materials include a "control of error" which allows the child to independently correct his/her own mistakes. Children can choose to work alone or with peers. Students must demonstrate that they have successfully absorbed a concept using specific materials (using beads to solve a multiplication problem, for example), as well as demonstrate they can work with the concept in the abstract (recite times tables and accurately solve multiplication numeric and word problems without using a multiplication material).

Students are grouped in mixed age classroom settings, with two to three grades taught in each

⁸ The Montessori Way: An Education for Life by Tim Seldin & Paul Epstein Ph.D.

classroom. Students are given lessons according to their ability, readiness, and achievement, rather than their age. Montessori students are responsible for respectful use of materials in both indoor and outdoor environments, and are taught how to maintain tolerant, respectful interactions with peers, adults, and guests from all cultures and belief systems.

Learning Environment

The Montessori teaching approach is based on research results that indicate students learn efficiently and deeply in an enriched, supportive environment through exploration, discovery, and the freedom to use their creativity. In a Montessori classroom, each student learns and develops at his/her own pace through the use of materials and lessons introduced by staff trained in the Montessori teaching approach. This training is in addition to that required by the state of California for teacher licensure. The Montessori training program course of study includes educational philosophy, academic training in the curricula areas, child development, classroom management, use of materials for individual lessons, scaffolding of instruction, and differentiation of instruction.

The Montessori teaching approach also includes specific materials and methods developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, as well as materials and content added by teachers to educate students to 21st century standards. Materials are selected and designed to meet the needs of the individual student, and there is a range of materials both in variety and level of development to allow children to progress through the curriculum as their skills develop.

The integrated curriculum is introduced sequentially and at the developmental level of each individual child, allowing every child to work to capacity at his/her ability level. Students receive lessons and complete work individually, in small groups, and in whole-class groupings. Teachers guide and teach content so as to address the development of social skills, emotional growth, physical coordination, and cognitive preparation within the thoughtfully designed classroom and school-wide environments.

Students choose their academic activities in a prepared environment; however, the teacher initially defines the boundaries of activities. The class will then work in partnership with the teacher to define the boundaries of acceptable behavior and activity. Eventually the goal is that each child will define his/her own boundaries of right and wrong, consistent with the standards of the school community. Within limits, students are free to choose their own work, work at their own pace, and to move around and collaborate with others in the classroom. The limits imposed are in relation to the collective interest, and this means that children learn to have respect for the rights and safety of others and for the environment. Students who disrupt their own work or that of others are redirected by the teacher. Children learn to use care with materials, to help other children and to become cooperative members of the group. This enables each child to enjoy the freedom which is offered while displaying and developing discipline. This freedom develops the ability of the child to make reasoned educational and interpersonal choices based

on a framework of self-discipline.

Many Montessori classroom materials are self-correcting, which means students are able to self-assess and evaluate progress toward a learning goal prior to a formal assessment. Students are also encouraged to peer assess as a form of review prior to a formal assessment. Once students have demonstrated mastery of a concept via formal or informal assessment metrics, they are given the next lesson in the sequence.

Classrooms are physically structured to provide curriculum area concentrations. There are distinct areas containing materials in the areas of mathematics, cultural subjects, sciences, language arts, and fine art. Students have individual space for storing their learning materials and personal belongings. The classroom furnishings are arranged to provide areas in which students may choose to do their work sitting, standing, or on work rugs on the floor. A variety of furniture sizes is provided to accommodate different student needs. Work areas also include spaces in which students may work alone, in small groups, or in a full-class grouping. Finally, Montessori classrooms are structured to promote student independence by giving students access to learning materials as needed.

Classroom and School Culture

Montessori has been in the public sector since 1907 when Dr. Maria Montessori opened her first public Montessori school. There are more than 22,000 Montessori schools worldwide on six continents. The U.S. has more than 5,000 Montessori programs, with approximately 475 operating in the public sector.⁹

To further align the Charter School with the standards outlined by NAMTA and Montessori best practices, RSMS provides students:

The Classrooms:

- Uninterrupted work periods of 90 minutes to three hours allow students to develop their concentration. Repetition of work is allowed until the student feels satisfied and is ready to move on.
- Opportunities to learn conflict resolution in a peaceful manner. Peace education is incorporated into the curriculum with grace and courtesy lessons modeled daily.
- Opportunities to think, reflect, problem-solve, and make decisions on what they have gathered using critical thinking skills they have developed.
- Ample time to observe, explore, and master materials, answering any and all questions they have about a concept that is introduced.

⁹ [National Center for the Montessori in the Public Sector website](#)

- Montessori teachers as classroom facilitators, creating an atmosphere that empowers students to speak up in front of groups and share their ideas.
- Emphasis on individuality; students have the freedom to move around the classroom to discover new concepts and explore them at length.
- Freedom within limits to discover and build confidence for the development of healthy self-esteem. Intrinsic motivation aids in developing good work ethics.
- Mixed-age classrooms for optimal teaching and learning experiences. Classrooms are designed to create an atmosphere of family.
- A calm classroom, setting the tone for the student to organize their thoughts and work in a methodical manner, encouraging self-discipline.
- Self-paced learning; students can recognize their own errors and troubleshoot the possibilities to arrive at another solution.
- A supportive environment in which to spot their own errors, free from shame, but rather, as a tool for learning. Repetition of work internalizes their feelings of success.
- A multitude of possibilities with many materials that offer extensions to lessons and concepts that were previously mastered.
- Multi-sensory materials throughout the classroom, allowing students to enjoy awakening their senses through physical, hands-on exploration of real-world concepts.
- Child-centered lessons. Children are engaged through Great Lessons, point of interest, hands-on experiments and exploration. The Montessori teacher encourages a child's natural sense of wonder.
- A view of "work as play." Teachers bring in new concepts and materials to engage a student's curiosity and imagination in a fun and challenging way.
- The means to view learning as a life-long habit, realizing there is always room for improvement.
- Access to technology with computers in the classrooms and library, internet access for research and projects, and participation in Intel's "PC-Pals" program. With funds raised through the "PC-Pals" program, the classrooms have purchased dedicated classroom technology platforms for student access and use in research and presentations across all subject areas.

The Teachers:

Rising Sun Montessori School teachers present education as a joyful, active process, encouraging students to accept challenges, give their personal best, and learn from their mistakes. Our teachers are an exceedingly able and dedicated group who care deeply about children and are responsive to the needs of individual students and families. They value the best elements of traditional and innovative education and support the development of every student's mind, body, and spirit. Our teachers are California Credentialed and Montessori trained as well as well-versed in other research based instructional methodology and best practices. All TK teachers meet legal qualifications. RSMS teachers are totally committed to the academic and personal growth of students and are willing to put in the extra time to ensure that their students succeed. Supported by new technologies and ideas, they are able to consider fresh approaches and strategies to maintain high standards throughout the curriculum.

The Parents:

Much of the Charter School's philosophy lies in the knowledge that children with families that are involved in their child's education are more successful academically. Families who attend RSMS are encouraged to volunteer their time and expertise at the Charter School. Parents and staff shall support each other for the success of RSMS. Each family shall be encouraged, but not required, to spend 30 hours per year volunteering and supporting RSMS in many different ways, including assisting teachers in the classroom, driving on field trips, serving on our Parent Committee board, or participating on an event-specific committee. Parents have led enrichment programs in photography, photo-journalism and desktop publishing, robotics, agriculture and more. Our ultimate goal for parent participation is to match the giftings and passions of our parent community with the needs of our students and classrooms. Each year, parents fill out an Enrollment Survey, the purpose of which is to identify these areas and their ability to share them with our student body. For more information, see **Element 4: Governance**.

Appreciation for Diversity and Culture:

As part of our mission RSMS will recruit students and families that seek a diverse, student-centered educational environment. Our goal is to have a school community which truly reflects the makeup of our larger surrounding community. Our students should attend a school that is representative of the world which they will inherit. The details of our methods of recruitment and plan for diversity can be found in **Element 7: Student Population Balance**.

Instructional Planning

Instructional planning will be organized into three steps: long-term plan development, unit plan development, and monthly and weekly lessons. Through these three steps, the instructional staff will develop instructional plans that align Montessori lessons with the State Standards.

Long Term Plan Development

To ensure that Rising Sun provides a comprehensive, rigorous education for its students, teachers and administrators will engage in long term planning before the school year begins. Additionally, teachers will map each grade level to the State Standards to align with the Montessori lessons onto a trimester grade level flow chart. The curriculum content will be divided into trimesters for pacing purposes.

RSMS staff use Transparent Classroom, a cloud-based online Montessori record-keeping scope and sequence. The Transparent Classroom team, developed in collaboration with leading Montessori educators, takes into account the very specific measurable learning objective that the child engages in during his/her work and maps that precise activity to the appropriate standard(s). The end result is an accurate alignment based upon meaningful classroom data that demonstrates the many strengths of the Montessori approach to education. In the process, a unique opportunity was presented for Montessori to gain greater attention in the public sector, as the common practice of introducing squares and square roots in Upper Elementary levels results in Montessori students meeting some of the defined Mathematics standards as many as four years earlier than their traditionally educated counterparts.

Unit Plan Development

On a trimester basis, Rising Sun teachers will create thematic units using the Montessori curriculum. These thematic units align Montessori lessons with Standards. Rising Sun teachers will plan units using the scope & sequence developed by the Montessori Foundation. The State Standards-aligned Montessori scope & sequence is easily accessible through Transparent Classroom. All units will be required to demonstrate the following:

- Goals and objectives
- Essential questions that provoke further inquiry
- Specific State Standards addressed
- Learning activities
- Differentiated learning techniques

See **Appendix 2B** for Sample Six Week Unit Lesson Plans

Additionally, every trimester, teachers will develop projects and portfolio lessons that connect to the cross-cultural units.

Monthly/Weekly Lessons

Rising Sun monthly and weekly lesson plans are based on the learning activities listed in the thematic units. Teachers and Administrators break down units into monthly and weekly lessons and provide individual lessons/activities for each student's monthly syllabus and weekly work plans. Teachers also plan out ways to differentiate the activities based on previous assessments and ongoing observations. Lesson plans are flexible in allowing teachers to adjust the pacing or adapt the lesson based on on-going observation and assessment. Throughout the lessons and activities, teachers make frequent checks for comprehension and adjust as appropriate.

RISING SUN MONTESSORI GOALS AND ACTIONS IN THE STATE PRIORITIES

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(A)(ii), a reasonably comprehensive description of the Charter School's annual goals, schoolwide and for all numerically significant student subgroups, in the State Priorities, and the annual actions to achieve those goals, can be found in the Charter School's current LCAP, which is on file with the District and also available in **Appendix 6**.

Local Control and Accountability Plan

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.5, Rising Sun shall comply with all elements of the LCAP pursuant to regulations and a template adopted by the California State Board of Education and reserves the right to establish additional and/or amend school-specific goals and corresponding assessments throughout the duration of the charter. Rising Sun shall submit the LCAP to the District and the El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools annually on or before July 1st, as required by Education Code Section 47604.33. The Charter School shall present a report on the annual update to the LCAP and the local control funding formula budget overview for parents on or before February 28 of each year as part of a nonconsent item at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The LCAP and any revisions necessary to implement the LCAP shall not be considered a material revision to the charter, and shall be maintained by Rising Sun at the school site. See **Appendix 6: LCAP** for further details.

PLAN FOR SPECIAL LEARNERS

Rising Sun Montessori School strives to meet the needs of every learner to ensure appropriate accommodations and supports are structured to allow maximum participation, provide aid and services as necessary, address individual educational needs, and provide a least restrictive environment. The educational program is appropriate for students of various backgrounds: students who are academically low achieving, students who are academically high achieving, English Learners, and special education students. Informing the community about student achievement will be an ongoing process. Teachers meet formally with every parent annually in parent/teacher conferences. The developmental and standards-based report card reflects student progress toward meeting grade level standards, in social and study skills, behavior, and physical skill development. The Transparent Classroom Online Record Keeping Software is used in the classroom on a daily basis, enabling parents to have current knowledge of grade level expectations. Program information in addition to assessment information, shall be shared with the community through Transparent Classroom, as well as school and classroom bulletin boards, weekly classroom and school newsletters, the School Accountability Report Card, LCAP, school website, all parent education evenings, and community meetings.

The TK/K-8 program design is an advantage for both higher and lower achieving students as well as EL students because every student is encouraged to meet the grade level standards at their own pace. Additionally, peer tutoring and mentoring can be effectively used in a TK/K-8

environment, as older students team up with younger students. The following subsections explain the ways in which Rising Sun identifies and addresses the needs of our diverse learners.

PLAN FOR HIGH ACHIEVING STUDENTS

RSMS provides additional support and challenges for high achieving students, with individually designed lessons to ensure high order thinking skills and productive collaborative learning. Teachers are trained to challenge students who master the standards in their grade level early by providing unlimited Montessori lessons, using tests and assessments to determine the level of work to provide. A good example of this is the use of Albanesi and Renaissance STAR Assessments. High achieving students are able to skip lessons on their work plan that they have mastered and accelerate their learning, since each plan is developed to align with each individual child's test scores. High achieving students also have the opportunity to sit in on lessons and retrieve materials in higher grade level classrooms as needed. The Montessori curriculum is enriched with many different activities, keeping higher achieving students active and engaged.

Parents will be notified of their child's academic progress every trimester and/or as often as needed. Parent-teacher conferences are held for every student during the first week of school and at the end of the first trimester.

PLAN FOR LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Universal screening will be employed in Transitional Kindergarten and to all newly admitted students in order to detect possible learning difficulties early on. The Transparent Classroom Online Record Keeping Software will be used in the classroom on a daily basis, enabling parents to have current knowledge of grade level expectations. Rising Sun staff work diligently to review individual student performance data, enabling staff to take corrective action for students who fall below the minimum performance expectation. For example, following the completion of each unit, students who consistently fall below 70% on their Albanesi Language and Math Review Tests; score below 70% on weekly spelling units, struggle with reading assessments, or score a 1 in multiple categories on their Writing Rubrics will need corrective action. Parents shall be notified of their child's academic progress at least every trimester and/or as often as needed.

For students who fall below minimum performance expectations, a Multi-tiered System of Supports will be used with initial interventions beginning in the regular education classroom. Within each Tier, frequent progress monitoring assessments will be used to determine if students have progressed enough to exit an intervention group, or if there is not sufficient response to the intervention, then the student will be referred to a more intensive tier level program. See **Appendix 2F** for MTSS notices and tracking sheets.

On a need basis, it may be necessary to provide an after-school Homework Club, with trained tutors to assist students. More intensive interventions could include having the opportunity to repeat lessons, and sitting in on lessons for lower grade levels, or borrowing materials from other classrooms that the student could use to practice lower-level skills, and pull-out, push-in

programs by specialists. Weekly collaboration teacher meetings will address working effectively with struggling students to ensure grade level achievement. Assessments will chart student growth and be recorded. Information from these programs will be used for parent-teacher conferences and when grouping students for instruction.

Tier 1: High-Quality Classroom Instruction: All students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. In the Montessori classroom, a variety of materials are used, teaching to different learning modalities. Teachers work one-on-one with students and record their progress daily, enabling the teacher to closely monitor if a student needs a repeat of the lesson, an accommodation of the lesson, or has mastered and is ready to move on from the lesson.

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions: flexible groupings, peer/cross age tutoring, and differentiated groupings. The teacher will meet with other members of the Student Success Team (“SST”), such as the Head of School and parent, no less than every six weeks to review data and determine if the student is progressing in Tier 1. If not, they will move to Tier 2. In the Tier 2 level, students receive smaller group lessons and supplemental in-class instruction delivered in a smaller group setting where teachers can monitor and assess daily progress. Student progress is compared against the rate of progress expected of typically performing students at the same grade level, and how well the student is progressing over time against his or her past performance.

Tier 3: Intensive Interventions: Tier 3 interventions include double-dosing (such as receiving reading instruction twice a day), individualized or one-on-one instruction, and before or after school tutoring. The SST intervention team will research the underlying factors contributing to a student’s need for a Tier 3 intervention and problem-solve on ways to alter these factors to promote learning and reduce the magnitude or severity of the problem. Information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student, teacher, peers, parent, and administrator to determine whether the learning problem is appropriately aligned with the student’s curriculum materials and instructional strategies.

Tier 4: Students with a Current IEP.

Tier 4 implies that a student has a current Individualized Education Program and receives the services outlined in the IEP. Students who enter Rising Sun with a current IEP will automatically receive Tier 4 services indicated by the IEP. However, a student with an IEP may also be eligible for additional services through Tiers 2 and 3 if those services are deemed appropriate. The SST intervention team will conduct follow-up meetings at least every six to eight weeks after the initial meeting and provide supplemental in-class instruction in accordance with their IEP.

PLAN FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Rising Sun Montessori School shall meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners including long-term English Learners or English Learners at risk of becoming long-term English Learners, as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement,

program options, EL and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirement. RSMS maintains policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of students and parents.

Access to Core Educational Program

English Learners shall have full access to Rising Sun’s educational program. Rising Sun is committed to the success of its English Learners and shall offer support in both academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. With the provision of support as needed, Rising Sun’s English Learners shall be expected to meet Charter School standards in all academic and non-academic areas of the instructional program.

RSMS shall employ teachers who are Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development (“CLAD”) certified and will also receive ongoing professional development training in testing and placement of incoming students, and structured immersion instruction, and revising instructional strategies to meet our EL students’ needs.

Identification and Reclassification of English Learners

Upon Enrollment

To determine a student’s primary language and program eligibility, the parents of newly enrolling students will complete a “Home Language Survey” at the time of initial enrollment in a California public school. The “Home Language Survey” shall consist of the following four questions:

1. Which language did your child use when s/he first began to talk?
2. What language does your child most often use at home?
3. What language do you (parent/guardian) most often use to talk to your child?
4. What language is most often spoken by adults in the home?

Parents who answer one of the questions with a non-English language shall be entered into a database of EL students.

Family Contact

Upon entry to the Charter School, each family shall be connected with an EL consultant with home language fluency. In addition to reaching out to the family to establish a friendly point of contact, the consultant shall: 1) provide an explanation of and support for completion of the home language survey, and 2) provide literature in the student’s home language that explains the Charter School’s plan for meeting the specialized needs of English Learners.

English Language Proficiency Assessment

All students who indicate that their home language is one other than English will be tested with the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California. The ELPAC has four proficiency levels (Level 4: well developed; Level 3: moderately developed; Level 2: somewhat developed; and Level 1: minimally developed) and is aligned with the 2012 California ELD Standards.

The ELPAC consists of two separate assessments:

- Initial Assessment (“IA”)

The ELPAC IA is used to identify students as either an English Learner, or as fluent in English. The IA is administered only once during a student’s time in the California public school system based upon the results of the home language survey. The locally scored IA will be the official score. The IA is given to students in grades K–12 whose primary language is not English to determine their English proficiency status.

- Summative Assessment (“SA”)

ELs will take the SA every year until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient. The ELPAC SA is only given to students who have previously been identified as an EL based upon the IA results, in order to measure how well they are progressing with English development in each of the four domains. The results are used as one of four criteria to determine if the student is ready to be reclassified as fluent English proficient, to help inform proper educational placement, and to report progress for accountability.

Both the ELPAC SA and IA are assessments administered in seven grade spans—K, 1, 2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–12. In kindergarten and grade 1, all domains are administered individually. In grades 2–12, the test is administered in groups, exclusive of speaking, which is administered individually. The ELPAC IA and SA will be administered via a computer-based platform, while the ELPAC Writing Domain for Kindergarten through 2nd grade will continue to be administered as a paper-pencil test.

Testing times will vary depending upon the grade level, domain, and individual student. Both the ELPAC IA and SA are given in two separate testing windows through the school year.

The IA testing window will be year-round (July 1–June 30). Any student whose primary language is other than English as determined by the home language survey and who has not previously been identified as an English Learner by a California public school or for whom there is no record of results from an administration of an English language proficiency test, shall be assessed for English language proficiency within 30 calendar days after the date of first enrollment in a California public school, or within 60 calendar days before the date of first enrollment, but not before July 1 of that school year.

The SA testing window will be a four-month window after January 1 (February 1–May 31). The

English language proficiency of all currently enrolled English Learners shall be assessed by administering the test during the annual assessment window.

The Charter School shall notify all parents of its responsibility for ELPAC testing and of ELPAC results within 30 days of receiving test results from the publisher. The ELPAC shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act for English proficiency testing.

The Charter School will notify all parents of its responsibility for ELPAC testing and of ELPAC results within thirty days of receiving results from publisher. The ELPAC shall be used to fulfill the requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act for annual English proficiency testing.

Parents of English Learners also receive information about their right to request a waiver for alternative programs (bilingual education) and other information required by state and federal regulations. Parents of students who are under review for reclassification receive notification of test results. Once the review process is completed, parents are notified of change in status, and the Charter School files the signed reclassification review form in the students' cumulative folders. Letters are also sent to parents of continuing English Learners within 30 days of the start of school, as required by law. The letters contain previous year's ELPAC results, current performance levels on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium ("SBAC"), and the student's program placement for the current year

Strategies for English Learner Instruction and Intervention

Rising Sun shall serve EL students, identified either through self-identification or ELPAC testing, through a Designated and Integrated English Language Development program of support. During regular class lesson times, students receive integrated support across all subject areas in both instruction and follow up work, including through the use of hands-on materials and activities via the Montessori Methodology. Designated supports are also provided to meet learning objectives as defined by the CDE. Under these complementary programs, the EL student is enrolled in the regular education program and receives differentiated instruction in order to learn English.

All instruction at RSMS shall be in English. However, the level of English used for instruction-both oral and written-shall be modified appropriately for each EL student. Teachers shall use a variety of strategies to make the content more comprehensible. Teachers shall adapt lessons, assignments, and instructional groups to reduce language barriers and to assist ELs to participate fully in the educational program. By its very hands-on nature, the Montessori environment is conducive to supporting all students, including ELs.

During individual learning time, as well as small group time, teachers are able to differentiate tasks, readings, and assignments for ELs. This is to ensure that all students have access to the same content and skills, with modifications made to assist ELs with language acquisition.

EL students are given ample opportunities to practice speaking and writing in English with

cooperative learning and collaborative groups. Students improve their mastery of language through frequent use. With students working in partners and small groups, they are provided an increase in authentic language practice.

Other ways to support language acquisition involve the visual to spoken connection. RSMS shall provide students with the opportunity to interact with subject content in ways that do not always require reading and writing, such as visuals, storyboards, and manipulatives.

Federal Required Notices

Per Federal law (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) the following notices will be mailed out to parents/guardians of English learners:

- Within 30 days after the beginning of the school year, notice that their child is enrolled in a language instruction program;
- Reasons for identification as limited English proficient and for need for language instruction educational program;
- Methods of instruction used in the program, and in other available programs, including content, instructional goals, and the use of English and the native language in instruction;
- How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child;
- How the program will help their child learn English and meet age-appropriate achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation; and
- The criteria for exiting the program.
- The parent's rights, including the right to have their child immediately removed from the program upon request.

Parent Notification

Parents will be notified regarding their child's English Language Development progress and ELPAC scores at every report card period or more often as needed.

English Learner Reclassification

Rising Sun will utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to reclassify a student as proficient in English, including but not limited to all of the following:

- Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument including, but not limited to the ELPAC.
- Participation of the student's classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the student to evaluate the student's curriculum mastery.
- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the

language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents' opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification procedure.

- Comparison of the student's performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance in basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient students of the same age that demonstrate that the student is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for students of the same age whose native language is English.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

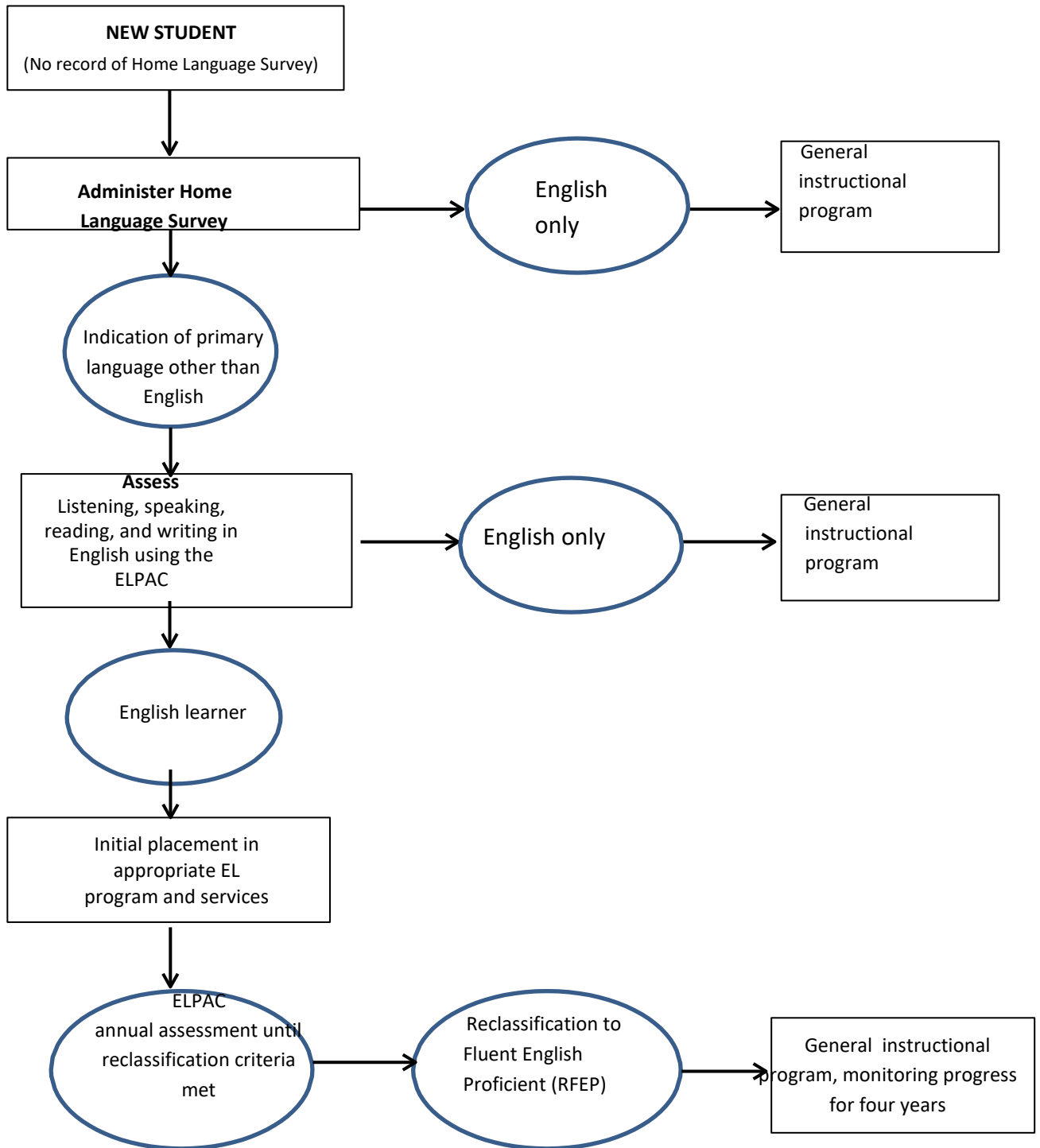
The evaluation for EL program effectiveness will include:

- Adhering to Charter School-adopted academic benchmarks by language proficiency level and years in program to determine annual progress.
- Monitoring of teacher qualifications and the use of appropriate instructional strategies based on program design.
- Monitoring of student identification and placement.
- Monitoring of parental program choice options.
- Monitoring of availability of adequate resources.
- Student progress on the ELPAC.

EL students who are not making progress will be supported by the MTSS model.

The flow chart on the following page outlines the procedure for initial identification for English Learners.

DECISION CHART FOR INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS
(To be completed within 30 calendar days of enrollment)



- **PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Overview

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504, the ADA and the IDEA.

The Charter School shall be its own local educational agency (“LEA”) and is a member of the El Dorado County Charter Special Education Local Plan Area (“SELPA”) in conformity with Education Code Section 47641(a).

In the event the Charter School seeks membership in a different state-approved SELPA, the Charter School shall provide notice to the District, the SELPA, and the California Department of Education before June 30th of the year before services are to commence.

The Charter School shall comply with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services and all SELPA policies and procedures; and shall utilize appropriate SELPA forms.

The Charter School may seek resources and services (e.g., Speech, Occupational Therapy, Adapted P.E., Nursing, and Transportation) from the SELPA, subject to SELPA approval and availability. The Charter School may also provide related services by hiring credentialed or licensed providers through private agencies or independent contractors.

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for its compliance with Section 504 and the ADA. The facilities to be utilized by the Charter School shall be accessible for all students with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The Charter School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. A student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment, is eligible for protections under Section 504. See **Appendix 2D** for board-adopted 504 policies and **Appendix 2E** for 504 forms and notifications.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Head of School and shall include the parent/guardian, the student (where appropriate) and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student’s existing records; including academic, social and behavioral records, and is

responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504.

The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team, which will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- Tests and other evaluation materials including those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.
- Tests are selected and administered to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a person with a disability is made by the 504 team in writing and notice is given in writing to the parent or guardian of the student in their primary language along with the procedural safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEA, a referral for assessment under the IDEA will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE"). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the Charter School's professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program accommodations, modifications or services that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, parents, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student's education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student's 504 Plan. The site

administrator will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that the teacher review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student's file. Each student's 504 Plan will be reviewed at least once per year to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, needed modifications to the plan, and continued eligibility.

Services for Students Under the IDEA as an LEA pursuant to Education Code Section 47641(a)

The Charter School shall provide special education instruction and related services in accordance with the IDEA, Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and practices of the SELPA.

The Charter School will provide services for special education students enrolled in the Charter School. The Charter School will follow SELPA policies and procedures, and shall utilize SELPA forms in seeking out, identifying, and serving students who may qualify for special education programs and services and for responding to record requests and parent complaints, and maintaining the confidentiality of pupil records.

The Charter School agrees to promptly respond to all SELPA inquiries, to comply with reasonable SELPA directives, and to allow the SELPA access to Charter School students, staff, facilities, equipment and records as required or imposed by law.

Staffing

All special education services at the Charter School will be delivered by individuals or agencies qualified to provide special education services as required by the California Education Code and the IDEA. Charter School staff shall participate in SELPA in-service training relating to special education.

The Charter School will be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of site staff necessary to provide special education services to its students, including, without limitation, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and resource specialists. The Charter School shall ensure that all special education staff hired or contracted by the Charter School are qualified pursuant to SELPA policies, as well as meet all legal requirements. The Charter School shall be responsible for the hiring, training, and employment of itinerant staff necessary to provide special education services to Charter School students, including, without limitation, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists, and psychologists.

Notification and Coordination

The Charter School shall follow SELPA policies as they apply to all SELPA schools for responding to implementation of special education services. The Charter School will adopt and implement policies relating to all special education issues and referrals.

Identification and Referral

The Charter School shall have the responsibility to identify, refer, and work cooperatively in locating Charter School students who have or may have exceptional needs that qualify them to receive special education services. The Charter School will implement SELPA policies and procedures to ensure timely identification and referral of students who have, or may have, such exceptional needs. A pupil shall be referred for special education only after the resources of the general education program have been considered, and where appropriate, utilized.

The Charter School will follow SELPA child-find procedures to identify all students who may require assessment to consider special education eligibility and special education and related services in the case that general education interventions do not provide a free appropriate public education to the student in question.

Assessments

The term “assessments” shall have the same meaning as the term “evaluation” in the IDEA, as provided in Section 1414, Title 20 of the United States Code. The Charter School will determine what assessments, if any, are necessary and arrange for such assessments for referred or eligible students in accordance with applicable law. The Charter School shall obtain parent/guardian consent to assess Charter School students.

IEP Meetings

The Charter School shall arrange and notice the necessary Individualized Education Program meetings. IEP team membership shall be in compliance with state and federal law. The Charter School shall be responsible for having the following individuals in attendance at the IEP meetings: the Head of School and/or the Charter School designated representative with appropriate administrative authority as required by the IDEA; the student’s special education teacher; the student’s general education teacher if the student is or may be in a general education classroom; the student, if appropriate; the student’s parent/guardian; and other Charter School representatives who are knowledgeable about the general education program at the Charter School and/or about the student. The Charter School shall arrange for the attendance or participation of all other necessary staff that may include, but are not limited to, an appropriate administrator to comply with the requirements of the IDEA, a speech therapist, psychologist, resource specialist, and behavior specialist; and shall document the IEP meeting and provide notice of parental rights.

IEP Development

The Charter School understands that the decisions regarding eligibility, goals/objectives, program, services, placement, and exit from special education shall be the decision of the IEP team, pursuant to the IEP process. Programs, services and placements shall be provided to all eligible Charter School students in accordance with the policies, procedures and requirements of the SELPA and State and Federal law.

IEP Implementation

The Charter School shall be responsible for all school site implementation of the IEP. As part of this responsibility, the Charter School shall provide parents with timely reports on the student's progress as provided in the student's IEP at least as frequently as report cards are provided for the Charter School's non-special education students. The Charter School shall also provide all home-school coordination and information exchange. The Charter School shall also be responsible for providing all curriculum, classroom materials, classroom modifications, and assistive technology.

Interim and Initial Placements of New Charter School Students

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 56325 with regard to students transferring into the Charter School within the academic school year. In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(1), for students who enroll in the Charter School from another school district within the State, but outside of the SELPA with a current IEP within the same academic year, the Charter School shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP, in consultation with the parent, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, by which time the Charter School shall adopt the previously approved IEP or shall develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law.

In accordance with Education Code Section 56325(a)(2), in the case of an individual with exceptional needs who has an IEP and transfers into the Charter School from a district operated program under the same special education local plan area of the Charter School within the same academic year, the Charter School shall continue, without delay, to provide services comparable to those described in the existing approved IEP, unless the parent and the Charter School agree to develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that is consistent with federal and state law.

For students transferring to the Charter School with an IEP from outside of California during the same academic year, the Charter School shall provide the pupil with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously approved IEP in consultation with the parents, until the Charter School conducts an assessment pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Section 1414 of Title 20 of the United States Code, if

determined to be necessary by the Charter School, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate that is consistent with federal and state law.

Non-Public Placements/Non-Public Agencies

The Charter School shall be solely responsible for selecting, contracting with, and overseeing all non-public schools and non-public agencies used to serve special education students.

Non-discrimination

It is understood and agreed that all children will have access to the Charter School and no student shall be denied admission nor counseled out of the Charter School due to the nature, extent, or severity of his/her disability or due to the student's request for, or actual need for, special education services.

Parent/Guardian Concerns and Complaints

The Charter School shall adopt policies for responding to parental concerns or complaints related to special education services. The Charter School shall receive any concerns raised by parents/guardians regarding related services and rights.

The Charter School's designated representative shall investigate as necessary, respond to, and address the parent/guardian concern or complaint.

Due Process Hearings

The Charter School may initiate a due process hearing or request for mediation with respect to a student enrolled in the Charter School if it determines such action is legally necessary or advisable. In the event that the parents/guardians file for a due process hearing, or request mediation, the Charter School shall defend the case.

SELPA Representation

The Charter School understands that it shall represent itself at all SELPA meetings.

Funding

The Charter School understands that it will be subject to the allocation plan of the SELPA.

Special Education Strategies for Instruction and Services

Rising Sun Montessori School will comply with the federal mandate of the least restrictive environment ("LRE"), meaning that the Charter School will educate special education students along with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent that is appropriate. Rising Sun

Montessori School will mainstream all of its students as much as is appropriate according to each individual IEP, offering a comprehensive inclusion program that includes specialized individual tutoring through Rising Sun Montessori School's extended day and year. Each student's IEP requires different kinds of modifications and accommodations for instruction and services, therefore the educational strategies of the IEP will be built around the student's needs and how these fit within the general educational program of the Charter School. The instruction outlined in each student's IEP will be delivered by personnel qualified to do so.

Professional Development for Rising Sun Montessori School Staff

The Head of School, general and special education teaching staff, as well as other appropriate faculty and staff members will attend professional development and/or training meetings necessary to comply with state and federal special education law, including meetings sponsored by industry professionals or SELPA.

Element 2: Measurable Pupil Outcomes

“The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. “Pupil outcomes,” for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the charter school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the charter school’s educational program. Pupil outcomes shall include outcomes that address increases in pupil academic achievement both schoolwide and for all pupil subgroups served by the charter school, as that term is defined in subdivision (a) of Section 52052. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served by the charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(B)

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(B), a reasonably comprehensive description of the Charter School’s outcomes, schoolwide and for all numerically significant student subgroups, aligned with the State Priorities, can be found in the Charter School’s current LCAP, which is on file with the District and also available in **Appendix 6**.

Rising Sun Montessori School has set high expectations and individual objectives for its students and staff. Rising Sun’s graduates will be:

Educated individuals who:

- Attain a level of knowledge that meets or exceeds State Standards.
- Attain subject area State Standards including, but not limited to, English Language Arts, History and Social Science, Science, Math, Health, P.E., and Visual and Performing Arts.
- Access information from a variety of sources.

Contributing members of society who:

- Possess and apply the skills to be productive in the workforce, family, and community.
- Adjust to new situations and ideas.
- Adapt to a changing world.
- Work effectively in a team setting.
- Analyze, interpret, and communicate information effectively.
- Serve as positive role models.

Critical, reflective thinkers and problem solvers who:

- Gather, analyze, and process information from a variety of sources.
- Organize relevant information, make connections, and draw conclusions.
- Work individually and cooperatively toward effective solutions.

Informed, responsible individuals who:

- Recognize and appreciate individual and cultural uniqueness.
- Contribute to solutions of community and worldwide issues.
- Take positive action on issues affecting our environment.
- Demonstrate teamwork and/or leadership skills.
- Exhibit mutual respect.

- Set, prioritize, and revise personal goals.

Effective communicators who:

- Understand and convey written, oral, and visual ideas and information.
- Listen and ask questions.

Effective users of technology who:

- Use technology to access, select, and apply information appropriate to individual needs.

Confident individuals with positive self-esteem who:

- Have respect for themselves and others.
- Have a clear, realistic, and positive view of self.
- Accept differing values and belief systems in their interactions with others.
- Are self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.

To achieve this, students need to perform academically at or above grade-level with respect to the State Standards in all subject areas. They also need to be able to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension in multiple forms of assessment including journals, essays, presentations, portfolios and demonstrations, performance, and standardized tests.

The above larger goals for pupil outcomes provide the guide for specific benchmark assessments given to ensure student progress and mastery in all subject areas. This section details these benchmarks along with associated indicators of success. Rising Sun’s teachers will use the State Standards to define measurable outcomes at each grade level. Rising Sun also supports its teachers in creating day-to-day and week-to-week objectives for their students, which will be formulated annually through teacher curriculum mapping. Through the use of Transparent Classroom, teachers will map standards into measurable objectives and create a year-long roadmap of outcomes that drive assessments and prioritize and sequence instruction.

Rising Sun believes outcomes and assessments should inform curriculum and instruction, and, like learning styles, there are multiple forms of assessment. No one measure alone will constitute a sole indicator of progress. Rising Sun’s assessments are described in **Element 3: Methods of Assessment**.

Rising Sun shall meet all State Standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Education Code Section 60605, and any other statewide standards or assessments authorized in statute. Rising Sun shall participate in the CAASPP assessment system and all other state-mandated assessments, including but not limited to the ELPAC, California Science Test (“CAST”), California Alternate Assessment (“CAA”), and Physical Fitness Test (“PFT”).

Our goal has been and remains to have RSMS students meet or exceed State Standards as reported by state accountability measures.

Multiple measures of student performance have been developed to accurately monitor student progress toward achieving grade level standards. Assessments will be formative and used in progress monitoring, as well as summative to measure student attainment of benchmark and year end grade level standards.

The RSMS parent community and students will understand the standards and performance expectations. At the beginning of each school year, parents will be expected to attend “Back to School Orientation Night” where they will learn about the grade-level standards and our curriculum.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used by teachers to evaluate student progress in the instructional process, and may need to be modified over time as deemed necessary.

First trimester progress will be reported to students and parents through individual conferences with teachers. Student led conferences will be used as much as possible, depending on the grade level. Second trimester student progress will be reported on the Charter School’s standards-based report card and will include a Montessori Progress Report as requested by the parent.

Essential standards will be highlighted, and relative progress on all standards addressed will be marked. At the end of the third trimester, or year’s end, achievement levels for each grade level standard will be indicated on the standards-based report card, along with a year-end portfolio presentation design to illustrate the student’s growth through the year. Individual student conferences will be held at any time based on teacher or parent request.

Element 3: Methods of Assessment

“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(C)

Rising Sun Montessori School uses Transparent Classroom to provide teachers with instant access to data, literacy assessments, and multiple measures for every student. Teachers are able to review and reconfigure data so that they can have a detailed analysis of current students and new incoming student groups each year. This system will be used in conjunction with progress monitoring interim assessments to monitor all students’ progress annually, and to monitor students needing additional support tri-annually. Assessment data, including CAASPP scores, standardized based report cards, Montessori Progress Reports, interim benchmark assessments, teacher observations, portfolios, and all other assessment tools as appropriate, that will combine to form a battery of multiple measures, will be disaggregated annually by gender, ethnicity, language, and other significant student subgroup categories.

Informing parents about their child’s achievement will be an ongoing process. Teachers will meet formally with every parent annually in parent/teacher conferences. The developmental and standards– based report card reflects student progress toward meeting grade level standards, in social and study skills, behavior, and physical skill development. The Transparent Classroom Online Record Keeping Software will be used in the classroom on a daily basis, enabling parents to have current knowledge of grade level expectations.

As new assessment tools become available that align with the State Standards, and CAASPP, we will continue to refine and update our assessment list to integrate these new tools. Rising Sun staff will work diligently to review individual student performance data enabling appropriate staff to take corrective action for students who fall below the minimum performance expectation.

Student performance will be measured using the following methods:

STATE ASSESSMENTS

Rising Sun will administer annual state mandated assessments as required under Education Code Section 60605, including the CAASPP assessment program to measure students’ mastery of grade- level standards and to assess annual progress in applicable state and federal accountability goals. As described above, the ELPAC will be administered to English Learners annually.

MULTIPLE MEASURES

Rising Sun’s assessment plan includes multiple measures designed to monitor student progress over time. It includes baseline, formative, and summative assessments. Baseline assessments measure basic academic skills in English Language Arts and mathematics as well as social-emotional competencies. Formative assessments are frequent and include formal and informal,

performance-based assessments. These assessments help students to better understand their strengths and areas in which they may be struggling. The information provided by the assessments is used to guide instruction and to identify students who may need additional support and/or challenge. Summative assessments take place in core subjects at the end of content units. Social-emotional growth is formally assessed on a formative and summative basis as well.

Rising Sun Montessori School is committed to using both criterion-referenced and standards-aligned assessments as well as diagnostic and formative assessments in our school-wide assessment plan. Criterion-referenced assessments are used to monitor whether children are mastering grade level State Standards, and to identify State Standards that require more attention in the classroom. These assessments are disaggregated by teachers working in partnership with the Head of School, in a team effort, to identify trends, find specific areas of instructional strength and weakness, and to ensure children are making progress towards grade-level proficiency as measured by the State Standards. Formative assessments are used to inform instruction as well as to track and monitor student growth and learning.

In addition to the annual state-mandated standardized assessments detailed above, Rising Sun's assessment plan includes the following assessments:

Leveled Reading Assessments. All students in grades 1-8 will be assessed at the beginning of the year. In grades 1-4 students are assessed using both Renaissance Star and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills ("DIBELS")®. DIBELS are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS is appropriate for emergent readers as it is comprised of seven measures to function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

In the intermediate grades and middle school (5-8), students are assessed using Renaissance Star or in some cases the San Diego Quick ("SDQA"). SDQA is a list of words categorized by grade level. The graded word list has two uses: 1) to determine a reading level; 2) to detect errors in word analysis. Teachers use the test information to group students for corrective practice or to select appropriate reading materials.

Star Reading from Renaissance Learning is a program which Rising Sun implemented in 2015. The Star program is a technology-centered assessment and information feedback system currently used by all students at RSMS. Star Reading provides real-time information and data on student levels across 46 different domains of reading and language fluency. Data is then used by Rising Sun staff to determine the best individualized program for learning moving forward. Parents also have access to their students' information and are thus better informed about how to assist in the reading and language areas at home. Because of the mixed-age groupings in Montessori environments, RSMS students have access to materials which will drive learning whether they are remedial or advanced in their reading levels.

Albanesi Language Test Battery is a complete set of tests (“test battery”) which includes all the tests designed for the Montessori Language Curriculum from Kindergarten to eighth grade. In each test battery there are two types of tests: the Review Tests and the Grade Achievement Tests GAT. The Review Tests are designed to cover small sections at a time of a year’s curriculum. The first review test of each level is used for baseline data. The Grade Achievement Tests cover one whole year’s level and will be administered a few weeks after the student has already been placed (to show where the student started), and again a few weeks before the end of the school year (to show the progress at the end of the grade level).

Work Plans are designed to track the progress of the children. After a child has taken the first Review Test (“Pre-Test”), the teacher can pull the corresponding Work Plan that already has all the printed numbers of the exercises on the Review Test which also correspond to specific exercise cards in the Language Lab. As the child receives presentation lessons and completes the exercises, the teacher crosses out the numbers and when the Work Plan is completed, the child takes the same Review Tests (“Post-Test”) which will reveal the progress made.

STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE

MASTERY	100%
EXCELLENT	90%
GOOD	80%
PASS	70%
REPEAT	60%

Writing Assessments. A writing sample will be collected and assessed for each student at least four times a year: as a baseline assessment, at the end of each trimester, and at the end of the year. In grade level groups, teachers will develop rubrics that align to grade specific content standards for writing. Additional samples will be collected for grades 4 and above.

Mathematics Assessments. At the beginning of each year all students, grades K-8, will be given a baseline mathematics assessment using Albanesi Grade Achievement Test. The data from the baseline assessment will be used to guide instruction including possible interventions and extensions.

Throughout the year student progress in mathematics will be measured using Albanesi Review Tests. Students will be pre-assessed at the beginning of each math unit to identify students in need of extra challenge or support. Ongoing assessment will take the form of teacher observations and Montessori assignments. At the end of each unit, student understanding and mastery will be measured through performance tasks and formal Albanesi Review Tests.

Albanesi Math/Geometry Test Battery is a complete set of tests which includes all the tests

designed for the Montessori Math Curriculum from first to eighth grade. In each test battery there are two types of tests: the Review Tests and the Grade Achievement Tests. The Review Tests are designed to cover small sections at a time of a year's curriculum. The first review test of each level is used for baseline data. The Grade Achievement Tests cover one whole year's level and will be administered a few weeks after the student has already been placed (to show where the student started, and again a few weeks before the end of the school year (to show the progress at the end of the grade level).

The Work Plans are designed to track the progress of the children. After a child has taken the first Review Test, the teacher can pull the corresponding Work Plan that already has all the printed numbers of the exercises on the Review Test which also correspond to specific exercise cards in the Math Lab. As the child receives presentation lessons and completes the exercises, the teacher crosses out the numbers and when the Work Plan is completed, the child takes the same Review Tests which will reveal the progress made.

STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE

MASTERY	100%
EXCELLENT	90%
GOOD	80%
PASS	70%
REPEAT	60%

Social Studies and Science Assessments. Social Studies and Science learning shall also be assessed through multiple measures. Teachers use the Montessori Foundation's Science Scope and Sequence to see whether students are reaching appropriate milestones. Social Studies and Science achievement is documented through projects, portfolio submissions, and observations.

Social-Emotional Development Assessments. Social-Emotional learning shall be assessed through multiple measures. Teachers use *CHOICES*, A Comprehensive Social Values and Social Skills Curriculum. Social-Emotional achievement is documented through student exercises, activities, portfolio submissions, and communication checklists.

REPORT CARDS, PORTFOLIOS, AND PROGRESS REPORTS

In addition to the subject area specific assessments described above, Rising Sun uses report cards, portfolios and progress reports. Montessori Progress Reports are available upon request.

Report Cards

Report Cards provide a summary of student assessment at the end of each trimester. Our report cards describe the level of development for each student in relation to key standards- based grade level skills and content.

Our report cards are designed to describe a three-point continuum of learning stages (Needs Improvement to Meet Standards, Making Satisfactory Progress towards Standards, Regularly Meets or Exceeds Grade Level Standards).

Report cards demonstrate student development in the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, visual and performing arts, physical education, social skills and work habits. The specific features of each area are grade-level specific and standards-based.

Portfolios

Rising Sun implements a portfolio system as part of our assessment plan. Portfolios are used as a record of learning that includes samples of work and students' reflections on their work. Portfolios display the individual nature of a child's learning over time, provide evidence of academic achievement, and assist teachers with targeted instructional planning. Portfolios are reviewed by students, parents/guardians, and teachers at each conference as well as at the end of the school year. As a learning record, portfolios ensure teacher knowledge of student work from class to class. Each trimester, students – in consultation with their teachers – select work samples from all core subject areas. As part of this selection process, students reflect on their performance to identify their strengths and areas for improvement as well as set personal goals for themselves, as seen in **Appendix 2: 2A Portfolio Data Sheets**.

Progress Reports

Rising Sun uses the Transparent Classroom student information system to track and maintain student data and generates custom summary reports as needed upon parent request. Our Progress Reports contain several narrative sections where teachers detail examples of a child's level of development/mastery based on observations, student work, portfolio submissions, project rubrics, and/or various classroom-based and school-wide assessments. Progress Reports demonstrate student development in the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, visual and performing arts, physical education, practical life, social skills and work habits. The specific features of each area show alignment to standards.

Please refer to the table in **Element 2: Measurable Student Outcomes** for an overview of our assessment tools that are aligned with our measurable student outcomes. RSMS affirms that its methods for measuring pupil outcomes for State Priorities, as described in Element 2 of this charter, shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a School Accountability Report Card ("SARC") as required by Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(C).

USE AND REPORTING OF DATA

Rising Sun uses Transparent Classroom, a student lesson and data tracking system as well as PowerSchool to implement a Student Information System ("SIS") to track and maintain student data, both for site based and State reporting purposes.

Individual Student Tracking: Each student's degree of proficiency and mastery in each subject area is tracked using a Montessori school wide data management system that aligns the

Montessori Curriculum with the State Standards and shall be regularly reviewed to evaluate progress. This information is reported to parents through daily access to the management system, conferences, and progress reports. We use Transparent Classroom to create reports that allow us to disaggregate, analyze, and disseminate performance data to staff, parents, students, and the authorizing agency.

Rising Sun teachers and staff are engaged in a trimester process of data review and evaluation in connection to student learning outcomes. They analyze individual data to review performance for students in their classrooms and work in collaborative teams to review class performance and benchmark data. In both cases, teachers are guided to look at how students performed on multiple measures, identify patterns of underperformance or high performance, and identify students who are not making adequate progress. Additionally, assessment data is used to judge the effectiveness of curriculum units and teaching. This information is then used to refine or change future units and instruction. Collaborative teams based on grade levels and subject areas use these opportunities to form questions that arise from the data, develop hypotheses around the questions, and pursue different strategies or actions to improve student outcomes. Teachers are coached in using various assessment tools: Transparent Classroom, Montessori Progress Reports, Report Cards, and Project Rubrics. Individual student achievement is also tracked longitudinally. Progress Reports allow teachers to track and monitor progress from one year to the next. Additionally, the Montessori three-year cycle fosters teacher collaboration throughout the grades. Each teacher monitors their students' progress throughout the three years they are assigned to them. They continue to be an advocate and resource for that student once the student has moved on to the next age group in that cycle.

PERMANENT GRADE RECORDS

The permanent grade records are important when transferring students from one class to another, or from one school to another. A student's well documented academic history is easy to assemble with the use of the Albanesi Curriculum Program ("ACP"). These Permanent Grade Records enable Montessori schools that use the Curriculum Cards Labs and the ACP Montessori Tests to offer documented objective evidence for each student's academic achievement. These reports are designed to reflect the level of abstraction in academic subjects with students.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

At the beginning of every school year, Rising Sun holds orientation meetings during which we share our assessment philosophy and system and to train the families on how to access assessment data. Such data may include student report cards, CAASPP and Dashboard results, School Accountability Report Card, interim and benchmark assessments, student portfolios, and project assessments. In addition, assessment data is shared directly with families during teacher-parent conferences, phone calls, and by sending materials home with students. Teachers and administrators will track parent contact.

REPORTING TO THE DISTRICT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Rising Sun Montessori School will promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries for data from the

BUSD or other authorized agency and assure timely scheduled data reporting to our chartering authority in compliance with the law. Further, Rising Sun hereby grants authority to the State of California to furnish copies of all test results directly to the District, as well as to the Charter School. In accordance with Title III, Rising Sun will adhere to all mandated reporting guidelines in relation to English Learners, including notification to parents regarding ELPAC results and reclassification. In accordance with IDEA, Rising Sun will comply with all state and federal law regarding reporting requirements for children with IEPs, including, at a minimum, trimester reports to a Special Education student's parent/guardian on progress towards goals stated within the student's IEP.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARD

Rising Sun Montessori School will compile the necessary data and create a SARC at the end of each school year. State law requires that the SARC contain all of the following:

- Demographic information
- School safety and climate for learning information
- Academic data
- School completion rates
- Class sizes
- Teacher and staff information
- Curriculum and instruction descriptions
- Postsecondary preparation information
- Fiscal and expenditure data

ANNUAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Charter School leadership, in conjunction with parent and teacher representatives, meet several times annually for the purpose of identifying and implementing school-wide improvement. The plan will target specified areas for improving student learning and other aspects of the Charter School that the Rising Sun community agrees need attention. The following aspects of the Charter School will be addressed each year by the Board of Directors in conjunction with Charter School leadership:

- Student Achievement
- Community Relations
- Parent Involvement and Communication
- Facilities
- Staffing and Personnel
- Governance
- Financial resources

Element 4: Governance Structure

“The governance structure of the charter school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the charter school to ensure parental involvement.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(D)

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Rising Sun Montessori School maintains a collaborative, shared leadership among families and the larger community to engage in an ongoing cycle of assessment, reflection, planning and implementation to ensure the success of the Charter School. Charter School governance is derived from best practices to ensure that RSMS meets its mission and goals, and that all stakeholders have a voice in the ongoing development of the Charter School.

NON PROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION

Rising Sun Montessori School operates as a California nonprofit public benefit corporation pursuant to California law. RSMS shall be governed by its Board of Directors pursuant to its adopted bylaws, which shall be consistent with this charter.

Rising Sun shall operate autonomously from the District, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services with the District and/or county office of education. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(d), the District shall not be liable for the debts and obligations of the Charter School, operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation, or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the Charter School as long as the District has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law.

Rising Sun Montessori School shall comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act and the California Public Records Act. The Charter School shall retain its own legal counsel when necessary. It shall finance and maintain as necessary general liability and other insurance.

In **Appendix 3**, please find the filed-endorsed Rising Sun Montessori School Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Conflict of Interest Code.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rising Sun Montessori School shall be governed by a Board of Directors in accordance with its adopted bylaws, which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter. The bylaws demonstrate the organizational design of Rising Sun’s governance structure to ensure that it remains viable and that there is active and effective representation of school stakeholders.

The Board shall be composed of at least five (5) and no more than nine (9) directors. All directors shall be appointed by the Board. The Board shall be composed as follows:

- At least one (1) parent/guardian of a currently enrolled student.
- At least one (1) Board member who is also an educator, with a California teaching

credential.

- The remainder of the Board shall be composed of community members who are neither employees of the Charter School nor relatives of employees.
- Lastly, in accordance with Education Code Section 47604(c), the chartering authority may appoint a representative to the Board. If the District chooses to do so, the Charter School may appoint an additional member to ensure that the Board is maintained with an odd number of directors.

Board members shall have experience in one or more of the following areas: education, government, law, business, finance/accounting, fundraising, facilities, or public relations. The Head of School shall not serve on the Board as a Board member and shall not vote in Board elections.

The Board of Directors is currently composed of five (5) members who hold office for two (2) years and until his or her successor is elected and qualified.

Additional information about the Board of Directors can be found on the Rising Sun Website at <https://risingsunmontessori.org/board-of-directors/>

BOARD MEETINGS AND DUTIES

The RSMS Board shall meet regularly, at least eight times per year, and all meetings shall comply with the Brown Act and Education Code Section 47604.1(c). The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the operation of fiscal affairs of the Charter School including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hire, supervise, evaluate, discipline, and dismiss the Head of School.
- Approve all non-employee contractual agreements or purchases in excess of \$10,000.00;
- Approve and monitor the implementation of general policies of the Charter School. This includes effective human resource policies for career growth and compensation of the staff;
- Approve and monitor the Charter School's annual budget and budget revisions;
- Act as a fiscal agent. This includes but is not limited to the receipt of funds for the operation of the Charter School in accordance with applicable laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the Charter School.
- Contract with an external independent auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices.
- Establish operational committees as needed;
- Regularly measure progress of both student and staff performance;
- Involve parents and the community in school related programs;
- Execute all applicable responsibilities provided for in the California Corporations Code;
- Engage in ongoing strategic planning;
- Approve the school calendar and schedule of Board meetings;
- Review requests for out of state or overnight field trips;

- Participate in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary;
- Approve charter amendments as necessary and submit requests for material revisions as necessary to the District for consideration;
- Approve annual independent fiscal audit;
- Appoint an administrative panel or act as a hearing body and take action on recommended student expulsions and involuntary removals.

The RSMS Board has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code which complies with the Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 1090, *et seq.*, as set forth in Education Code Section 47604.1, and Corporations Code Conflicts of Interest rules, which shall be updated with any charter school specific conflicts of interest laws or regulations. As noted above, the Conflict of Interest Code is attached in **Appendix 5**.

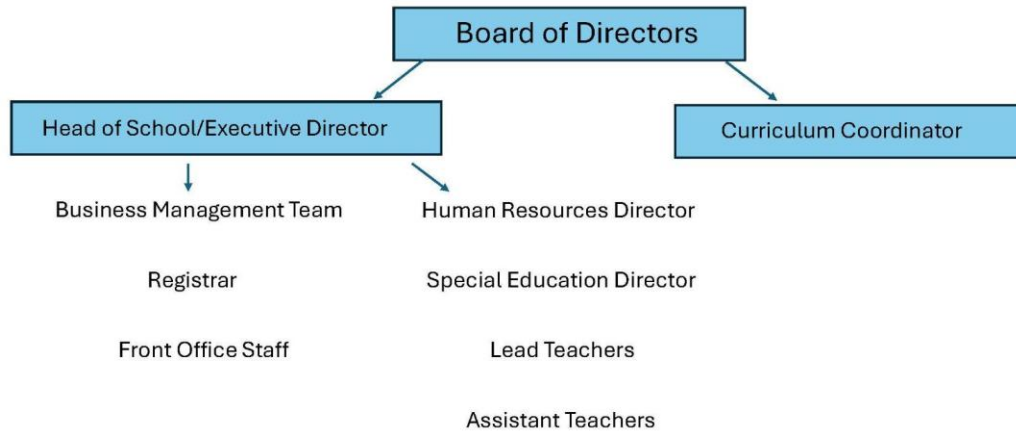
The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee of the Charter School any of those duties with the exception of budget approval or revision, approval of the fiscal, and the adoption of Board policies. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board of Directors being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

BOARD TRAINING

Rising Sun Montessori School Board of Directors shall attend periodic conferences and in-services for the purposes of training individual board members regarding their conduct, roles and responsibilities. Training may include attending conferences whereby relevant governance training is available and additional training and workshops to be held at special and regularly scheduled Board meetings each year. Training may be given by the Charter School's legal counsel, the California Charter Schools Association, or other experts. Topics may include ethics, conflicts of interest, charter school legal compliance, Brown Act, special education, budget and finance.

Rising Sun Organizational Structure



ROLE OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL/Executive Director

As noted in the organizational chart above, the Head of School is hired by, and reports to, the RSMS Board. The Head of School is evaluated by the Board using multiple metrics, including the Head of School Evaluation Instrument, developed by Independent School Management. These evaluations should occur on an annual basis. As the administrative leader of the Charter School, the Head of School models the Charter School's core values and development of the school culture. The Head of School shall manage academic program development and professional development activities, and work with teachers to improve curriculum and instruction. The Head of School also ensures that the connection between the Charter School and families is strong, mutually respectful, and marked by continuous communication about student performance and behavior. A complete description of the Head of School's duties and qualifications can be found in **Element 5: Employee Qualifications**.

ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Like the Head of School, the Curriculum Coordinator is evaluated by the Board. The Curriculum Coordinator leads all professional development for lead and assistant teachers as it relates to updates to and implementation of Montessori scope and sequence in the classroom. The Curriculum Coordinator also oversees the classroom materials for each grade level and leads team meetings weekly to ensure continuity and consistency amongst same-age classrooms.

ROLE OF THE TEACHERS

As part of the RSMS governance structure, teachers shall be expected to take a leadership role in ongoing Charter School development. Some key elements of teacher leadership include:

- Designing and leading selected staff workshops,
- Developing academic program and curriculum to meet evolving understanding of target student needs,
- Engaging in community outreach, including family communication and school events and academic exhibitions,
- Participating on key school committees,
- Analyzing data and communicating results from student assessments,
- Facilitating parent teacher conferences.
- Making presentations to the school board on student progress and classroom activities.

As part of its shared leadership model, RSMS shall also have designated lead teachers for the elementary and middle schools. A complete description of the Teachers' duties and qualifications can be found in **Element 5: Employee Qualifications**.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY/COMMUNITY

As noted above, at least one (1) seat on the Board shall be filled by the parent/guardian of a currently enrolled student. In addition, RSMS shall promote a parent participation program in the Charter School. Parents shall be strongly encouraged, but not required, to dedicate at least 30 hours of participation per year, per family, to benefit the school community. However, no child

shall be excluded from RSMS or Charter School activities due to the failure of his or her parent or legal guardian to fulfill the encouraged 30 hours of participation; RSMS shall notify the parents and guardians of applicant pupils and currently enrolled pupils that parental involvement is not a requirement for acceptance to, or continued enrollment at, the charter school. The Charter School maintains an on-going list of extensive participation opportunities for parents, conducts annual parent orientation meetings, and offers extra-curricular activities for both student and parent/family participation. Some current examples of ways in which RSMS families have been involved include:

- Volunteering in the classroom to support teaching and learning
- Intel PC Pals Coordination
- Preparing materials at home
- Chaperoning on field trips
- Attending and assisting with school events
- Serving on subcommittee groups: Yearbook, Scholastic, Fundraising, Garden
- Grant writing to secure additional funding for extra programs

Element 5: Employee Qualifications

“The qualifications to be met by individuals to be employed by the charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(E)

Rising Sun Montessori School shall employ a staff of professionals who are dedicated to upholding the highest expectations of each child and providing a quality, enriching educational program. Our staff shall be committed to upholding the mission and vision of Rising Sun and shall work diligently to see they are realized.

Assurances

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(1), Rising Sun Montessori School shall be nonsectarian in its employment practices and all other operations. Rising Sun shall not discriminate against any individual (employee or pupil) on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics), or upon any other characteristic prohibited by applicable state or federal law.

Rising Sun complies with Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1 regarding the requirement to fingerprint and obtain background clearance of employees and contractors. Prior to employment, each employee must provide an up- to-date Tuberculosis (“TB”) risk assessment and examination (if necessary), and documents establishing legal employment status.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(l)(1), Rising Sun employs or retains teachers who hold the Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document required for the teacher’s certificated assignment. The Head of School shall ensure that credentials are processed and maintained in accordance with requirements as set forth by the CTC and applicable state law.

Employee Recruitment

Rising Sun Montessori School is dedicated to hiring professionals who aspire to exemplify high standards of excellence in their work with children and the families we serve, and in their own professional development. All staff hired with Rising Sun must demonstrate an understanding and willingness to commit to Rising Sun’s mission and vision, and educational philosophy.

To ensure the selection of the highest quality staff, Rising Sun shall implement the following selection process:

- Advertise job openings in local, regional, and professional print and online media, specific

to the position to be filled (e.g. EdJoin.org)

- Request resumes and cover letters
- Conduct a brief screening interview (in-person or by phone)
- Follow-up interviews
- Verification of credentials and past employment
- Required background checks, and professional and personal reference checks
- Finalize selection
- Finalize work agreements and extend offers of employment

The Head of School shall be appointed by the Rising Sun Board of Directors through a selection and interview process as follows:

Selection

The Board shall conduct a candidate search using Montessori agencies that may include, but are not necessarily limited to: American Montessori Society (“AMS”), and North American Montessori Teachers’ Association, as well as traditional job search engines such as Ed Join.

Interview

During the interview process the Board shall pose a series of open-ended or hypothetical questions that will cover three main areas of expected Head of School qualifications and skills:

1. General leadership—How does the candidate handle parent communication?
Hypothetical situations shall be posed to allow the candidate to reflect and answer how they would communicate with parents on a variety of topics. Does the candidate have experience working with a school board? How do they resolve situations at the school level, rather than allowing every school-parent interaction to reach the board?
2. Specific Montessori leadership—Does the candidate’s leadership qualities align with Montessori pedagogy? For example: Montessori teachers offer students support when they are learning a new subject, but then pull back to allow the student time to develop their independence in mastery of the subject. Similarly, does the Head of School offer the teaching staff support so that the teacher can learn, grow from the experience, and then work towards greater autonomy, without always relying on the Head of School?
3. Operational/Management skills—Specific questions shall be posed to determine if the candidate has prior experience in the daily operations and facility management involved in running a school.

As a conclusion to the interview, the candidate(s) for Head of School shall be asked to describe their areas of particular strength, as well as areas where they feel they have room for personal and professional growth.

Verification

The Board shall ask the candidate(s) to describe how other colleagues and teachers would describe them and their prior experiences. The Board shall call to verify any references given by the candidate upon conclusion of their interview.

Employee Qualifications and Job Descriptions

Rising Sun Montessori School shall be the exclusive public school employer of all employees. Certificated employees will be employed by the Charter School on an annual work agreement. Non-certificated employees will be employed by the Charter School in an at-will capacity, consistent with the Personnel Policies of the Charter School.

RSMS may hire outside agencies and/or independent contractors for additional certificated and non-certificated personnel to assist in providing instruction, management, and support services.

The following job descriptions outline key school positions, including qualifications and responsibilities. They will be revised as necessary to reflect the needs of the Charter School.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Job Description

Under the direction of the Rising Sun Montessori Board of Directors, the Head of School carries out the broad educational policies established by the Board and acts within the limits of the financial policy set by that body.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, with a master's and/or administrative credential preferred and a Montessori trained leader certificate issued by an accredited institution, or be in the process of completion of Montessori training within two years
- 5 years prior experience demonstrating team-based leadership outcomes aligned with the mission and vision of Rising Sun Montessori School.

TEACHERS AND MONTESSORI SPECIALISTS

Job Description

Under the general supervision of the Head of School, the Lead Teacher will supervise no more than the given number of children in a classroom with respect to the proper square footage. The Lead Teacher shall be responsible for providing care, guidance, emotional needs and developmental experience to children assigned to his/her classroom. In addition, the Lead Teacher will be responsible for directing an environment that is appropriate with respect to Montessori educational philosophy and teaching the State Standards.

Qualifications

Rising Sun Montessori School shall adhere to Education Code Section 47605(l)(1) and all California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requirements in the hiring of all faculties for the School.

- Teachers shall hold the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document required for the teacher's certificated assignment. These documents shall be maintained on file at the Charter School and are subject to periodic inspection by the District. Teachers who were employed by charter schools during the 2019–20 school year shall have until July 1, 2025, to obtain the certificate required for the teacher's certificated assignment
- RSMS will require that teachers hold Montessori certification from an accredited institution for the level in which they teach
- Preferred 6 years teaching experience, with at least 2 years' experience in a Montessori school.
- Teachers assigned to a transitional kindergarten shall have one of the following:
 - (1) At least 24 units in early childhood education, or childhood development, or both.
 - (2) As determined by RSMS as the employer, professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool age children, which is comparable to the 24 units of education described in paragraph (1).
 - (3) A child development teacher permit issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (Education Code Section 48000(g)(4).)

Rising Sun may also employ non-certificated staff in non-teaching instructional capacities in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in an instructional capacity.

MONTESSORI CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Job Description

The Montessori Curriculum Coordinator”) at Rising Sun Montessori School is an integral part of a strong educational team and helps provide forward-looking leadership for an exemplary Montessori program. The Curriculum Coordinator is aware of educational issues and trends in both the Montessori community and in conventional education, and helps the Charter School anticipate and respond to those issues and trends as they impact the evolving needs of children and the Charter School.

Qualifications

- Bachelor’s degree in related field.
- Montessori certification in both Primary (3-6) and Elementary (6-12) levels
- Two years working in a Montessori program.
- An understanding of, and respect for, Association Montessori International (“AMI”) and AMS training, philosophy, and approach
- Organizational and management experience.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills (written and verbal)

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Job Description

The Director of Advancement at Rising Sun Montessori School leads the Charter School’s advancement, fundraising, marketing, and alumni relations efforts to support the facility, programs, and operations of the Charter School.

Qualifications

- BA in liberal arts, marketing, public relations, or communications;
- 3-5 years in nonprofit development work;
- People-oriented personality;
- Office and managerial skills;
- Patience, vision, and energy;
- Endeavors to get to know every person associated with the Charter School;
- Advocates for the Charter School knowledgeably and enthusiastically;
- Able to informally train and work harmoniously with volunteers

BUSINESS MANAGER

Job Description

The Business Manager at Rising Sun Montessori School serves as an active member of the Charter School’s management team, overseeing business and facility operations.

Qualifications

- Degree or appropriate certification in accounting or business administration, and five years of progressive management experience.
- Experience in a not-for-profit environment is preferred.
- Experience in a school environment is preferred.
- The individual should be highly skilled in the following areas:
 - Communication;
 - Interpersonal relationship building;

- Analytical/strategic thinking;
- Organization and time management;
- Delegation;
- Problem-solving;
- Conflict management;
- Decision-making ability;

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Job Description

The Administrative Assistant at Rising Sun Montessori School will act as the liaison to the faculty, staff, parents, and students for the Head of School as directed by the Head of School.

Qualifications

- BA degree preferred
- Front office experience
- Proficient in MS software applications
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal
- Experience in school setting desirable

STAFF EVALUATION

The purpose of evaluation at Rising Sun Montessori School is to help teachers, staff, and Administrators successfully grow in the practice of the talents they possess to best serve the needs of the school community and its members. RSMS will use the book *MFE: Faculty Development and Renewal*, written by Dr. M. Walker Buckalew. The Meaningful Faculty Evaluation (“MFE”) premises that student performance, enthusiasm, and satisfaction is positively correlated with a faculty’s commitment to its own growth and career; and that a powerful sense of community has proven fundamental both to organizational culture enhancement and to any sort of sustained organizational excellence, both for students and faculty.

General Overview

Mentoring employees and evaluating their work is a continuing process, overseen by the Head of School and management team. Faculty members will be visited in their classrooms periodically for purposes of evaluation. Staff and administrators will be observed on an ongoing basis. A copy of any written evaluation will be provided to the individual evaluated.

Frequency of Observation and Evaluation

With regard to frequency of observation and evaluation:

- Faculty members in their first year at Rising Sun Montessori School will be observed by the Head of School and management team at least twice during the first trimester and at least once more during the school year.
- Teachers who are in their second and third years of service at Rising Sun Montessori

School will also be observed at least twice during their second and third years.

- All other teachers will be observed at least annually during the first half of the school year.
- All staff and administrators will be evaluated at least annually.
- Employees are eligible for a pay increase at the beginning of each new school year.

The Evaluation Cycle

The faculty evaluation process is comprised of an ongoing conversation that typically includes the following:

The faculty member and Head of School and/or Human Resources Director meet to jointly discuss and establish performance and development goals for the year, along with a plan for achieving these goals. This typically occurs in the April/May timeframe. Generally speaking, this conversation is driven by the faculty member.

- Performance will be directed to improving student performance, enthusiasm, and satisfaction through a faculty member's commitment to his/her own growth and renewal.
- Growth and renewal activities will include collegial interaction; visits to classrooms to observe exemplary practices; a developing hierarchy of activities that leads to leadership within the faculty in terms of, for example, mentoring, leading workshops, teaching others, presenting at regional/national workshops; etc.
- Growth and renewal activities will be career-long.
- The ongoing conversation is both formal and informal, comprising a formal approval of the written growth and development goals, and an ongoing follow-up to ensure success.

Goal-Setting

The employee and Head of School and/or Human Resources Director meet to jointly discuss and establish performance and development goals for the year, along with a plan for achieving these goals. This typically occurs in the September/October time frame.

- **Classroom Observation**—For faculty, observations will occur based on the general frequency noted above.
- **Ongoing Feedback**—At different points during the academic year, both parties will meet formally and informally to discuss how the development plan is proceeding, whether changes are needed, what additional resources or support are available, etc.
- **Self-appraisal**-- Each employee will assess his/her performance at the end of the year, identifying strengths and areas for improvement or further development. For faculty, this typically occurs in March/April. For staff and administrators, this typically occurs in

June/July.

Employee Evaluation

Each employee's supervisor will complete an annual written performance evaluation. The review will be based on the agreed upon classroom observations (for faculty), professional standards, the professional growth plan established during the previous fall, as well as feedback from the employee's self-evaluation.

Review Meeting

Each employee will meet with his/her supervisor to discuss the self-appraisal and employee evaluation and to establish initial goals and objectives for the following academic year. The employee has the option to submit a written statement regarding his/her agreement/disagreement with the evaluation, which will be attached to the evaluation and made part of the employee's personnel record.

- **Goal-Setting**—The goals set initially during the end-of-year evaluation are reassessed in September/October and fine-tuned as needed, and the process continues.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RSMS faculty will participate in an annual professional development plan that will include the following:

- Completion of a personal "Professional Growth Plan" that will lead the teachers through an examination of the Charter School's mission.
- Completion of a school-wide faculty objective that will "stretch" the teacher's skills in ways that impact student performance, satisfaction for both students and parents and enthusiasm both in and out of the classroom.
- Attendance at in-services.
- Attendance at Montessori workshops and workshops provided by outside consultants or conferences.
- Presentation of a faculty in-service topic.
- Presentation of the "Professional Growth Plan" at the end of each academic year that will demonstrate a connection between accomplishments and the ways in which the students have demonstrated academic and personal growth during the course of the year.
- Receive a faculty evaluation that serves as a summary of formal and informal coaching

and mentoring interactions that have occurred during the school year, and that may indicate required or suggested skill enhancement that become part of the teacher's growth and renewal plan for the future.

Element 6: Health and Safety

“The procedures that the charter school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall require all of the following:

- (i) That each employee of the charter school furnish the charter school with a criminal record summary as described in Section 44237.*
- (ii) For all schools, the development of a school safety plan, which shall include the safety topics listed in subparagraphs (A) to (K), inclusive, of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 32282. For schools serving pupils in any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, the development of a school safety plan shall also include the safety topic listed in subparagraph (L) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 32282.*
- (iii) That the school safety plan be reviewed and updated by March 1 of every year by the charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(F)*

The Rising Sun Montessori School Board of Directors maintains a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies to ensure the health and safety of its pupils and staff. These policies have been developed in consultation with the Charter School’s insurance carriers and may be annually updated and reviewed, in consultation with staff and families. These policies shall be distributed each year to all RSMS staff and families in the Rising Sun Montessori School Family-Student Handbook. The Charter School shall ensure that staff are trained annually on the health and safety policies. A full draft of Rising Sun’s health and safety policies shall be provided to the District at any time upon request. The following is a summary of the health and safety policies of Rising Sun:

Procedures for Background Checks

Employees and contractors of the Charter School shall be required to submit to a criminal background check and to furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code Sections 44237 and 45125.1. Applicants for employment must submit two sets of fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. The Charter School shall not hire any person, in either a certificated or classified position, who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony except as otherwise provided by law, pursuant to Education Code Sections 44830.1 and 45122.1. The Head of School of the Charter School shall monitor compliance with this policy and report to the Charter School Board of Directors on a regular basis. The Board Chair shall monitor the fingerprinting and background clearance of the Head of School. Volunteers who will volunteer outside of the direct supervision of a credentialed employee shall be fingerprinted and receive background clearance prior to volunteering without the direct supervision of a credentialed employee.

Role of Staff as Mandated Child Abuse Reporters

All employees shall be mandated child abuse reporters and shall follow all applicable reporting laws, the same policies and procedures used by the District. The Charter School shall provide or arrange for mandated reporter training to all employees annually, in accordance with Education Code Section 44691.

Tuberculosis Risk Assessment and Examination

Employees, and volunteers who have frequent or prolonged contact with students, shall be assessed and examined (if necessary) for tuberculosis prior to commencing employment and working with students, and for employees at least once each four years thereafter, as required by Education Code Section 49406.

Immunizations

All enrolled students who receive classroom-based instruction shall be required to provide records documenting immunizations as is required at public schools pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 120325-120375, and Title 17, California Code of Regulations Sections 6000-6075. All rising 7th grade students must be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster.

Upon a student's admission or advancement to 6th grade, the Charter School shall submit to the student and their parent or guardian a notification that advises students to adhere to current immunization guidelines regarding human papillomavirus ("HPV") before admission or advancement to 8th grade, consistent with the requirements of Education Code Section 48980.4 and Health and Safety Code Section 120336.

Medication in School

The Charter School shall adhere to Education Code Section 49423 regarding administration of medication in school. The Charter School will adhere to Education Code Section 49414 regarding epinephrine auto-injectors and training for staff members; per AB 1651 (2023), the Charter School shall store emergency epinephrine auto-injectors in an accessible location upon need for emergency use and include that location in annual notices required by law. To the extent the Charter School maintains a stock of albuterol inhalers to respond to respiratory distress in students, the Charter School shall comply with the requirements of Education Code Section 49414.7, including with respect to training, notices, and the stocking of albuterol inhalers.

Vision, Hearing, and Scoliosis

Students shall be screened for vision, hearing and scoliosis. The Charter School shall adhere to Education Code Section 49450 *et seq.*, as applicable to the grade levels served by the Charter School.

Diabetes

The Charter School shall make type 1 diabetes informational materials accessible to the parent or guardian of a pupil when the pupil is first enrolled in elementary school.

The Charter School shall provide an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7th grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 2 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or

- warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes.
4. A description of treatments and prevention methods of type 2 diabetes.
 5. A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available.

Suicide Prevention Policy

The Charter School shall maintain a policy on student suicide prevention in accordance with Education Code Section 215. The Charter School shall review, at minimum every fifth year, its policy on pupil suicide prevention and, if necessary, update its policy. Pursuant to AB 58 (2021-22), the Charter School will also review and update its suicide prevention policy by January 1, 2025, to incorporate best practices identified by the California Department of Education's model policy, as revised.

Prevention of Human Trafficking

The Charter School shall identify and implement the most appropriate methods of informing parents and guardians of students in grades 6 through 8 of human trafficking prevention resources.

Menstrual Products

The Charter School shall stock the school's restrooms at all times with an adequate supply of menstrual products, available and accessible, free of cost, in all women's restrooms and all-gender restrooms, and in at least one men's restroom. The Charter School shall post a notice regarding the requirements of Education Code Section 35292.6 in a prominent and conspicuous location in every restroom required to stock menstrual products, as specified. This notice shall include the text of Education Code Section 35292.6 and contact information, including an email address and telephone number, for a designated individual responsible for maintaining the requisite supply of menstrual products.

All Gender Restrooms

On or before July 1, 2026, the Charter School shall provide and maintain at least one all-gender restroom for voluntary student use at each of its school sites that has more than one female restroom and more than one male restroom designated exclusively for student use. The restroom shall have signage identifying the bathroom as being open to all genders, it shall remain unlocked, unobstructed, and easily accessible by any student, and be available during school hours and school functions when students are present. The Charter School shall designate a staff member to serve as a point of contact and to post a notice regarding these requirements.

School Meals

The Charter School shall provide breakfast and lunch free of charge during each school day to

any pupil who requests a meal without consideration of the pupil's eligibility for a federally funded free or reduced-price meal, with a maximum of one free meal for each meal service period. The meals provided under this paragraph shall be nutritionally adequate meals that qualify for federal reimbursement.

The Charter School shall provide each student adequate time to eat as determined by the Charter School in consideration of available guidance.

Recess

Except where a field trip or other educational program is taking place, if the Charter School provides recess, to the extent required by Education Code Section 49056, the Charter School shall provide supervised and unstructured recess, distinct from physical education courses and mealtimes, of at least 30 minutes on regular instructional days and at least 15 minutes on early release days. The Charter School shall not restrict a student's recess unless there is an immediate threat to the physical safety of the student or one or more of their peers.

California Healthy Youth Act

The Charter School shall teach sexual health education and human immunodeficiency virus ("HIV") prevention education to students in grades 7-8, at least once pursuant to the California Healthy Youth Act (Education Code Section 51930, *et seq.*).

Mental Health Education

If the Charter School offers one or more courses in health education to students in grades 7-8, the Charter School shall include in those courses instruction in mental health that meets the requirements of Education Code Section 51925, *et seq.*

Mental Health Information

The Charter School shall create and post a poster at the school site identifying approaches and resources addressing student mental health in compliance with Education Code Section 49428.5. The poster shall be displayed in English and the primary language(s) spoken by 15 percent or more of students enrolled at the school site. The poster shall be prominently and conspicuously displayed in appropriate public areas that are accessible to, and commonly frequented by, students at the school site. The poster shall also be digitized and distributed online to students through social media, internet websites, portals, and learning platforms at the beginning of each school year.

School Safety Plan

The Charter School shall adopt a School Safety Plan, to be reviewed and updated by March 1 of

every year, which shall include identification of appropriate strategies and programs that will provide or maintain a high level of school safety and address the Charter School's procedures for complying with applicable laws related to school safety including the development of all of the following pursuant to Education Code Section 32282(a)(2)(A)-(L):

- child abuse reporting procedures
- routine and emergency disaster procedures
- policies for students who committed an act under Education Code Section 48915 and other Charter School-designated serious acts leading to suspension, expulsion, or mandatory expulsion recommendations
- procedures to notify teachers of dangerous students pursuant to Education Code Section 49079
- a discrimination and harassment policy consistent with Education Code Section 200
- provisions of any school wide dress code that prohibits students from wearing "gang-related apparel," if applicable
- procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and employees to and from the Charter School
- a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning
- the rules and procedures on school discipline adopted pursuant to Education Code Sections 35291, 35291.5, and 47605
- procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents
- procedures to assess and respond to reports of any dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity that is being conducted or threatened to be conducted at the school, at an activity sponsored by the school, or on a school bus serving the school
- a protocol in the event a pupil is suffering or is reasonably believed to be suffering from an opioid overdose

The School Safety Plan shall be drafted specifically to the needs of the facility in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshal. Staff shall receive training in emergency response, including appropriate "first responder" training or its equivalent.

Disaster procedures included in the School Safety Plan shall address and include adaptations for students with disabilities. To the extent an employee, parent/guardian, educational rights holder, or student brings concerns regarding the procedures to the Head of School and, if there is merit to the concern, the principal shall direct the School Safety Plan to be modified accordingly.

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

The Charter School shall establish, implement, and maintain, at all times in all work areas, an effective workplace violence prevention plan consistent with the requirements of Labor Code Section 6401.9.

Bloodborne Pathogens

The Charter School shall meet state and federal standards for dealing with bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials in the workplace. The Board maintains a written infectious control plan designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with bloodborne viruses, including HIV and hepatitis B virus (“HBV”).

Whenever exposed to blood or other bodily fluids through injury or accident, staff and students shall follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

Drug-, Alcohol-, and Smoke-Free Environment

The Charter School shall function as a drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free environment.

Facility Safety

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by either utilizing facilities that are compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The Charter School shall test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms annually at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times. The Charter School shall conduct fire drills as required under Education Code Section 32001.

Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures

The Charter School is committed to providing a school that is free from discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as any harassment based upon the actual or perceived characteristics of race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, national origin, ancestry, ethnic group identification, genetic information, age, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, sex and pregnancy, physical or mental disability, childbirth or related medical conditions, military and veteran status, denial of family and medical care leave, or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School maintains a comprehensive policy to prevent and immediately remediate any concerns about discrimination or harassment at the Charter School (including employee to employee, employee to student, and student to employee misconduct). Misconduct of this nature is very serious and shall be addressed in accordance with the Charter School’s anti-discrimination and harassment policies.

A copy of the policy shall be provided as part of any orientation program conducted for new and continuing pupils at the beginning of each quarter, semester, or summer session, as applicable, and to each faculty member, all members of the administrative staff, and all members of the support staff at the beginning of the first quarter or semester of the school year, or at the time that there is a new employee hired.

Bullying Prevention

The Charter School shall adopt procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying. The Charter School shall annually make available the online training module developed by the CDE pursuant to Education Code Section 32283.5(a) to certificated school site employees and all other school site employees who have regular interaction with children.

Supporting LGBTQ Students

Commencing with the 2025-26 school year and ending with completion of the 2029-30 school year, the charter school shall use an online training delivery platform and curriculum to provide at least 1 hour of required LGBTQ cultural competency training annually to teachers and other certificated employees and maintain records of such training as required by Education Code Section 218.

SAFETY Act

Pursuant to AB 1955 (2024), employees of the Charter School shall not be required to disclose any information related to a pupil's LGBTQ+ identity to any other person without the pupil's consent unless otherwise required by state or federal law. This provision shall not limit a parent's ability to request school records on behalf of their child.

Homicide Threats

The Charter School shall comply with all requirements under Education Code Sections 49390-49395 regarding mandatory reporting in response to homicidal threats. All employees and Board members who are alerted to or who observe any threat or perceived threat in writing or through an action of a student that creates a reasonable suspicion that the student is preparing to commit a homicidal act related to school or a school activity shall make a report to law enforcement.

Gun Safety Notice

At the beginning of the first semester, the Charter School shall distribute a notice to the parents/guardians of each student addressing California's child gun access prevention laws and laws related to firearm safety utilizing the most updated model language published by the California Department of Education.

Athletic Programs

The Charter School shall comply with all applicable laws related to health and safety policies and procedures surrounding athletic programs at charter schools, including but not limited to providing information to athletes regarding sudden cardiac arrest and annually providing each athlete an Opioid Factsheet for Patients.

Transportation Services

Effective July 1, 2025, the Charter School shall comply with the requirements of Education Code Section 39875(c), if applicable, relating to background checks and testing for individuals providing transportation services for students.

Element 7: Student Population Balance

“The means by which the charter school will achieve a balance of racial and ethnic pupils, special education pupils, and English learner pupils, including redesignated fluent English proficient pupils, as defined by the evaluation rubrics in Section 52064.5, that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted. Upon renewal, for a charter school not deemed to be a local educational agency for purposes of special education pursuant to Section 47641, the chartering authority may consider the effect of school placements made by the chartering authority in providing a free and appropriate public education as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 101-476), on the balance of pupils with disabilities at the charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(G)

Objective

Rising Sun Montessori School recognizes the importance of achieving a student population balance. RSMS shall implement a student recruitment strategy that includes, at a minimum, the following elements or strategies to ensure a student population balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the District:

- An enrollment process that is scheduled and adopted to include a timeline that allows for a broad-based recruiting and application process.
- The continued development and active dissemination of promotional and informational materials in English and Spanish for any interested families in Buckeye Union School district.
- The continued development and active dissemination of promotional and informational materials in languages other than English as appropriate.
- Outreach meetings in several areas of the District to reach prospective students and parents.

Recruitment Strategy

Rising Sun’s open enrollment policy shall seek to maintain a diverse balance among students of Rising Sun, including students from a range of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic background, as well as students with disabilities. All children shall be equally welcome and eligible to apply for enrollment. RSMS shall implement a recruitment program to ensure that all families of students residing within the boundaries of Buckeye Union School District are given an equal opportunity to enroll their children at the Charter School.

Recruitment Plan

Rising Sun Montessori shall review its recruitment plan each year, and make revisions as needed. A database shall be kept to detail the results of each recruitment effort including: number of inquiries, inquiries which led to enrollment and subsequent follow up. Revisions shall be made to the recruitment plan based on the data collected in an effort to achieve a student balance that

is reflective of the District as a whole.

The following details some of the avenues of recruitment that shall be implemented:

- Promotional materials, such as brochures, flyers, advertisements and media press kits in English and Spanish;
- Outreach to area preschools, community centers, religious organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and community organizations throughout Buckeye Union School District;
- Information booths at community events;
- Distribution of materials at local places of business that targeted families frequent, such as dental offices, libraries, children's gyms and other clubs;
- Promotion through area media;
- Open house and school tours on a regular, on-going basis.

Achieving Student Population Balance Summary

Rising Sun Montessori School shall keep on file documentation of efforts made to achieve a student population balance and the results achieved, as well as an accurate accounting of the demographics of students enrolled in the Charter School. School leadership shall evaluate this data annually and revise the outreach plan as necessary.

Rising Sun Montessori School seeks to maintain a student population balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the Buckeye Union School District's territorial jurisdiction. Rising Sun anticipates that its student population will reflect the diversity of the Buckeye Union School District.

Efforts to Recruit Low-Achieving and Economically Disadvantaged Students

In line with Rising Sun Montessori School's mission of diversity, we are committed to serving all student sub-groups, including those who have a history of being academically low-achieving in other school settings. Rising Sun has a long partnership with community libraries in Folsom and other surrounding areas, and routinely reaches out to local communities through parent groups, direct mailing with the effort to include socio-economically disadvantaged students. We will continue to ensure that our efforts are maintained in a manner as to reach as many diverse student groups as possible.

Element 8: Admission Policies and Procedures

*“Admission policies and procedures, consistent with [Education Code Section 47605] subdivision (e).”
Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(H)*

Assurances

As a non-sectarian, tuition-free public school, Rising Sun Montessori School will admit all grade-level eligible pupils who wish to attend, up to the Charter School’s capacity, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(A). Rising Sun Montessori will be a school of choice and in compliance with Education Code Section 47605(g), no student will be required to attend Rising Sun. Admission shall not be determined based on the place of residence of the pupil or of their parent or guardian. However, in the event of a public random drawing, admission preference shall be granted to residents of the Buckeye Union School District. In accordance with Education Code Sections 49011 and 47605(e)(2)(B)(iv), admission preferences shall not require mandatory parental volunteer hours as a criterion for admission or continued enrollment.

Rising Sun Montessori School shall abide by Education Code Section 47605(e)(1) and shall not charge tuition, nor discriminate against any pupil on the basis of the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics). In accordance with Education Code Section 48000 (a)-(c), children must meet minimum age requirements for enrollment. Rising Sun will abide by any future amendments to the Education Code regarding minimum and maximum age for public schools. Proof of the child’s age must be presented at the time of enrollment as described in Education Code Section 48002.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A), the Charter School shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the charter school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), including pupils with disabilities, academically low-achieving pupils, English learners, neglected or delinquent pupils, homeless pupils, or pupils who are economically disadvantaged, as determined by eligibility for any free or reduced-price meal program, foster youth, or pupils based on nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Similarly, in accordance with Section 47605(e)(4)(C), the Charter School shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the Charter School to disenroll from the Charter School or transfer to another school for any reason, including, but not limited to the academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), as listed above.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(D), the Charter School shall post a notice developed by the CDE on the Charter School website, outlining the requirements of Section

47605(e)(4), and make this notice available to parents.

Admission and Enrollment Process

Rising Sun Montessori School shall admit all students who wish to attend the Charter School. The Charter School shall require students who wish to attend the Charter School to complete an application form. After admission, students shall be required to submit an enrollment packet, which includes the following:

1. Student enrollment form
2. Proof of Immunization
3. Home Language Survey
4. Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
5. Proof of minimum age requirements
6. Release of records¹⁰

Rising Sun Montessori School shall make application and enrollment forms available in English and Spanish. Open enrollment shall begin on the first business day in January and extend through the end of February. Forms shall be available at the school site and through participation in any Parent Information Meeting that may be held throughout the open enrollment period. Submitted application forms shall be date and time stamped and student names added to an application roster to track receipt. If, by the close of open enrollment, the number of forms received is less than the number of spaces available, all applicants shall be accepted and enrolled in the Charter School upon submission of an enrollment packet. Subsequent application forms shall be accepted until our capacity is reached.

Public Random Drawing

Following the open enrollment period each year, applications shall be counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than availability. In the event that this happens, the Charter School shall hold a public random drawing (or “lottery”) for the impacted grade level(s), with the exception of students currently enrolled in the Charter School, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year.

Admission preference in the case of a lottery will be given in the following sequence of priority:

1. Siblings of students admitted to or attending Rising Sun
2. Children of Rising Sun employees
3. Children of the Rising Sun founding team
4. Children with one year prior Montessori experience
5. Children who reside within the boundaries of Buckeye Union School District
6. All other applicants

¹⁰ In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(B), the Charter School shall not request a pupil’s records or require a parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil’s records to the Charter School before enrollment

7. Students who have been withdrawn previously by parents pending disciplinary action for behaviors or who were involuntarily removed due to a lack of attendance

The Charter School and the District agree to adhere to the requirements related to admission preferences as set forth in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(i)-(iv).

Families who submit completed application forms prior to the February deadline shall be notified in writing regarding the date, time, and location of the public lottery, and rules for the lottery process. The lottery drawing shall be held on the school grounds in March. Results shall be published in English and Spanish, and shall be posted online and in hard copy in previously determined locations. Results shall also be mailed to all applicants and follow-up phone calls shall be made.

The Board of Directors will take all necessary efforts to ensure lottery procedures are fairly executed. Lottery spaces are pulled in order of grade level by the designated lottery official (appointed by the Head of School). Separate lotteries shall be conducted for each grade in which there are fewer vacancies than pupils interested in attending. All lotteries shall take place on the same day in a single location. Lotteries will be conducted in ascending order beginning with the lowest applicable grade level. There is no weighted priority assigned to the preference categories; rather, within each grade level, students will be drawn from pools beginning with all applicants who qualify for the first preference category, and shall continue with that preference category until all vacancies within that grade level have been filled. If there are more students in a preference category than there are spaces available, a random drawing will be held from within that preference category until all available spaces are filled. If all students from the preference category have been selected and there are remaining spaces available in that grade level, students from the second preference category will be drawn in the lottery, and the drawing shall continue until all spaces are filled and preference categories are exhausted in the order provided above.

Families of students who are offered admission shall have 5 business days to confirm in writing their intent to enroll and submit an enrollment packet including proof of age, proof of address, and immunization records. Any families who decline admission or who fail to confirm shall lose their position to the next name on the waiting list. The waiting list shall be kept on file at the Charter School and be valid for the duration of the school year for which it was formed. If a student leaves the Charter School, that space will be offered to the next person on the waiting list. In no circumstance will a waiting list carry over to the following school year.

The Charter School may refine the lottery policies and procedures in accordance with written policy adopted by the Rising Sun Board.

Rising Sun Montessori School serves grades TK/K-8. Grade configuration is determined by available facilities and enrollment. Capacity will be determined on a year-to-year basis. Parents who intend to re-enroll their children must notify the RSMS office by February of the current

school year.

Parents and students will be given handbooks at the beginning of the academic year describing the educational philosophy of RSMS. Parents will be encouraged, but not required, by RSMS to support the Charter School in a variety of ways, including volunteering in the classroom, attending field trips, or assisting in fundraising efforts. All students are required to follow the school rules and policies regarding student behavior. All students are afforded the protections under written policies adopted by the RSMS Board of Directors with respect to nondiscrimination.

Element 9: Annual Financial Audit

“The manner in which annual, independent, financial audits shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(I)

Rising Sun Montessori School will annually oversee the selection of an independent auditor to inspect the Charter School’s accounting and reporting records as required by Education Code Sections 47605(c)(5)(I) and 47605(m). The books and records of the Charter School will be kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and as required by applicable law, the audit will employ generally accepted accounting procedures. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with applicable provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide.

The Charter School Board will select an independent auditor through a request for proposal format. The independent audit will be performed by a CPA with experience in Local Educational Agency and charter school audits, who is familiar with the State Controller’s K-12 Audit Guide for charter schools, and who is approved by the California State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The scope of the audit will be to verify the accuracy of Rising Sun’s financial statements (including balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements), attendance and enrollment reporting practices, internal controls, and any other documents or systems required by law. To the extent required under applicable federal law, the audit scope will be expanded to include items and processes specified in applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

The Treasurer and Board Chair of RSMS will be responsible for ensuring that the Charter School receives an independent audit, and RSMS will provide the audit to the State Controller, BUSD, the El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools, and the California Department of Education by December 15 of each year.

At the conclusion of the audit, any exceptions and deficiencies will be reviewed by the Audit Committee with the Head of School and, if applicable, the Charter School’s back office service provider. The Audit Committee will report the findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors. The Board will then report to the District to address how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved to the satisfaction of the District. Rising Sun will agree to a timeline for resolution of the audit exceptions and deficiencies with the District. Audit appeals or requests for summary review shall be submitted to the Education Audit Appeals Panel (“EAAP”) in accordance with applicable law.

As required by Education Code Section 47604.3, the Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries, including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding financial records, from its chartering authority, the El Dorado County Office of Education, and from the Superintendent of

Public Instruction. Rising Sun acknowledges that it is subject to audit by BUSD, and that if BUSD seeks an audit of Rising Sun, the District shall assume all costs of such audit. This obligation for the District to pay for an audit only applies if the audit requested is specifically requested by the District and is not otherwise required to be completed by Rising Sun by law or charter provision. The independent fiscal audit of Rising Sun Montessori School is a public record to be provided to the public upon request.

Element 10: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

“The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled from the charter school for disciplinary reasons or otherwise involuntarily removed from the charter school for any reason. These procedures, at a minimum, shall include an explanation of how the charter school will comply with federal and state constitutional procedural and substantive due process requirements that is consistent with all of the following:

(i) For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present the pupil’s side of the story.

(ii) For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, both of the following:

(I) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil’s basic rights.

(II) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.

(iii) Contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil’s parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a homeless child or youth, or a foster child or youth, in the native language of the homeless or foster child’s educational rights holder. In the case of a foster child or youth, the written notice shall also be provided to the foster child’s attorney and county social worker. If the pupil is an Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the written notice shall also be provided to the Indian child’s tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker. The written notice shall inform the pupil, the pupil’s parent or guardian, the homeless child’s educational rights holder, the foster child’s educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, or the Indian child’s tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker of the right to initiate the procedures specified in clause (ii) before the effective date of the action. If the pupil’s parent or guardian, the homeless child’s educational rights holder, the foster child’s educational rights holder, attorney, or county social worker, or the Indian Child’s tribal social worker or, if applicable, county social worker initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in clauses (i) and (ii).

(iv) A foster child’s educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker and an Indian child’s tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker shall have the same rights a parent or guardian of a child has to receive a suspension notice, expulsion notice, manifestation determination notice, involuntary transfer notice, and other documents and related information.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)

Policy

Rising Sun Montessori School has established comprehensive student conduct and discipline policies in order to provide a safe and respectful educational environment for its students, staff, and visitors to the Charter School, and to serve the best interests of the students and their families. In creating this policy, Rising Sun has reviewed Education Code Section 48900, et seq.

which describe offenses for which students at non-charter schools may be suspended or expelled and the procedures governing those suspensions and expulsions in order to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions, expulsions, and involuntary removal. The language that follows is largely consistent with the language of Education Code Section 48900 et seq. Rising Sun is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions, expulsions and involuntary removals, and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension, expulsion, or involuntary removal.

Consistent with this Policy, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This shall serve as the Charter School's policy and procedures for student suspension, expulsion, and involuntary removal, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to seek a material revision of the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements. Charter School staff shall enforce disciplinary policies and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its procedures will be printed and distributed annually as part of the Charter School's parent, student and teacher handbooks which will clearly describe the Charter School's discipline expectations. Each family will be required to verify that they have reviewed and understand the policies prior to enrollment by signing a statement at the beginning of each academic year.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of this Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians¹¹ are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary removal policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this Policy and its Procedures are available upon request at the Head of School's office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the IDEA or who is qualified for services under Section 504 is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to general education students except when federal and state law requires additional or different procedures. The Charter School will follow all applicable

¹¹ The Charter School shall ensure that a homeless child or youth's educational rights holder; a foster child or youth's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker; and an Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker have the same rights as a parent or guardian to receive a suspension notice, expulsion notice, manifestation determination notice, involuntary transfer notice, involuntary removal notice, and other documents and related information. For purposes of this Policy and its Procedures, the term "parent/guardian" shall include these parties.

federal and state laws including but not limited to the applicable portions of the Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities, for whom the Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in accordance with due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent/guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent/guardian and shall inform the student and the student's parent/guardian of the basis for which the student is being involuntarily removed and the student's parent/guardian's right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a student's parent/guardian requests a hearing, the Charter School shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified below for expulsions, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student's parent/guardian requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspensions or expulsions as enumerated below.

As charter schools are schools of choice, and as a charter school student who fails to attend school is potentially depriving another student of their opportunity to enroll, a student may be involuntarily removed as described within the Charter School's Board adopted Attendance Policy for truancy and only after the Charter School follows the requirements of the Attendance Policy and only in accordance with the policy described above which requires notice and an opportunity for a parent, guardian, educational rights holder to request a hearing prior to any involuntary removal.

Procedures

A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to:

- a) while on school grounds;
- b) while going to or coming from school;
- c) during lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; or
- d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

B. Enumerated Offenses

1. Discretionary Suspension Offenses. Students may be suspended when it is determined

the student:

- a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
- c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a student.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.

- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases., or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.
- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual’s academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in Education Code Section 233(e). This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened, or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
 - 1) “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students

in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.

- ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
- iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
- iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.

2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- i. A message, text, sound, video or image.
- ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
 - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
 - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
- iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
 - (a) For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the

photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

- (b) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

- 3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

- u) A student who aids or abets, as defined in Penal Code Section 31, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a student who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1)(a)-(b).

- v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Head of School or designee’s concurrence.

2. Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion when it is determined the student:

- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Head of School or designee’s concurrence.
- b) Brandished a knife at another person.
- c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, *et seq.*
- d) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

3. Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students may be recommended for expulsion when it is determined the student:

- a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
- c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence

of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

- d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a student.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which,

on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.

- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in Education Code Section 233(e). This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
 - 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
 - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
 - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference

with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.

- 2) “Electronic Act” means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- i. A message, text, sound, video or image.
 - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
 - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
 - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
 - iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
 - (a) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
 - (b) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

- 3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall

not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

- u) A student who aids or abets, as defined in Penal Code Section 31, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a student who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (3)(a)-(b).
- v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Head of School or designee's concurrence.

4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be recommended for expulsion for when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the student:

- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Head of School or designee's concurrence.
- b) Brandished a knife at another person.
- c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Health and Safety Code Section 11053, et seq.
- d) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a firearm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or destructive device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the student shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The Charter School will use the following definitions:

- The term "knife" means (A) any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (B) a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (C) a weapon with a blade longer than 3½ inches; (D) a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or (E) a razor with an unguarded blade.
- The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed

to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such a term does not include an antique firearm.

- The term “destructive device” means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clause.

C. Suspension Procedures

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Head of School or designee with the student and the student’s parent/guardian and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or Charter School employee who referred the student to the Head of School or designee.

The conference may be omitted if the Head of School determines that an emergency situation exists. An “emergency situation” involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or RSMS personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and the student shall be notified of the student’s right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference the student shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against the student and shall be given the opportunity to present their version and evidence in their defense, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(i). This conference shall be held within two (2) school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason. Penalties shall not be imposed on a student for failure of the student’s parent or guardian to attend the conference with Charter School officials. Reinstatement of the suspended student shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student’s parent or guardian at the conference.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of the suspension, an administrator or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by email, telephone, or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense(s) committed by the student as well as the date the student may return to school following the suspension.

If Charter School officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon recommendation of expulsion by the Head of School or designee, the student and student's parent/ guardian will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the student should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. In such instances when the Charter School has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the student or the student's parent/guardian, unless the student and the student's parent/guardian fail to attend the conference.

This determination will be made by the Head of School or designee upon either of the following: 1) the student's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the student poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the student's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

4. Homework Assignments During Suspension

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(a), upon the request of a parent, a legal guardian or other person holding the right to make education decisions for the student, or the affected student, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 8, inclusive, who has been suspended from school for two (2) or more school days, the homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(b), if a homework assignment that is requested pursuant to Section 47606.2(a) and turned into the teacher by the student either upon the student's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.

D. Authority to Expel

As required by Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(ii), students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer to determine whether the student should be expelled. The procedures herein provide for such a hearing and the notice of said hearing, as required by law.

A student may be expelled either by the neutral and impartial Charter School Board following a hearing before it or by the Charter School Board upon the recommendation of a neutral

and impartial Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Board as needed. The Administrative Panel shall consist of at least three (3) members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the student nor a member of the Charter School's Board. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense, and the Board of Directors shall make the final determination.

E. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days after the Head of School or designee determines that the student has committed an expellable offense and recommends the student for expulsion.

In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing will be held in a closed session (complying with all student confidentiality rules under FERPA) unless the student makes a written request for a public hearing in open session three (3) days prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the student. The notice shall include:

1. Date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of the Charter School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the Charter School to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

F. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The Charter School may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both,

would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations that shall be examined only by the Charter School or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the student.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of their right to (a) receive five (5) days' notice of their scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of their choosing present in the hearing at the time the complaining witness testifies, which may include a parent/guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the entity conducting the expulsion hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which the complaining witness may leave the hearing room.
4. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours the complaining witness is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the entity presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The entity conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany the complaining witness to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the

presiding officer from exercising their discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom they believe is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in public at the request of the student being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have their testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the entity conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal, counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

H. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay. Sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board or Administrative Panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled student, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

I. Expulsion Decision

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The Board shall make the final determination regarding the expulsion within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, or the Board of Directors ultimately decides not to expel, the student shall immediately be returned to their previous educational program.

The Board of Directors may also determine to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order for a period of not more than one (1) calendar year from the date of the expulsion hearing and return the student to the student's previous educational program under a probationary status and rehabilitation plan to be determined by the Board. During the period of the suspension of the expulsion order, the student is deemed to be on probationary status. The Board of Directors may revoke the suspension of an expulsion order under this section if the student commits any of the enumerated offenses listed above or violates any of the Charter School's rules and regulations governing student conduct. If the Board revokes the suspension of an expulsion order, the student may be expelled under the terms of the original expulsion order. The Board of Directors shall apply the criteria for suspending the enforcement of the expulsion order equally to all students, including individuals with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code Section 56026. The Board of Directors shall further comply with the provisions set forth under Education Code Section 48917, except as otherwise expressly set forth herein.

J. Written Notice to Expel

The Head of School or designee, following a decision of the Board to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student and student's parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following: (a) Notice of the specific offense committed by the student; and (b) Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.

The Head of School or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the chartering authority. This notice shall include the following: (a) The student's name; and (b) The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

K. Disciplinary Records

The Charter School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the

Charter School. Such records shall be made available to the chartering authority upon request.

L. No Right to Appeal

The student shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Charter School Board's decision to expel shall be final.

M. Expelled Students/Alternative Education

Parents/guardians of students who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. The Charter School shall work cooperatively with parents/guardians as requested by parents/guardians or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

N. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the student may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.

O. Readmission or Admission of Previously Expelled Student

The decision to readmit a student after the end of the student's expulsion term or to admit a previously expelled student from another school district or charter school who has not been readmitted/admitted to another school or school district after the end of the student's expulsion term, shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the Head of School or designee and the student and student's parent/guardian or representative to determine whether the student has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the student poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Head of School or designee shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding the Head of School's or designee's determination. The Board shall then make a final decision regarding readmission or admission of the student during the closed session of a public meeting, reporting any action taken during closed session consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act. The student's readmission is also contingent upon the Charter School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission or admission to the Charter School.

P. Notice to Teachers

The Charter School shall notify teachers of each student who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

Q. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion or Involuntary Removal of Students with Disabilities

a. Notification of SELPA

The Charter School shall immediately notify the SELPA and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the SELPA of the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the Charter School or SELPA would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

b. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (which could constitute a change of placement and the student's IEP would reflect this change), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

c. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent/guardian and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent/guardian to determine:

- i. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- ii. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.

If the Charter School, the parent/guardian and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent/guardian and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the

IEP/504 Team shall:

- a. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- b. If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c. Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent/guardian and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

d. Due Process Appeals

The parent/guardian of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent/guardian or the Charter School, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer in accordance with state and federal law, including 20 USC Section 1415(k), until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, , unless the parent/guardian and the Charter School agree otherwise.

In accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(3), if a parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or if the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, the parent/guardian or Charter School may request a hearing.

In such an appeal, a hearing officer may: (1) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

e. Special Circumstances

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Head of School or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- i. Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- ii. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- iii. Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

f. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.

g. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEA and who has violated the Charter School's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- i. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- ii. The parent/guardian has requested an evaluation of the child.
- iii. The child's teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If the Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The Charter School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however, the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

Element 11: Staff Retirement Systems

“The manner by which staff members of the charter school will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employees’ Retirement System, or federal social security.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(K)

Compensation and Benefits

Rising Sun Montessori School employees shall receive a comprehensive benefits package (medical, dental, and retirement) that will be included as part of each full-time employee’s compensation. Revenues and expenditures will be reviewed annually, and a recommendation will be made to the Rising Sun Montessori School Board for cost-of-living adjustments and other adjustments to the compensation packages as appropriate.

Retirement

Rising Sun Montessori School has the responsibility to provide retirement benefits to its employees. Eligible employees at RSMS shall participate in the State Teachers’ Retirement System (“STRS”), and eligible non-certificated staff at RSMS shall participate in the federal social security system. Employees may have access to other Charter School-sponsored retirement plans according to policies developed by the RSMS Board of Directors and adopted as the Charter School’s employee policies. RSMS retains the option for its Board to elect to participate in the Public Employees’ Retirement System and coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with PERS or other reciprocal systems in the future, should it find that participation enables the Charter School to attract and retain a higher quality of staff. The RSMS Head of School or Business Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements for retirement coverage have been made.

All employees who are not members of STRS must contribute to the federal social security system to the extent required by federal law. RSMS will make all employer contributions as required by STRS and federal social security laws. RSMS will make contributions for workers’ compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and any other payroll obligations of an employer.

Element 12: Public School Attendance Alternatives

“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(L)

No student may be required to attend Rising Sun Montessori School. Children who reside within the District who choose not to attend the Charter School may attend a school within the District according to District policy or at another school district or school within the district through its intra- and inter-district transfer policies. The parent or guardian of each student enrolled in Rising Sun shall be notified on admission forms that the student(s) has no right to admission in a particular school of any local educational agency (or program of any local educational agency) as a consequence of enrollment in the Charter School, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local educational agency.

Element 13: Employee Return Rights

“The rights of an employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(M)

No public school district employee shall be required to work at the Charter School. Employees of the District who choose to leave the employment of the District to work at the Charter School will have no automatic rights of return to the District after employment by the Charter School unless specifically granted by the District through a leave of absence or other agreement. Charter School employees shall have any right upon leaving the District to work in the Charter School that the District may specify, any rights of return to employment in a school district after employment in the Charter School that the District may specify, and any other rights upon leaving employment to work in the Charter School that the District determines to be reasonable and not in conflict with any law.

Sick or vacation leave or years of service credit at the District or any other school district will not be transferred to the Charter School. Employment by the Charter School provides no rights of employment at any other entity, including any rights in the case of closure of the Charter School.

Element 14: Dispute Resolution Procedures

“The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the chartering authority to resolve disputes relating to the provisions of the charter.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(N)

Intent

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to (1) resolve disputes within the Charter School pursuant to the Charter School’s policies, (2) minimize the oversight burden on the District, and (3) ensure a fair and timely resolution to disputes.

Public Comments

The staff and Governing Board members of Rising Sun Montessori School and the District agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

Disputes Arising from within the Charter School

Disputes arising from within RSMS, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, and Governing Board members of the Charter School, shall be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the Charter School.

The Charter School shall have an internal dispute resolution process to be used for all internal disputes related to the Charter School’s operations. The Charter School shall also maintain a Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures and Title IX complaint policy as required by state and federal law. Parents, students, Board members, volunteers, and staff at the Charter School shall be provided with a copy of the Charter School’s policies and internal dispute resolution process. The District shall promptly refer all disputes not related to a possible violation of the charter or law to the Charter School for resolution pursuant to the Charter School’s policies. The District shall not intervene in any such internal disputes without the consent of the Governing Board or Head of School of RSMS. The District agrees not to intervene or become involved in the dispute unless the dispute has given the District reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this charter or related laws or agreements has occurred, or unless the Governing Board of the Charter School has requested the District to intervene in the dispute.

Disputes between Rising Sun and the District

Rising Sun Montessori School and the District will be encouraged to attempt to resolve any disputes amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures. Rising Sun acknowledges the District’s ongoing right to inspect and observe the Charter School under Education Code Section 47607(a)(5), and such inspection and observation is not subject to this dispute resolution mechanism.

In the event of a dispute between Rising Sun Montessori School and the District, the staff,

employees, and Board members of the Charter School agree to first frame the issue in written format (“dispute statement”) and refer the issue to the District Superintendent and the RSMS Head of School, or their respective designees. In the event that the District believes that the dispute relates to an issue that could lead to revocation of the charter in accordance with Education Code Section 47607, the Charter School requests that this shall be specifically noted in the written dispute statement, although it recognizes it cannot legally bind the District to do so. However, participation in the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section shall not be interpreted to impede or act as a pre-requisite to the District’s ability to proceed with revocation in accordance with Education Code Section 47607 and its implementing regulations.

The RSMS Head of School and District Superintendent, or their respective designees shall informally meet and confer in a timely fashion in an attempt to resolve the dispute, not later than ten (10) business days from receipt of the dispute statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, Rising Sun shall identify two Board members who shall jointly meet with two designees from the District as well as the Head of School and District Superintendent and attempt to resolve the dispute within twenty (20) business days from receipt of the dispute statement.

If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the District Superintendent and the Rising Sun Head of School, or their respective designees, shall meet to jointly to identify a neutral, third-party mediator to engage the parties in a mediation session designed to facilitate resolution of the dispute. The format of the mediation session shall be developed jointly by the District Superintendent and the RSMS Head of School, or their respective designees. Mediation shall be held within sixty (60) business days of receipt of the dispute statement. The costs of the mediator will be split equally between the District and Rising Sun Montessori School. If mediation does not resolve the dispute, either party may pursue any other remedy available under the law.

All timelines in this section may be revised upon mutual written agreement of the District and the Charter School. The only binding results are those to which both parties agree or those which are issued as rulings by a legal body.

Element 15: School Closure Procedures

“The procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the charter school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school, including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.” Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(O)

The following procedures shall apply in the event the Charter School closes. These procedures will apply regardless of the reason for closure.

Closure of the Charter School will be documented by official action of the Board of Directors. The action will identify the reason for closure. The official action will also identify an entity and person or persons responsible for closure-related activities.

The Charter School will promptly notify parents and students of the Charter School, the District, the El Dorado County Office of Education, the Charter School’s SELPA, the retirement systems in which the Charter School’s employees participate (e.g., Public Employees’ Retirement System, State Teachers’ Retirement System, and federal social security), and the California Department of Education of the closure as well as the effective date of the closure. This notice will also include the name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) to whom reasonable inquiries may be made regarding the closure; the pupils’ school districts of residence; and the manner in which parents/guardians may obtain copies of pupil records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements.

The Charter School will ensure that the notification to the parents and students of the Charter School of the closure provides information to assist parents and students in locating suitable alternative programs. This notice will be provided promptly following the Board's decision to close the Charter School. The Charter School will also develop a list of pupils in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the pupils’ districts of residence, which it will provide to the entity responsible for closure-related activities.

As applicable, the Charter School will provide parents, students and the District with copies of all appropriate student records and will otherwise assist students in transferring to their next school. All transfers of student records will be made in compliance with FERPA. The Charter School will ask the District to store original records of Charter School students. All student records of the Charter School shall be transferred to the District upon Charter School closure. If the District will not or cannot store the records, the Charter School shall work with the County Office of Education to determine a suitable alternative location for storage.

All state assessment results, special education records, and personnel records will be transferred to and maintained by the entity responsible for closure-related activities in accordance with applicable law.

As soon as reasonably practicable, the Charter School will prepare final financial records. The Charter School will also have an independent audit completed within six months after closure. The Charter School will pay for the final audit. The audit will be prepared by a qualified Certified Public Accountant selected by the Charter School and will be provided to the District promptly upon its completion. The final audit will include an accounting of all financial assets, including cash and accounts receivable and an inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value, an accounting of the liabilities, including accounts payable and any reduction in apportionments as a result of audit findings or other investigations, loans, and unpaid staff compensation, and an assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the Charter School.

The Charter School will complete and file any annual reports required pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.33.

On closure of the Charter School, all assets of the Charter School, including but not limited to all leaseholds, personal property, intellectual property and all ADA apportionments and other revenues generated by students attending the Charter School, remain the sole property of the nonprofit public benefit corporation and, upon the dissolution of the nonprofit public benefit corporation, shall be distributed in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation. Any assets acquired from the District or District property will be promptly returned upon Charter School closure to the District. The distribution shall include return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as well as the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted.

On closure, the Charter School shall remain solely responsible for all liabilities arising from the operation of the Charter School. As the Charter School is operated as a non-profit public benefit corporation, should the corporation dissolve with the closure of the Charter School, the Board will follow the procedures set forth in the California Corporations Code for the dissolution of a non-profit public benefit corporation and file all necessary filings with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

As specified by the Budget in **Appendix 1**, the Charter School will utilize the reserve fund to undertake any expenses associated with the closure procedures identified above.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

“The governing board of a school district shall require that the petitioner or petitioners provide information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the charter school, including, but not limited to, the facilities to be used by the charter school, the manner in which administrative services of the charter school are to be provided, and potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the charter school and upon the school district. The description of the facilities to be used by the charter school shall specify where the charter school intends to locate. The petitioner or petitioners also shall be required to provide financial statements that include a proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and financial projections for the first three years of operation.” Education Code Section 47605(h)

FINANCIAL PLAN

Rising Sun Montessori School has developed Stability Markers to steadily gain strength in the organization.

Stability Marker 1: Cash reserves

RSMS maintains an annual cash reserve.

Stability Marker 2: Strategic plan/Financial plan

RSMS shall develop a three-year Strategic Plan. The plan shall be reviewed during the second year to determine the strengths and enhancements necessary to develop the Strategic/Financial plan for the next three years. The Strategic plan/Financial plan shall include items related to money, organizational structure, technology, programs and services, faculty professional development, and facilities/grounds, and the financial/qualitative consequences of those items.

Stability Marker 3: School leadership

RSMS' school leadership shall support the mission and values of the Charter School, student body, and community, and maintain accountability for working within the framework of the Strategic/Financial plans.

Stability Marker 4: Profiled Board and Board leadership

The Board shall be profiled for the necessary skill levels at least as often as a new strategic/financial plan is created. The Board shall be governed by individuals who discipline themselves in take viability-focused action on behalf of the next generation of students.

BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

Rising Sun Montessori School has developed a conservative financial plan based on the most current public funding projections for the Charter School's next first five years of operation. The budget documents that accompany this proposal in **Appendix 1 include:**

- Budget narrative

- Annual operating budgets for the Charter School's next five operating years
- Cash flows for each five-year annual budget
- FCMAT Apportionment Assumptions
- Student Input

These documents are based upon the best data available to the petitioners at this time.

The Charter School shall provide reports to the District and County Superintendent of Schools as follows in accordance with Education Code Section 47604.33, and shall provide additional fiscal reports as requested by the District and/or as set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding with the District:

1. By July 1, a preliminary budget for the current fiscal year.
2. By July 1, an LCAP and an annual update to the LCAP required pursuant to Education Code Section 47606.5.
3. By December 15, an interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through October 31. Additionally, on December 15, a copy of the Charter School's annual, independent financial audit report for the preceding fiscal year shall be delivered to the District, State Controller, State Department of Education and County Superintendent of Schools.
4. By March 15, a second interim financial report for the current fiscal year reflecting changes through January 31.
5. By September 15, a final unaudited report for the full prior year. The report submitted to the District shall include an annual statement of all the Charter School's receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

The Charter School shall provide reporting to the District as required by law and as set forth in the MOU with the District including, but not limited to, the following: California Basic Educational Data System ("CBEDS"), actual Average Daily Attendance reports, all financial reports required by Education Code Sections 47604.33 and 47605(m), the SARC, and the LCAP.

The Charter School agrees to and submits to the right of the District to make random visits and inspections in order to carry out its statutorily required oversight in accordance with Education Code Sections 47604.32 and 47607.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604.3, the Charter School shall promptly respond to all reasonable inquiries including, but not limited to, inquiries regarding its financial records from

the District.

FACILITIES

Rising Sun opened in the fall of 2014 with 75 students in grades 1- 6, comprising two 1-3 grade classes and one 4-6 grade classroom. Our spatial needs for the first year included approximately 3,500 square feet, with three classrooms, an administrative office, restrooms, and storage space. We also had an ample outdoor learning environment for exercise and play.

In the fall of 2019, Rising Sun relocated to its current location which has adjacent buildings located at 4940 Robert J Mathews Parkway (address of record) and 4958 Robert J Mathews Parkway. Each building is approximately 10,000 square feet and houses seven classrooms, a computer lab, an after-school program, library, staff room and administrative offices. Additionally, Rising Sun has two playground areas which have both play structures, blacktop areas and large grass areas for student recess, PE and recreational activities. Rising Sun has additional room for one more classroom as the need presents in the near future with the addition of a second upper elementary classroom of 4th-6th grade students. Each building has a garden area located adjacent to the respective playground areas which also serve as outdoor classroom areas for botany studies, and biology units.

Rising Sun has the full support of our lessors, and has leases which extend to the end of this 5 year term. There is also the option, as indicated in Appendix 7, to either negotiate a new lease or to extend the current lease for a period of another 5 years beyond this upcoming charter term. Appendix 7 also contains signed letters from the lessors indicating that we are tenants in good standing.

Rising Sun has also obtained written approval from the board of directors from the Latrobe School District to continue operations within their district boundaries, see Appendix 9 for details.

Proposition 39

Rising Sun Montessori School may seek the support of the District in securing a District-owned facility through the annual presentation of a Proposition 39 request. This is a legal requirement for school districts to provide facilities for “in-district” students attending charter schools as provided by Education Code Section 47614. The District may charge Rising Sun a pro-rata share (based on the ratio of space allocated by District to the Charter School divided by the total space of the District) for those District facility costs which the District pays for with unrestricted general fund revenues. The Charter School shall not be otherwise charged for use of the facilities.

Facility Safety

The Charter School shall comply with Education Code Section 47610 by utilizing facilities that are either compliant with the Field Act or facilities that are compliant with the California Building Standards Code. The Charter School’s facilities shall comply with applicable state and local building codes, federal American Disabilities Act access requirements, and other applicable fire,

health and structural safety requirements, and shall maintain on-file records documenting such compliance which will be available for inspection. A complete plan for natural disasters such as earthquakes, fire, etc., is maintained at the Charter School. Rising Sun maintains the proper Certificate of Occupancy and any other necessary permits under local ordinances for operating a school.

IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER

Rising Sun Montessori School shall be operated as a non-profit, public benefit corporation incorporated in the State of California with a 501(c)(3) designation by the IRS. Rising Sun shall operate autonomously from the District, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by statute and other contracted services as negotiated between the District and the Charter School. The following impacts are restated here for clarity.

District Oversight

Pursuant to California law, the District will be required to provide oversight and performance monitoring services, including, but not limited to, monitoring school and student performance data, reviewing the school's audit reports, performing annual site visits, engaging in any necessary dispute resolution processes, and considering charter amendment and renewal requests and any other oversight required by Education Code Sections 47604.32. In accordance with Education Code Section 47613(a), the District will charge for the actual costs of supervisory oversight of Rising Sun not to exceed one (1) percent of the revenue of the Charter School. Pursuant to Education Code Section 47613(f), "revenue of the charter school" means the amount received in the current fiscal year from the local control funding formula calculated pursuant to Education Code Section 42238.02, as implemented by Education Code Section 42238.03.

Insurance Coverage

Rising Sun shall maintain, at its own expense, its own insurance policies for the operation of the Charter School including, but not limited to, general liability, property, workers' compensation, errors and omissions, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance. Coverage amounts shall be based on recommendations provided by the District as set forth in the MOU with the District, and the Charter School's insurer. The District Board of Education shall be named as an additional insured on all policies of the Charter School. The Charter School shall provide the District with certificates of insurance at any time upon request.

Liability and Indemnity

The Charter School shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701(d). Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(d), an entity that grants a charter to a charter school operated by or as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors, or omissions by the charter school if the authority has complied with all oversight

responsibilities required by law. The Charter School shall continue to work diligently to assist the District in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law, including monthly meetings, reporting, or other District requested protocol to ensure the District shall not be liable for the operation of the Charter School. Further, the Charter School intends to review and renew a memorandum of understanding with the District, wherein the Charter School shall indemnify the District for the actions of the Charter School under this charter.

The corporate bylaws of the Charter School shall provide for indemnification of the Charter School's Board, officers, agents, and employees, and the Charter School shall maintain and finance general liability insurance, Board Members and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

As stated above, insurance amounts shall be determined by recommendation of the District and the Charter School's insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and student population. The District shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of the Charter School. The Charter School Board maintains appropriate risk management practices as discussed herein, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, and dispute resolution.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Rising Sun has contracted with Delta Managed Solutions ("DMS") after initiating an extensive search in 2022. DMS provides a full complement of services, including Payroll, onboarding, HR and California labor law compliance, bill payment, bank reconciliation and state/budget reporting. DMS is in its 21st year of operations.

LEGAL ISSUES

Renewal Term

The term of this charter renewal shall begin on July 1, 2025 and expire five years thereafter on June 30, 2030.

Amendments

Any amendments to this charter shall be made by the mutual agreement of the governing boards of the Rising Sun Montessori School and the charter granting agency. Material revisions shall be made pursuant to the standards, criteria, and timelines in Education Code Sections 47607 and 47605.

Legal Services

Rising Sun Montessori School will use the legal services of:

Young, Minney & Corr, LLP
655 University Avenue, Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95825

CONCLUSION

Rising Sun Montessori School continues to see a desire and need for alternative education choices for families located in the Buckeye Union School District. In particular, the desire for a high quality, authentic Montessori school that will provide an optimal learning environment for early childhood, elementary- and middle- school aged students. By approving this charter renewal, Buckeye Union School District will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 to improve pupil learning; create new professional opportunities for teachers; and provide parents and pupils with alternative education choices within the community, and following the directive of the law to encourage the creation of charter schools.

Rising Sun has demonstrated strong oversight of its budget and educational programs, resulting in fiscal reserves in excess of those required by its MOU with the District. In addition, RSMS has demonstrated the need for the Charter School by growing significantly in terms of percentage of student population from year to year, while also maintaining the quality of instruction that is indicated in our latest testing data.

Rising Sun Montessori School is eager to continue to work independently, yet cooperatively with the Buckeye Union School District. To this end, Rising Sun Montessori School pledges to work professionally with BUSD to answer any concerns over this document and to present the District with the strongest possible proposal for renewal requesting a five-year term from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.