

World's Best Workforce District Plan



Swan River Montessori Charter School
ISD #4137-07

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Executive Summary

Minnesota schools strive to provide the best educational opportunities for all children. Providing an education to Minnesota youth that leads to creating the world's best workforce is a goal that must be addressed early on in every child's life. Students are more likely to reach this goal if they are ready for school upon entering kindergarten; achieve grade-level literacy by grade three; graduate from high school and attain career and college readiness.

In order to create the world's best workforce, it is imperative that academic achievement gaps are closed among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between student's living in poverty and not living in poverty as well as for English language learners and non-English language learners and for students who receive or do not receive special education.

This comprehensive strategic plan is intended to serve as a foundational document to align educational initiatives to ensure reaching intended student outcomes from pre-kindergarten to post high school graduation.

PART I: Overview of Local WBWF District Plan Requirements

The district's public strategic plan referred to as the "World's Best Workforce District Plan" includes, at a minimum, the following items consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11:

Performance Measures

Measures to determine school district/school site progress in striving to create the world's best workforce; specifically progress towards:

- closing the identified achievement gap(s) in the district,
- kindergarten readiness,
- 3rd grade achieving grade level literacy,

Measures to assess progress must include at least:

- student performance on the National Association of Education Progress,
- the size of the academic achievement gap by student subgroup,
- student performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, and
- other relevant local standardized assessments.



Required District Plan Components & Activities

Clearly defined district/school site goals and benchmarks for instruction and student achievement for all student subgroups identified in section 120B.35, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), clause (2);

Specific information on a process for assessing and evaluating each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in pursuit of student and school success and curriculum affecting students' progress and growth toward career and college readiness and leading to the world's best workforce;

Description of a system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all instruction and curriculum, taking into account strategies and best practices, student outcomes, school principal evaluations and teacher evaluations;

Specific information on strategies for improving instruction, curriculum, and student achievement;

Description of education effectiveness practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, instructional technology, and a collaborative professional culture that develops and supports teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness; and

An annual budget for sustaining implementation of the district plan. To review SRMCS' annual budget and board-approved financial audit(s), please visit www.swanrivermontessori.org.

District Reporting Requirements

The school board shall publish a report in the local newspaper with the largest circulation in the district, by mail, or by electronic means on the district website.

The school board shall hold an annual public meeting to:

- Review and revise, where appropriate, student achievement goals, local assessment outcomes, plans, strategies, and practices for improving curriculum and instruction.
- Review district success in achieving the previously adopted student achievement goals and related benchmarks and the improvement plans leading to the world's best workforce.

The school board must transmit an electronic summary of its report to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education each fall.

The school district shall periodically survey affected constituencies about their connection to and level of satisfaction with the school. The district shall include the results of these surveys in the summary report.

Committees & Roles

Each school board shall establish a District Advisory Committee to ensure active community participation in all phases of planning and improving the instruction and curriculum affective state and local academic standards.

- The District Advisory Committee, to the extent possible, shall reflect the diversity of the district/schools, and shall include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents.
- Whenever possible, parents and other community residents shall comprise of at least two-thirds of the Advisory Committee members.
- The District Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations to the school board regarding rigorous academic standards, student achievement goals and measures consistent with subdivision 1a and sections 120B.22, subdivision 1, paragraphs (b) and (c), and 120B.35, district assessments and program evaluations.

The district will establish a school site team as subcommittees of the District Advisory Committee.

A school will establish a school site team to develop and implement strategies and evidence-based practices to improve instruction, curriculum, and student achievement at the school site.

- The school site team will advise the board and the District Advisory Committee about developing the annual budget and revising the school site improvement plan that aligns curriculum, assessment of student progress and growth in meeting state and local academic standards and instruction.

PART II: Swan River Montessori Charter School District Plan: District Plan Components & Activities

District Goals & Benchmarks for Instruction & Student Achievement

Per our contract with our authorizer, Audubon Center of the North Woods, the SRMCS lead teaching staff continuously works together to create reasonable, yet rigorous goals to be met on a yearly basis. These goals are as follows:

Kindergarten Readiness Goal: All children are ready for school.	
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students enrolled in preschool and entering kindergarten the next school year who meet or exceed kindergarten readiness standards as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist assessed annually in the spring will be at least 85%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 95%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 85%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 80%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Reading Well By 3rd Grade Goal: All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.	
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 3 will increase by at least 3.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY13-15 baseline – 72.9) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grade (3).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 8.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is at least 8.0 points above the state's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 3.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is greater than the state's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least equal to the baseline score OR is within 5.0 points of the state's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 3 will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same grade (3).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 4.0 points above the resident district's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 8.0 points of the resident district's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Achievement Gap Closure: All racial & economic achievement gaps between students are closed.****NOTE: Though shown below once, these goals and benchmarks are identical for reading, math & science.**

Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education subgroup will be greater than that of the state for the same subgroup and the same grades (3-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 10.0 points above the state's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is greater than the state's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 5.0 points of the state's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education subgroup will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same subgroup and the same grades (3-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 3.0 points above the resident district's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 6.0 points of the resident district's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Career and College Readiness: All students are career- and college- ready before graduating from high school. **NOTE: Though shown below once, these goals and benchmarks are identical for reading & math.

Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate growth z-score for all students on state accountability tests will be equal to or greater than 0.00.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate growth z-score is equal to or greater than 0.50
Meets Target	The aggregate growth z-score is equal to or greater than 0.00.
Approaches Target	The aggregate growth z-score is greater than -0.50.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students that achieve a positive z-score on state accountability tests will be greater than 50.0%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 60.0%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage is greater than 50.0%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 40.0%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Career and College Readiness in READING: All students are career- and college- ready before graduating from high school.

Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 4-6 will increase by at least 2.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY13-15 baseline – 79.6) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grades (4-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 6.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is at least 6.0 points above the state's score.

Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 2.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is greater than the state's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least equal to the baseline score OR is within 5.0 points of the state's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 4-6 will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same grades (4-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 5.0 points above the resident district's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 8.0 points of the resident district's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in the Special Education subgroup will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same subgroup and the same grades (3-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 3.0 points above the resident district's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 6.0 points of the resident district's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students in grades 1-6 who demonstrate "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance based on AIMS Web normed assessment scales for READING FLUENCY on the spring assessment will be at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrate "above average" or "well above average" performance will be at least 25%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 90% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "above average" or "well above average" performance is at least 40%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "above average" or "well above average" performance is at least 25%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 70%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students in grades K-6 who meet or exceed grade level reading expectations based on Fountas & Pinnell Instructional Level Expectations for Reading in spring will be at least 80%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 90%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 80%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 70%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Career and College Readiness in MATH: All students are career- and college- ready before graduating from high school.	
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 3-6 will increase by at least 3.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY13-15 baseline – 70.4) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grades (3-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 8.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is at least 8.0 points above the state's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 3.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is greater than the state's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least equal to the baseline score OR is within 5.0 points of the state's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school's aggregate proficiency index score for students in grades 3-6 will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same grades (3-6).
Exceeds Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is at least 5.0 points above the resident district's score.
Meets Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district's score.
Approaches Target	The school's aggregate proficiency index score is within 8.0 points of the resident district's score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students in grades 2-6 who demonstrate "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance based on AIMS Web normed assessment scales for MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS on the spring assessment will be at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrate "above average" or "well above average" performance will be at least 25%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 90% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "above average" or "well above average" performance is at least 40%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "above average" or "well above average" performance is at least 25%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance is at least 70%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students in grades 1-6 who demonstrate "average," "above average," or "well above average" performance based on AIMS Web normed assessment scales for MATHEMATICAL COMPUTATION on the spring assessment will be at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrate "above average" or "well above average" performance will be at least 25%.

Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated “average,” “above average,” or “well above average” performance is at least 90% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated “above average” or “well above average” performance is at least 40%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated “average,” “above average,” or “well above average” performance is at least 80% AND the aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated “above average” or “well above average” performance is at least 25%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage of students who demonstrated “average,” “above average,” or “well above average” performance is at least 70%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Career and College Readiness in SCIENCE: All students are career- and college- ready before graduating from high school. **Note: Data is limited to 5th grade students only.

Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 5 will increase by at least 3.0 points from the baseline proficiency index score (FY13-15 baseline – 74.2) OR will be greater than that of the state for the same grade (5).
Exceeds Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score is at least 8.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is at least 8.0 points above the state’s score.
Meets Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score is at least 3.0 points greater than the baseline score OR is greater than the state’s score.
Approaches Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score at least equal to the baseline score OR is within 5.0 points of the state’s score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.
Performance Ratings	From FY17 to FY20, the school’s aggregate proficiency index score for students in grade 5 will be within 2.0 points of the resident district (ISD 882 – Monticello) for the same grade (5).
Exceeds Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score is at least 4.0 points above the resident district’s score.
Meets Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score is within 2.0 points of the resident district’s score.
Approaches Target	The school’s aggregate proficiency index score is within 8.0 points of the resident district’s score.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Career and College Readiness in WRITING: All students are career- and college- ready before graduating from high school.

Benchmark	From FY17 to FY20, the aggregate percentage of students enrolled in preschool and entering kindergarten the next school year who meet or exceed kindergarten readiness standards as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist assessed annually in the spring will be at least 85%.
Exceeds Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 95%.
Meets Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 85%.
Approaches Target	The aggregate percentage is at least 80%.
Does Not Meet Target	The school did not meet the criteria for any of the ratings above.

Graduate from High School: All students graduate from high school.	
	SRMCS is a Pre-k through 6 th grade elementary school and, therefore, does not have a specific goal relating to graduation rates from high school.

Progress toward Closing the Gap

Response to Intervention: In an a continued effort to help all of our students become proficient, the large majority of our staff members (teachers, classroom assistants, and program paraprofessionals) have (or will) received training in RTI aka Response to Intervention. RTI is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning needs. Every fall, all SRMCS students 1st-6th grade are screened using both Fountas & Pinnell and AIMSweb assessments. Struggling learners are provided with various types of interventions to accelerate their rate of learning. These services are provided by a number of school personnel including general education teachers, special education teachers, and specialists.

Our staff knows that effective RTI implementation requires high-quality classroom instruction, ongoing assessment, tiered instruction (which is essentially what Montessori is ~ differentiated instruction), targeted interventions, and positive parent involvement.

Literacy Specialist: As part of our RTI implementation, SRMCS employs a full-time Literacy Specialist to work individually with students who have been “flagged” or deemed “at risk” in a specific academic area, particularly reading though not exclusively. This is determined by teacher observations, assessment scores, and via the school’s Child Find Team.

Progress toward Ensuring Kindergarten Readiness



Since SRMCS opened its doors in 2005, we have operated a private, fee-based Children’s House program. This program serves preschool students ages 3-6 and has been an integral part of SRMCS. It not only assists in “feeding” charter school enrollment, but it, more importantly, lays a critical foundation for learning with our Montessori students. Simply stated, Children’s House is the beginning of the Montessori journey providing all the initial lessons, which are built on in the years that follow.

According to Montessori child development, children ages 3-6 are in a “sponge-like” phase for learning; children simply absorb information around them unconsciously. Montessorians take advantage of this unique timeframe by introducing children to, what many people believe, are concepts far too difficult for this age group. Examples include introduction to phonograms, the Scientific Method, all four math operations, and even more abstract concepts such as fractions, if the child is ready. With introductions like these, it is obvious why this is beneficial as the child enters Montessori elementary or any other school of the family’s choosing.

****Note:** Each year, there are a number of students who enter Swan River as a kindergarten student without a Montessori preschool experience. These students are still provided a similar foundation-building year. However, given the time constraint of one year versus two or three, teachers use discretion on what materials are the most critical to introduce.

As detailed above, SRMCS uses a Kindergarten Readiness Checklist to determine if a child has made steady progress and is considered to be ready for kindergarten. Please see Attachment 1 to view this checklist in its entirety.



Progress toward “Reading Well by 3rd Grade”

As with all schools, one of our top priorities is to ensure that all children have a strong foundation in reading, particularly by the time they reach upper elementary. As stated throughout this report, SRMCS implements a wide variety of differentiated instruction and support for each child enrolled. The staff is well trained, especially in Response to Intervention (RTI), in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses as a student ages and develops. We understand that early intervention is key to the long term success for every child. According to Susan Hall, Learning Disability Specialist:

- 90% of children with reading difficulties will achieve grade level in reading if they receive help by the 1st grade.
- 75% of children whose help is delayed to age 9 or later continue to struggle throughout their school careers.
- If help is given in 4th grade, rather than in late kindergarten, it takes 4 times as long to improve the same skills by the same amount.

How do we support our students so they are reading well by 3rd grade?

1. Employment of a Literacy Specialist to work individually with students deemed at risk
2. Modifying classroom curriculum and instruction as necessary

3. Holding regular teacher meetings focusing on instructional improvement
4. Encouraging parent involvement in each child's progress
5. Consistent use of assessments (AIMSweb, Fountas & Pinnell) to monitor growth
6. Increasing teacher content knowledge via continuing education opportunities.



Assessing/Evaluating Student Progress toward Meeting State & Local Standards

Assessment & Evaluation of Students

Montessori education recognizes that tests represent only a small portion of what a child truly knows. Instead, teachers rely largely on student work and in-class observations to assess his/her students. It is very common (and encouraged) for a Montessori teacher to take

time out of his/her day to sit quietly and observe the classroom community. The purpose of this is to monitor students while they use the materials, taking note if the child is showing mastery and is ready to move forward, needs more time with a particular material, or needs a refresher/repeat lesson.

Observations also allow the teacher to see if movement in the room is purposeful, if partnered students are working well together, if students are making appropriate work choices, and to ensure work time is being used effectively.

As mandated by the State of Minnesota, all students 3rd through 6th grade participate in MCA testing as well as NWEA testing each fall and spring. This was also the first year that we utilized AIMSweb and Fountas & Pinnell to assess for reading comprehension, fluency, and mathematical concepts. This is done three times per year in fall, winter, and spring.

Alignment to State Standards

The Montessori Method does a very good job providing thorough instruction in all subject areas. However, we recognize that our approach may not transparently reflect Minnesota State Standards. To address this issue, the lead teachers meet regularly throughout each year to align the Montessori curriculum/materials to said standards. Administration is responsible for staying updated on any state standard changes and relaying these updates to all relevant staff members so continued curriculum alignment can take place.

Remediation & Acceleration Practices

Students Needing Additional Support: If a student is flagged for needing additional support beyond what is offered in the general education classroom, their name is brought to the monthly Child Find Team (CFT). This team is comprised of the general education teacher, Special Education staff, Literacy Specialist, School Director, and, when possible, the Special Education Director. The purpose of this team is to brainstorm appropriate intervention strategies to specific support a struggling student. A minimum of two, 4-6 week interventions are done consecutively, not simultaneously. Upon the completion of the first intervention, the CFT meets to review student progress. If progress is made, the teacher continues with the intervention being used. If progress is low or absent, the team decides on a second intervention which is executed in the general education classroom for 4-6 weeks. Once complete, the CFT discusses if additional interventions should be used or if the student should be referred for a special education evaluation.



As stated previously, SRMCS also employs an on-site Literacy Specialist to work with students who have been flagged by teachers as needing additional help with reading or math, but do not qualify for special education services. This specialist is fully trained on the Sue Barton Reading System.

Students Requiring Acceleration: In the event that grade acceleration, including early admission to kindergarten and first grade, would be appropriate for a student, SRMCS does have a policy in place outlining the steps that must be taken. To view this policy in its entirety, please visit our web site at www.swanrivermontessori.org.

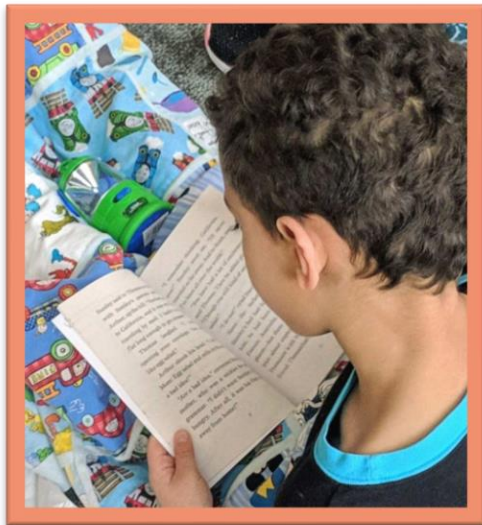
Special Education

SRMCS is fortunate to have excellent staff in the Special Education Department. All students with I.E.P.s (Individualized Education Plans) have their needs met as they would in any other traditional school. However, due to the size and scope of our program, specialized services such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc. are contracted externally.

Review and Evaluation of Instruction, Curriculum & Teaching Professionals

The School Process to Review & Evaluate the Effectiveness of Instruction & Curriculum

Beyond formal assessments, the staff of SRMCS is very diligent about creating, progressing, and reporting on the growth of the WHOLE child – cognitive, social/emotional, and physical. While we do not use a standard grading system as most traditional schools use, we do complete progress reports multiple times per year. We also meet on an ongoing basis regarding school-wide goals, assessment outcomes, and the strengths/weaknesses of the curriculum and instruction we provide.



Example:

To provide one example of this process, after multiple discussions with the lead general education teachers, the group felt that there were holes in the current writing curriculum used in E-1 (1st-3rd grade). In an effort to fill these gaps, the teachers created their own grade-level-specific writing rubric to better assess student growth from fall to spring each year, but also to specifically target where individual and groups of students were showing weakness. After the initial data was collected and analyzed, specific areas of focus were targeted and two teachers were nominated to

research better curriculum options to meet these needs. After two weeks, it was decided that SRMCS would adopt Writing with Excellence, a curriculum which was found to be very Montessori friendly and offered great strategies for closing the gaps that had been identified. To date, we have seen incredible growth in the writing samples the students are providing. The group has decided to continue with Writing with Excellence indefinitely.

Process Summary:

To summarize, the general process to review and evaluate instructional and curriculum effectiveness is as follows:

1. Meeting is called with all lead teaching staff members and administration.
2. An area or skill is isolated for discussion and review.
3. If the curriculum receives positive feedback, we continue its usage.
4. If the curriculum receives poor feedback:
 - a. Discussion is held as to why it was ineffective.

- b. Curriculum/instructional gaps are identified.
 - c. The group brainstorms alternative options.
 - d. Specific individuals are charged with continued research of selected alternatives.
 - e. Individuals then report their findings to the lead teacher group.
 - f. A decision is made to either begin the new curriculum or if further research must be conducted.
5. A minimum of one follow up meeting is held to determine progress.

Teacher Development & Performance Evaluation

Swan River Montessori Charter School implements a 3-year development and evaluation schedule for all contracted teachers. The goal of this cycle is to develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success.

Year 1

1. A peer review is completed a minimum of one time per year. In Year 1, this peer must be from the same grade-level team of teachers.
2. School Director observes every contracted teacher a minimum of one time annually for a minimum of 45 minutes per session. A summative narrative is written based on the observation(s).
3. Every teacher completes a Job Performance Evaluation Form one time per year. This evaluation includes a thorough self-assessment. When completed, this form is submitted to the School Director who, in turn, completes the employee assessment portions.
4. The contracted teacher meets individually with the School Director to go over the results of the evaluation. A signature is required by both parties. During this meeting:
 - a. Areas of strengths and areas for development are highlighted.
 - b. The teacher has the opportunity to present student work samples or other relevant information.
 - c. If there are areas for development, an action plan is put in place with specific goals to increase performance. A timeline is given for the action plan to be completed. This is all documented on the Job Performance Evaluation Form.
 - i. Teacher and School Director meet again to discuss the outcomes of the action plan. If the teacher has not made sufficient progress, a second action plan is developed or job termination is possible.

Year 2

1. A peer review is completed a minimum of one time per year. In Year 2, a minimum of two peers must observe and be from different grade-level teams of teachers.

2. School Director observes every contracted teacher a minimum of one time annually for a minimum of 45 minutes per session. A summative narrative is written based on the observation(s).
3. Every teacher completes a Job Performance Evaluation Form one time per year. This evaluation includes a thorough self-assessment. When completed, this form is submitted to the School Director who, in turn, completes the employee assessment portions.
4. The contracted teacher meets individually with the School Director to go over the results of the evaluation. A signature is required by both parties. During this meeting:
 - a. Areas of strengths and areas for development are highlighted.
 - b. The teacher has the opportunity to present student work samples or other relevant information.
 - c. If there are areas for development, an action plan is put in place with specific goals to increase performance. A timeline is given for the action plan to be completed. This is all documented on the Job Performance Evaluation Form.
 - i. Teacher and School Director meet again to discuss the outcomes of the action plan. If the teacher has not made sufficient progress, a second action plan is developed or job termination is possible.

Year 3

1. In Year 3, every teacher is observed and reviewed by a qualified external professional. This person could be, but is not limited to:
 - a. A school board member
 - b. An outside educator trained in Montessori education
 - c. A licensed educator from another school or educational setting
2. School Director observes every contracted teacher a minimum of one time annually for a minimum of 45 minutes per session. A summative narrative is written based on the observation(s).
3. Every teacher completes a Job Performance Evaluation Form one time per year. This evaluation includes a thorough self-assessment. When completed, this form is submitted to the School Director who, in turn, completes the employee assessment portions.
4. The contracted teacher meets individually with the School Director to go over the results of the evaluation. A signature is required by both parties. During this meeting:
 - a. Areas of strengths and areas for development are highlighted.
 - b. The teacher has the opportunity to present student work samples or other relevant information.

- c. If there are areas for development, an action plan is put in place with specific goals to increase performance. A timeline is given for the action plan to be completed. This is all documented on the Job Performance Evaluation Form.
 - ii. Teacher and School Director meet again to discuss the outcomes of the action plan. If the teacher has not made sufficient progress, a second action plan is developed or job termination is possible.

Strategies for Improving Instruction, Curriculum & Student Achievement

The Montessori Method

The beauty of a Montessori education is that modification and individualization is a natural occurrence in every child's learning journey. If a child is struggling with a certain concept or skill, there are a number of ways the teacher can modify the material to better suit that child's style of learning. Sometimes just changing the material used in class leads to it "clicking" with the student. In addition, with the child and teacher being together for three full years, the adults understand what a particular child may or may not need to succeed. There is an incredible amount of freedom to alter the curriculum and instruction as necessary to support student achievement in all areas of development.



Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is of utmost importance to Swan River Montessori. We continually encourage staff to seek out continued education and, when deemed appropriate, the school may pay the full or a partial amount to cover attendance costs.

The SRMCS administration guarantees a minimum of 16 continuing education hours/credits are offered on site throughout the school year. All professional development offered focuses increasing our knowledge and improving our practices.

Access to Excellent & Diverse Teachers

Equitable Teacher Distribution

One of Swan River's greatest strengths is equal access highly educated, experienced teachers. Not only do all of our teachers hold a valid teaching license in the State of Minnesota, our school requires that each general education teacher be Montessori trained in the level s/he teaches. Depending on the ages/grades of the students being taught, each lead teacher must hold the equivalent Montessori certification - a minimum of 1-2 years of additional coursework beyond what is required for standard teacher licensure. Therefore, every child enrolled at SRMCS will receive a comparable education from a teacher with a Bachelor's Degree, valid licensure, and Montessori certification.

Access to Diverse Teachers

Being a small charter school located in greater Minnesota, access to diverse teachers can be a challenge. However, given the school's student population and the population of the local and surrounding communities, the percentages relating to diversity are quite proportionate. Should the school need to hire new employees, access to diverse teachers is taken into consideration.

Education Effectiveness Practices

The staff of SRMCS is dedicated to providing a high-quality Montessori education to every student every day. We are always looking to improve our means of instruction while staying as authentic to the Montessori philosophy as we can. There are a number of ways we measure the educational effectiveness on an ongoing basis:

- Regularly held teacher meetings reviewing current curriculum.
- Ongoing research by teachers on potential new types of curriculum to implement.
- Provision of a minimum of 16 continuing education hours for all staff annually.
- Potential monetary support for staff to attend external workshops and conferences.
- Staying updated on school law, academic standards, and aligning the Montessori sequence of curriculum to those standards.
- Integration of educational technology, when appropriate.
- Annual performance evaluation of all staff members.
- Weekly student observations by lead classroom teacher.
- Regular grade level team meetings.
- Expecting high standards of conduct for all students and employees as stated in the Student/Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook.

Parent, Student & Other Constituencies Satisfaction Survey

Every spring a survey is distributed to all families requesting feedback regarding the level of satisfaction with Swan River. It is provided in online and hard paper-copy formats in an attempt to reach more constituents. Specific areas surveyed include:

- School Environment
- Montessori and the Classroom
- Administration and the School Board
- Student Involvement
- Communication
- Extended Care Program
- Lunch Program
- Parent Involvement
- Student Involvement

After the deadline for submission passes, all data is compiled, including all comments, which remain exactly as written by the submitter. The results are placed in chart format and distributed to the School Board for review. The results are then provided to the public via the Annual Report and posted on the school's web site. A hard copy is also available upon request.



PART II: Swan River Montessori Charter School District Plan: Committees & Roles

District Advisory Committee (DAC)

Establishment & Member Composition

SRMCS shall establish a District Advisory Committee that reflects the diversity of the district and shall include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community members. Its primary purpose is to ensure active community participation in all phases of planning and improving the instruction and curriculum affecting state academic standards.

Whenever possible, the District Advisory Committee will be comprised of 2/3 parents and other community members.

Recommendation Process to the School Board Regarding Academic Standards, Student Achievement Goals & Measures, District Assessments & Program Evaluations

One or more members representing the entirety of the District Advisory Committee will attend a minimum of one school board meeting per school year to provide a report. The expectation is any recommendations made to the school board regarding standards, achievement, goals/measures, assessments and evaluations be made transparently and must be understood by all members of the DAC and school board. The school board may choose to approve or deny any recommendations made by the DAC.

Establishment of Subcommittees of the District Advisory Committee

Due to the size and scope of Swan River and its programs, subcommittees are not deemed necessary.

District Reporting Requirements

Publishing & Communication of the World's Best Workforce District Plan

Upon school board approval, Swan River Montessori Charter School's Local World's Best Workforce Plan will be posted on the district's official web site and contain all required elements consistent with statute in a manner that is accessible and relevant.

SRMCS will make accessibility accommodations for any community stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to language/translation, readability, visual content usage, clarity and language usage are considered and incorporated into the published report.

Annual Public Meetings of the School Board

The SRMCS School Board will review and revise where appropriate student achievement goals, local assessment outcomes, plans, strategies, and practices for improving plans leading to the world's best workforce. In addition, the SRMCS School Board will review district success in achieving the previously adopted student achievement goals and related benchmarks and the improvement plans leading to the world's best workforce.

Submission to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education

A summary report regarding the World's Best Workforce District Plan and its outcomes will be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education as well as the school's authorizer Audubon Center of the North Woods. This report may or may not be combined with the school's Annual Report.

ATTACHMENT 1: Kindergarten Readiness Checklist**Kindergarten Readiness Checklist**

The following checklist is one of many tool used by teachers to determine kindergarten readiness for every preschool student currently enrolled at Swan River Montessori Charter School. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a set of indicators that will be used in conjunction with the overall transition of a preschool student to kindergarten. For a student to be considered ready for kindergarten, the total score should be 69 points or more.

Social Skills

- Separates from caregiver without issue
 - Uses words to solve problems or conflicts
 - Uses words like please, thank you and excuse me
 - Adjusts to new situations
 - Attempts new tasks and demonstrates appropriate response to mistakes
 - Shows pride in accomplishments and doing good work
 - Follows simple, two+ step directions
 - Has an adequately developed concentration span (stays with an activity to completion)
 - Asks for help when needed
 - Interacts appropriately with adults and peers
 - Respects the rights, property and feelings of others
 - Responds appropriately to other's feelings
 - Works cooperatively (listens to others, shares and takes turns)
 - Demonstrates increasing self-control
 - Readily participates in clean-up activities
 - Takes responsibility for own belongings (lunch, coat, etc.)
 - Is able to dress self with minimal help
 - Uses good hygiene habits and table manners
 - Uses appropriate bathroom skills
 - Follows simple safety rules
 - Offers to help peers and family
 - Tries to regulate emotions properly and articulates feelings in words
 - Is able to wait for a turn and understands turn taking
- Section Score: ____ /23

Fine Motor Skills

- Able to control scissors to complete an intentional task
- Holds pencils/pens/markers/crayons in a non-fisted grip
- Traces lines and basic shapes
- Copies basic figures such as a circle, square and a straight line

Section Score: ____ /4

Gross Motor Skills

- Bounces, kicks, throws and catches a ball
- Enjoys outdoor activities, like running, jumping, climbing, skipping
- Ascends and descends stairs with alternating feet
- Walks backwards

Section Score: ____ /4

Reasoning & Concept Development

- Matches or groups objects according to size, shape or color
- Groups objects that are the same
- Understands concepts of *in/out*, *under/over*, *on/off*, *front/back*, etc.
- Shows an understanding of the passing of time, including concepts of before and after, and today, yesterday and tomorrow
- Experiments enthusiastically with new activities and work, sometimes in a trial-and-error manner
- Describes how objects are the same or different

Section Score: ____ /6

Language Skills

- Talks in complete sentences
- Follows one- and two-step oral directions
- Uses compound sentences that include two or more ideas
- Uses descriptive language
- Pretends, creates, and makes up songs or stories
- Tells or retells stories and/or everyday experiences with acceptable accuracy
- Asks questions and expresses curiosity
- Expresses ideas so that others can understand, including needs and wants

Section Score: ____ /8

Reading Skills

- Looks at books or pictures on their own and handles them appropriately

- Pretends to read books by reading the pictures
- Tries to read in everyday situations (signs, labels, etc.)
- Recognizes rhyming words and can produce additional words that rhyme.
- Blends sounds into words
- Recognizes some common words in print (sight words)
- Recognizes many uppercase and lowercase letters
- Recognizes letter sounds and letter names
- Recognizes own name
- Describes characters' actions and feelings in a story
- Relates stories to personal experiences
- Puts events of a story in order

Section Score: ____ /12

Writing Skills

- Tries to write, scribble or draw
- Asks others to write words or notes
- Attempts to write own name and recognizes own name in print

Section Score: ____ /3

Mathematical Concepts

- Compares the size of groups of objects using language such as "more," "less" and "same as"
- Arranges and sorts objects according to common characteristics (big to small, or small to big, color, shape, size etc.)
- Uses comparison words, like "bigger," "smaller," "heavier," etc.
- Understands concepts of *none*, *some* and *all* and *more than* and *less than*
- Identifies and draws a basic shapes (square, rectangle, circle, and triangle)
- Correctly counts with one-to-one correspondence
- Knows that the final number counted represents the total number of objects in a set
- Recognizes numbers 1 – 10
- Can distinguish numbers from letters, and understands that numbers relate to quantity
- Understands the effects of addition and subtraction

Section Score: ____ /10

Science

- Shows interest and asks questions about objects and events observed in their environment
- Notices common properties and differences among objects and materials

- Knows some facts about common plants and animals, such as what they eat and baby names
- Recognizes objects in the sky such as the sun, moon, clouds and lightning

Section Score: _____ /4

Creative Arts & Music

- Recognizes and names basic colors
- Draws recognizable shapes and simple objects
- Tells a story with pictures
- Explores with common musical instruments
- Enjoys improvising or copying musical patterns

Section Score: _____ /5

Social Studies

- Recognizes basic traditions such as birthdays and holidays
- Understands that people live in different parts of the worlds and have different customs and traditions
- Explores simple maps and visual representations of neighborhoods or communities

Section Score: _____ /3

Self Help Skills

- Can use the bathroom independently and complete accompanying hygiene tasks
- Able to dress self (puts on coat, fastens snaps, buttons and zippers)
- States full name and age
- Appropriately asks others for help when needed

Section Score: _____ /4

Total Score = _____ /86**Kindergarten Readiness Scale**

TOTAL POINTS	STANDARD
77 or Above	Exceeds Readiness Standards
69-76	Meets Readiness Standards
60-68	Approaching Readiness Standards
Below 60	Does Not Meet Readiness Standards. Additional student support suggested.