



# SWAN RIVER

## MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

### Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) Strategic Plan

*Adopted by the School Board at a Public Meeting on [10.21.25]*

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Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) law requires each school board to adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan that is designed to support and improve teaching and learning while striving for comprehensive achievement and civic readiness. The plan must be approved by the Board of Directors at a public meeting. In addition to the strategic plan provided on the following pages, statute requires that the charter school must also:

- Create a district advisory committee with broad community representation to guide planning and review of curriculum and instruction.
- Establish a site team to develop strategies and practices for improving instruction, curriculum, cultural competencies, and student achievement.
- Annually report to the public a review of student achievement goals, strategies, and progress toward comprehensive achievement and civic readiness (i.e. the school's Annual Report).
- Survey students, families, and community members periodically to assess their connection to and satisfaction with the school (with results shared in the school's Annual Report).

## I. Introduction

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) is a public, tuition-free Montessori school serving approximately 170 students in grades Kindergarten through 6, with an early childhood Children's House program for ages 3–5. Guided by its mission to provide a child-centered environment where learning is self-directed and connected to the natural world, SRMCS fosters academic excellence, independence, and civic responsibility through a whole-child approach. The school's interdisciplinary Montessori model cultivates curiosity, creativity, and a deep respect for community and environment with key elements of lifelong learning and civic readiness. With personalized learning and a commitment to equity, SRMCS supports each student's academic and social-emotional growth while building strong foundations for future success. In alignment with Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) goals, SRMCS ensures that all children are ready for school, achievement gaps are closed, and every student is prepared for continued learning and meaningful participation in society.

## II. District and School Site Goals and Benchmarks

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) establishes clear, measurable goals for instruction and student achievement that address all student groups identified in law, including students by race/ethnicity, English learners, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and students currently or previously in foster care. These goals are disaggregated to monitor progress for each group, except when small group sizes could reveal personally identifiable information. In alignment with the school's charter contract, SRMCS sets academic and academic-related goals that reflect Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) priorities. These goals include ensuring all children are ready for kindergarten, achieving reading proficiency by third grade, closing academic achievement gaps among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and fostering readiness for future academic and career success. Collectively, these benchmarks guide instruction, inform data-driven decision-making, and reflect the school's mission to prepare students to be lifelong learners and engaged, capable citizens.

### **SMART Academic and Academic-Related Goals**

#### **1. Ready for Kindergarten**

Goal: At least 85% of students entering kindergarten will meet or exceed expectations on the school's locally selected Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, demonstrating age-appropriate development in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills.

Measure: Local readiness assessment data (Spring administration).

Disaggregation: Data reviewed by student subgroups (race/ethnicity, FRPL status, English learners, foster care status).

## 2. Reading Well by 3rd Grade

Goal: At least 60% of third-grade students will achieve grade-level proficiency in reading as measured by the FASTBridge or state-approved literacy assessment.

Measure: FASTBridge / MCA-III reading results.

Disaggregation: Reading data analyzed for all student groups to identify and address gaps.

Alignment: CACR Goal – Ensure literacy and school readiness benchmarks are met.

## 3. Achievement Gap Closure

Goal: The achievement gap in reading and math proficiency between economically disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged peers will decrease by at least 10 percentage points, as measured by state assessments.

Measure: MCA-III proficiency rates.

Disaggregation: Results by race/ethnicity, FRPL status, and other subgroups as required.

Alignment: CACR Goal – Close academic achievement gaps among racial, ethnic, and economic groups.

## 4. Career and College Readiness

Goal: The overall percentage of SRMCS students achieving proficiency or higher on statewide assessments in reading, mathematics, and science will increase annually and be equal to or greater than the corresponding statewide and local district averages.

Measure: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III) proficiency rates in reading, math, and science.

Disaggregation: Results will be analyzed by subgroup by race/ethnicity, FRPL status, and other subgroups as required.

Alignment: CACR Goal – Prepare all students for career and college readiness by ensuring academic proficiency in core content areas aligned with state standards.

## 5. Lifelong Learners and Civic Readiness

Goal: Students at Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) will demonstrate measurable growth in the four child development categories—Normalization, Independence, Social/Emotional Wellbeing, and Community Engagement—as outlined in the Montessori Planes of Development. Growth will be measured using a locally developed assessment rubric. The aggregate score for all students in grades K–6 will be equal to or greater than 12 points (out of 16), as measured by the Montessori Planes of Development: Student Growth Assessment rubric administered annually in the spring.

Measure: Locally developed Montessori Planes of Development: Student Growth Assessment rubric (administered annually).

Disaggregation: Aggregate and subgroup data (as applicable) will be reviewed to ensure equitable growth across all student groups.

Alignment: CACR Goal – Prepare all students to be lifelong learners and engaged citizens through holistic development in alignment with Montessori philosophy.

### III. Assessing Student Progress and Instructional Strengths

#### **Academic Assessments Used**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) uses a combination of statewide assessments and locally developed tools to monitor each student's progress toward state and local academic standards. Students participate annually in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III) for reading, mathematics, and science, which provide data on proficiency and growth relative to state benchmarks. Locally, SRMCS employs FASTBridge and classroom-based assessments to measure literacy and numeracy development, alongside Montessori progress reports and the Montessori Planes of Development: Student Growth Assessment rubric to track holistic progress in normalization, independence, social-emotional wellbeing, and community engagement. Assessment results are reviewed regularly to guide instruction, inform interventions, and ensure alignment with CACR goals.

#### **Gifted/Talented Identification Process**

SRMCS identifies students with giftedness or advanced learning needs through a multi-faceted review process that includes classroom performance, teacher observations, assessment data, and evidence of advanced cognitive or creative abilities. Montessori teachers, trained to observe individual learning trajectories, document students who consistently perform above grade-level expectations or demonstrate exceptional aptitude. Identified students are referred to the school's student support team for further review and individualized learning planning. The process ensures equitable access to enrichment opportunities, considering both academic and developmental indicators.

#### **Description of Accelerated Instruction**

In alignment with Montessori principles and Minnesota law, SRMCS provides individualized and accelerated instruction when appropriate. Differentiation occurs through multi-age classrooms, self-paced learning, and advanced materials designed to match each student's readiness level. Students demonstrating mastery may progress to higher-level content within their classroom or receive extended projects that deepen conceptual understanding. For formally identified gifted learners, the school may develop individualized learning plans that include curriculum compacting, enrichment activities, and cross-grade opportunities. Additionally, SRMCS follows Minn. Stat. § 120B.15 for early admission to kindergarten or first grade, implementing

procedures that include readiness screening, teacher evaluation, and family consultation to determine suitability.

### **Instructional Strengths/Needs Review**

SRMCS conducts ongoing reviews of instructional practices and curriculum effectiveness through data analysis, teacher collaboration, and annual performance reports. Academic and developmental assessments inform instructional adjustments to ensure all students meet or exceed state standards and are prepared for future academic and civic success. The Montessori curriculum's emphasis on independence, inquiry, and experiential learning is a core strength, fostering engagement and critical thinking. Areas of need identified through assessment data or classroom observation are addressed through targeted professional development, curriculum refinement, and instructional coaching. The school's commitment to continuous improvement ensures alignment with CACR goals for academic achievement and civic readiness.

## **IV. Curriculum and Instruction Review System**

### **Measures to Assess Instruction**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) regularly reviews the quality and effectiveness of its instruction through a comprehensive system of data analysis, observation, and evaluation. Instructional quality is assessed using student performance data from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III), FASTBridge assessments, classroom-based measures, and Montessori Planes of Development rubrics, ensuring alignment with state standards and the school's holistic educational goals. Teachers participate in an ongoing evaluation process that includes classroom observations, professional goal setting, and reflection aligned with Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subd. 8. These evaluations focus on instructional best practices, student engagement, and effective use of Montessori methods. School leaders conduct regular walkthroughs and collaborate with staff to identify instructional strengths, address areas for growth, and ensure access to high-quality, culturally responsive instruction for all students.

### **Practices to Evaluate Curriculum**

The SRMCS curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure it integrates best practices, proven Montessori strategies, and alignment with Minnesota academic standards. Curriculum effectiveness is measured through student outcomes, feedback from teachers and families, and analysis of performance trends across all student groups. The review process includes consideration of equity—ensuring all students have access to effective teachers, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, and that instructional materials reflect student diversity and community values. The school leadership team uses data from teacher and school leader evaluations, student achievement reports, and stakeholder input to guide curriculum adjustments, professional development, and strategic planning. This continuous improvement cycle supports SRMCS's mission to deliver a child-centered, rigorous, and civically engaged education aligned with CACR goals.

## V. Strategies for Improving Instruction and Student Achievement

### **Strategies for Improving Instruction, Curriculum, and Student Outcomes**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) is committed to continuous improvement in teaching and learning to ensure that all students—across all backgrounds and abilities—achieve academic success, social-emotional growth, and civic readiness. The school uses a holistic improvement model grounded in Montessori best practices, state standards, and data-informed decision-making.

#### **Instructional Improvement Strategies**

- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Teachers analyze results from the MCA-III, FASTBridge, and Montessori Planes of Development rubrics to identify trends, adjust instruction, and provide targeted support for students needing enrichment or intervention.
- **Professional Development:** Ongoing training focuses on Montessori pedagogy, differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and evidence-based literacy and numeracy strategies.
- **Instructional Coaching & Collaboration:** Teachers participate in collaborative planning sessions and peer observations to share best practices, strengthen consistency, and align lessons with both Montessori philosophy and Minnesota standards.
- **Individualized Learning:** The Montessori environment allows students to progress at their own pace, engaging in hands-on, inquiry-based learning that fosters independence, motivation, and mastery.

#### **Curriculum Enhancement Strategies**

- **Standards Alignment:** Curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure it meets Minnesota Academic Standards while honoring Montessori's interdisciplinary approach.
- **Holistic Development:** Lessons incorporate academic rigor, social-emotional learning, environmental education, and community engagement, supporting the CACR goal of lifelong learning and civic responsibility.
- **Inclusive Materials:** Learning resources are reviewed to ensure cultural relevance, equity, and accessibility for all learners.

#### **Supports for English Learners (ELs)**

- **English Language Development:** EL students receive targeted language support integrated into classroom instruction, focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking within content areas.
- **Native Language Support:** When feasible, SRMCS values and incorporates students' native languages through family partnerships, peer collaboration, and culturally relevant materials.
- **Progress Monitoring:** EL progress is tracked using assessment data and classroom observations to guide instruction and ensure growth in both English proficiency and academic achievement.
- **Staff Training:** Teachers receive professional development on language acquisition strategies, sheltered instruction, and fostering inclusive, language-rich environments.

### **Student Outcome Enhancement Strategies**

- Personalized Interventions: Academic and social-emotional interventions are provided for students below benchmark levels, with frequent progress monitoring.
- Family Engagement: Families are engaged as partners in goal-setting, student support, and school initiatives, fostering shared accountability for outcomes.
- Equity and Access: The school actively reviews data by subgroup (race/ethnicity, FRPL, EL, foster care) to identify and close achievement gaps.

## **VI. Equitable Distribution of Teachers**

### **Data Collection and Analysis Process**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) regularly reviews teacher assignment data to ensure equitable access to effective, licensed, and experienced educators. The school collects and analyzes information on teacher licensure, years of experience, assignment by grade and subject, and teacher effectiveness ratings from annual evaluations (aligned with Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subd. 8). These data are disaggregated by student demographic groups, including race/ethnicity, income status, and American Indian identity, to identify any inequities in access. SRMCS also monitors class rosters and instructional assignments annually to ensure balanced placement of experienced and qualified teachers across all classrooms.

### **Current Status of Teacher Assignment**

All teachers at SRMCS hold appropriate Minnesota teaching licenses and receive training in Montessori pedagogy. Teacher assignments are made to align with educators' areas of licensure and demonstrated strengths in Montessori instruction. Current data indicate that students from low-income families, families of color, and American Indian families are not disproportionately assigned to inexperienced, out-of-field, or less effective teachers. The school's small size and collaborative instructional model allow leadership to closely oversee assignments and ensure that all students have access to high-quality, effective educators.

### **Improvement Strategies and Timeline**

To maintain and strengthen equitable teacher assignments, SRMCS will:

- Conduct annual reviews of staffing data, including licensure, evaluation results, and classroom demographics, to identify and correct any emerging inequities.
- Prioritize equitable placement of highly effective and experienced teachers across all grade levels and student populations.
- Provide targeted professional development for all staff in culturally responsive teaching, equity, and inclusion to ensure instructional quality for all learners.
- Recruit and retain diverse educators, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, to reflect the diversity of the student population and community.
- Include equity metrics in annual school improvement planning and staff evaluations to monitor progress.



## VII. Education Effectiveness Practices

### **Instructional and Curriculum Practices**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) integrates high-quality, rigorous, accurate, antiracist, and culturally sustaining instruction through a combination of Montessori pedagogy and alignment with Minnesota Academic Standards. Instruction emphasizes student-centered learning, hands-on exploration, and critical thinking. The school employs data-driven practices using MCA-III, FASTBridge, and Montessori Planes of Development rubrics to monitor progress and inform instruction. Teachers receive job-embedded professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching, antiracist practices, and differentiation to meet the needs of all learners, including English learners.

SRMCS implements a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to address academic and social-emotional needs, with intervention and progress monitoring embedded in daily practice. The curriculum incorporates social-emotional learning, environmental education, and community engagement, supporting the CACR goal of preparing lifelong learners. Technology is used to enhance instruction while maintaining Montessori's emphasis on experiential, real-world learning.

### **Culturally Sustaining Practices for Students and Families**

SRMCS creates a learning environment that respects, affirms, and integrates the cultural and community strengths of its students and families. Classrooms intentionally incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into lessons and projects, encouraging self-expression, identity development, and mutual respect. Teachers use inclusive materials and literature representing diverse cultures and experiences.

Family partnerships are central to the school's mission. SRMCS hosts family engagement events, community service projects, and student exhibitions that celebrate diversity and build shared ownership of learning. Communication with families is designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring all voices are heard in school decision-making. Professional development supports staff in culturally sustaining and antiracist practices, aligning with Minnesota's Read Act and CACR commitments.

### **Culturally Sustaining Practices for Staff**

The school fosters a workplace culture that values diversity and promotes equity, belonging, and professional growth. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural identities and teaching practices through ongoing professional learning and collaborative reflection sessions. Leadership models a strong commitment to inclusivity by implementing equitable communication norms, transparent decision-making, and accountability measures such as climate and equity surveys. Staff are recognized for their unique cultural and professional strengths, and their input is integral to shaping instructional priorities and community partnerships.

### **Strategies to Build a Collaborative Professional Culture**

SRMCS cultivates a collaborative and supportive professional environment that empowers educators to thrive. Teachers participate in shared leadership, peer mentoring, and collaborative planning sessions that promote continuous improvement and mutual support. The teacher evaluation system emphasizes reflection, growth, and alignment with Montessori best practices. Professional development is job-embedded, focusing on instructional excellence, equity, social-emotional learning, and cultural competence. Policies prioritize workload equity, teacher well-being, and voice in decision-making, ensuring a culture of trust and shared accountability.

### **Recruitment and Retention Strategies**

SRMCS is committed to recruiting and retaining qualified, racially and ethnically diverse educators who are effective in serving a diverse student body. Hiring practices emphasize alignment with the school's mission, cultural responsiveness, and Montessori training or philosophy. The school partners with teacher preparation programs and Montessori networks to identify diverse candidates. New staff receive comprehensive onboarding, mentorship, and access to professional learning communities. Retention is supported through growth opportunities, collaborative culture, and a strong emphasis on well-being and belonging. Leadership actively monitors staff satisfaction and equity through annual surveys and uses results to guide strategic improvements.

## **VIII. Annual Implementation Budget**

### **Staffing**

The FY26 budget prioritizes maintaining a strong instructional team aligned with the school's Montessori mission. Staffing expenditures include \$574,436 for instructional salaries and \$152,319 for associated benefits. Administrative and operations salaries total \$119,397 with benefits of \$31,869, supporting leadership, office management, and operational oversight. Additional allocations include \$354,753 for state special education staff and \$22,365 for federally funded special education positions, ensuring compliance and support for all learners. This staffing plan reflects the school's commitment to retaining experienced, licensed educators who deliver high-quality Montessori and standards-aligned instruction.

### **Professional Development**

To support continuous improvement and instructional excellence, SRMCS has budgeted \$5,202 for professional development activities under administration and operations, plus \$6,615 for instructional travel and conferences. These funds provide job-embedded professional learning opportunities in Montessori methodology, culturally responsive teaching, data-driven instruction, and compliance with CACR and Read Act requirements. Professional growth is further supported through staff evaluations and collaboration aligned with Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subd. 8.

### **Curriculum / Instructional Materials**

The FY26 budget allocates \$14,646 for general instructional supplies and \$31,244 for classroom-specific instructional materials. Additionally, \$2,756 is designated for standardized testing and \$4,829 for special education general supplies, ensuring access to high-quality, standards-aligned, and developmentally appropriate resources. These materials support the integration of Montessori curriculum, state standards, and differentiated instruction that meets diverse student needs. Investments in software (\$520) and technology resources further enhance instruction and assessment practices.

### **Program Support**

SRMCS has set aside \$158,500 for contracted services within administration and operations to sustain essential programs such as technology, operations, and specialized support services. Additional funding includes \$13,183 for transportation (field trips and registration), \$7,525 for special education contracted services, and \$332,487 for payments to other agencies supporting special education compliance. Community service programs are supported by \$110,517, which funds before/after school care and Children's House programming. These investments ensure comprehensive support for student academic, social-emotional, and enrichment programs in alignment with CACR goals.

## **IX. Materials, Practices, and Curriculum**

### **Required Curricular Materials and Sources**

SRMCS aligns all instructional materials with the Minnesota Academic Standards and integrates them within the Montessori curriculum framework, ensuring rigorous, accurate, and culturally sustaining instruction. Required curricular materials include:

- Montessori Curriculum Materials – Core instructional resources reflecting hands-on, inquiry-based learning across all content areas (language, math, science, geography, and cultural studies).
- Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards – State-adopted standards guiding instruction in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, ensuring academic rigor and statewide consistency.
- Minnesota Indigenous Education for All Resources – Materials that include accurate, standards-aligned content about Minnesota's Indigenous peoples, meeting state requirements under the Minnesota American Indian Education Act.
- Multicultural and Antiracist Texts – Literature and informational texts representing diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, and social identities, selected to reflect Minnesota's diversity and support culturally responsive learning.
- SEL-Aligned Resources – Integration of social-emotional learning through Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons and culturally inclusive SEL frameworks.

These materials are regularly reviewed to ensure they are accurate, current, and inclusive, reflecting Minnesota's diversity and aligning with CACR goals.

### **Other Resources Available to Teachers**

To strengthen culturally responsive and effective instruction, SRMCS provides access to the following instructional and professional resources:

- Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) resources and guidance on culturally sustaining curriculum and Inclusive Education Practices.
- Montessori Scope and Sequence guides with embedded cultural studies, geography, and peace education components that celebrate global and local diversity.
- MDE Equity and Inclusion Toolkit and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards (CRTLS).
- Local partnerships and community organizations (e.g., Indigenous educators, cultural centers, and environmental learning centers like Osprey Wilds) for experiential, culturally grounded learning.
- Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) plan resources for English Learners that incorporate students' home languages and cultural backgrounds into instruction.
- Digital tools (FASTBridge, MCA reporting platforms, and data dashboards) to monitor equity in outcomes and inform instruction.

These resources equip teachers to design and implement instruction that is rigorous, equitable, and reflective of students' identities.

### **Professional Development on Instructional Skills**

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS) provides ongoing, job-embedded professional development designed to enhance instructional quality, support equitable outcomes, and strengthen alignment with the school's mission and Minnesota standards. Professional learning opportunities focus on the following key areas:

- Montessori Pedagogy Training – Deepening teacher understanding of child-centered, developmentally appropriate practices that promote independence, intrinsic motivation, and holistic growth across academic and social domains.
- Culturally Responsive and Antiracist Teaching – Building staff capacity to design lessons that reflect students' backgrounds, affirm diverse identities, and integrate multicultural perspectives throughout the curriculum.
- Data-Driven Instruction and MTSS Implementation – Training teachers to use assessment data (e.g., FASTBridge, MCA-III, Montessori rubrics) to inform instruction, monitor progress, and provide timely interventions to close achievement gaps.
- Language Development Strategies – Equipping educators with approaches to support English learners in developing academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, and expressive language skills integrated within the Montessori environment.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practices – Providing tools for fostering emotional regulation, empathy, and community belonging through Montessori's Grace and Courtesy lessons and classroom circles.
- Read Act Implementation – Ensuring literacy instruction is evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive of diverse, culturally relevant texts aligned with the Minnesota Read Act.

These professional development activities are supported through coaching, peer collaboration, and reflective practice, ensuring teachers continuously refine their skills to meet the needs of all learners and uphold SRMCS's commitment to academic excellence and equity.

## X. Plan Review and Continuous Improvement

### **Annual Review Date(s):**

The Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness (CACR) Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually each fall, with the formal review and update scheduled for the October school board meeting. The 2025–26 annual review and approval is scheduled for October 21, 2025, and subsequent reviews will occur each October to align with CACR reporting timelines and submission deadlines.

### **Responsible Team or Committee:**

The CACR Advisory Committee, which reflects the diversity of the SRMCS community and includes staff, families, and community members, will lead the review process in collaboration with the School Director and Board Academic Committee.

### **Process for Board Review and Community Engagement:**

The committee will analyze student data and feedback, recommend updates to goals and strategies, and present revisions to the School Board for approval during the October public meeting, ensuring community input and transparency before submission to the Minnesota Department of Education.