

Mill Falls Charter School: *Bringing Montessori Public*

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Mill Falls Charter School: *Bringing Montessori Public*

*Proposed by 10 Founding Parents and The Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation
January 2011*

An Introduction

The following pages articulate our request for a state-issued charter to create a Montessori charter school in Manchester, New Hampshire. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will serve elementary-aged students in grades K-6. The School will begin with lower elementary classrooms of mixed ages (grades 1-3), and gradually add upper elementary classrooms of mixed ages (grades 4-6). We will also add kindergarten soon after the School is established. Because the Montessori tradition is still unfamiliar to many, we have provided some detailed information about its history and contemporary application alongside our educational goals and plans for the *Mill Falls Charter School*. The proposed School launch is September 2012.

Montessori: An Early Inner-City Pedagogy

The Montessori method is a world-renowned technique that was developed in the early 1900's by Dr. Maria Montessori, who sought to deliver high quality education to the very poorest of children living in Rome, Italy. Through her medical and scientific training and keen observation skills, Dr. Montessori recognized that children acquire knowledge directly from life experiences. She found that children cannot help but learn, that they are born to learn, but what they learn depends greatly on their teachers, their experiences and their environments. Dr. Montessori designed curricula, unique materials and an individualized approach to education based on the academic, developmental and psychological needs of the children she served. She was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, in part for the *Education for Peace* work she did later while living in India during World War II.

Dr. Montessori established her first school, *Casa dei Bambini* (The Children's House) in 1907. Soon after, there was great interest in her work by many, including Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison. But World War II impeded collaboration and it was not until 1960 that the method was re-introduced and embraced. Today the Montessori method is used worldwide in both public and private settings, educating children from pre-K through high school. There are over 6,000 Montessori schools in the United States. More than 400 of them are public.

Why Charter?

Currently, there are no elementary charter school opportunities located in greater Manchester, and there are no public Montessori elementary schools in New Hampshire. Our area offers several private and Catholic schools for young children through middle school, and the few private Montessori elementary schools are a considerable drive from the city.

We, the 10 Founding Parents, have come together as a group, committed not just to Montessori, but also to creating an opportunity within the public school system. The most appropriate approach for us, as currently defined by the New Hampshire Department of Education, is the charter model.¹

Charter schools use innovative approaches focusing on a particular pedagogy, discipline or theme. As a result, these schools offer the potential for research and development, providing the public school system with space, time and support to develop practices beyond the traditional methods of education. The Montessori method, with its individualized approach and proven experiential learning methods, provides a rich opportunity to share best practices outside of what is currently being explored in traditional classrooms in Manchester and beyond. Even at this early stage of the School's development, we have met with several Manchester School District administrators and employees and members of its Board as well as many community leaders. They have expressed great enthusiasm for the project, and we look forward to working together.

Dissemination of successful practices is a key element of a strong charter program and will be a central tenet of our School. We anticipate that the *Mill Falls Charter School* will offer a place for observation and training of teachers and parents/guardians, bridging economic and cultural differences, bringing together disparate groups from within Manchester and across the state. It will serve as a substantive resource in developing and sharing ideas that best reach and teach our children.

Why Manchester?

Manchester's diverse population is in need of a charter school that can address the multifaceted needs of this growing city and its surrounding areas. While the Manchester community has strong generational roots, the changing face of southern New Hampshire is manifesting itself in many ways. Young professionals have moved to or returned to Manchester and its surrounding cities and towns. Some of the newest Americans in the country have made Manchester their home as part of the refugee relocation program. All residents — returning, new and long-term residents — have the same desire for high quality public education for their children.

In New Hampshire's Merrimack Valley area there are currently 13 private Montessori preschool-through-kindergarten programs (though none within the city limits of Manchester) that bring children together in mixed-age classes to learn about themselves and the world around them. Therefore, the only children currently able to experience the Montessori approach are those from families who can afford this private option. This is in direct contrast to the philosophic origins of Montessori education (as an urban school for poor children). The hands-on nature of Montessori makes it an excellent vehicle for children of different backgrounds, experiences and

¹A study conducted by Angeline Lillard and Nicole Else-Quest, comparing outcomes of children at a public inner city Montessori school with children who attended traditional schools indicates that Montessori education leads to children with better social and academic skills. The study appeared in the Sept. 29, 2006 issue of the journal *Science*.

learning styles. The *Mill Falls Charter School* is committed to reaching out to and including a variety of economic and ethnic communities who may not currently be aware of or able to access Montessori education.

Dr. Montessori's work continued well beyond the preschool years. She created a powerful individualized pedagogy aimed at reaching and impacting students as they move from early childhood into adolescence. The method engages students' powers of reasoning, imagination and creativity, supporting them as their minds shift from a focus on the concrete towards the abstract concepts involved in elementary education and beyond.

Seeking Sustainability

Public schools, including the *Mill Falls Charter School*, cannot and will not ask families to pay for their children's education. Unfortunately, however, as evidenced by New Hampshire charter schools currently in operation, funding from the State is often insufficient to maintain the charter schools' programming.

From the very start of this project, we have understood the significant need for building a sustainability and development plan that will include fundraising large and small, and the importance of crafting an effort that will garner support from families, community members and businesses. In addition, we will seek support from local and national foundations to assist with both startup and recurrent capital and operating costs. These approaches have been met with measured success by existing charters, and our work in this area has already begun and will intensify upon receipt of the charter. In order to maximize our ability to build a strong and lasting project, after the School is established, the *Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation* will function as an independent, non-profit organization separate from the School. It will focus on development and economic sustainability of the *Mill Falls Charter School*.

Through our commitment to the city of Manchester and the State of New Hampshire, we will create an economically sustainable, high quality charter school. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will bring Montessori public.

Mill Falls Charter School: *Bringing Montessori Public*

A: Educational MISSION

The *Mill Falls Charter School* creates life-long learners by providing an intellectually rich and challenging experience delivered through the Montessori tradition. In a safe and peaceful setting, dedicated educators foster students' individuality, creativity and critical-thinking skills to fully prepare them for future scholastic, civic and personal success.

Educational Philosophy

- Provide an academic experience above and beyond the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum*, delivered through the *Montessori Scope and Sequence*.
- Fully embrace the Montessori practice in all aspects of the School's approach and development.
- Build a strong school community led by qualified and nurturing educators, and supported by engaged parents/guardians.
- Provide classrooms populated with materials and resources developed for the Montessori approach to help learners of all kinds reach their highest potential.
- Create mixed-age classrooms where peer-to-peer teaching and modeling is fully supported to enable the sharing of experience and knowledge, as well as the social and academic development of our students.
- Create an integrated learning environment that encourages connections across academic disciplines.
- Foster creativity and curiosity, leading to the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Develop individualized, student-directed learning, leading to engaged, empowered and self-directed students.
- Practice the Montessori approach of educating the *whole child*, leading to the development self-confidence, and inner-discipline among students.
- Develop 21st century learners through the use of technology and creative problem solving, leading to responsible and knowledgeable global citizens.
- Provide a peaceful, safe and secure environment for personal development with constructive conflict resolution.
- Foster a culture of respect, individuality and celebration of diversity of all kinds.

Key Goals and Expected Outcomes

• **High Academic Achievement and Standards** will be established through use and development of a curriculum that will integrate the *NH Core Curriculum* and the *Montessori Scope and Sequence*. With an emphasis on the mastery of materials across all areas of academic focus, our students will be expected to advance at least one grade level per year and will be given standardized tests to

demonstrate progress. In addition, Faculty will utilize a variety of assessment methods in order to continually measure student growth, and plan appropriately for students' individualized learning plans. The academic program will integrate the development of community and responsible global citizenship; peaceful approach to conflict; and the integration of curriculum partners in areas of the arts, service and the natural world.

- **Individualized Learning** will inspire our students to seek their highest potential. Through the Montessori methods of observation and evaluation, as well as state and independent standardized tests, each student's instruction will be tailored to his or her ability and needs. Our teachers will work closely with students and their parents/guardians to establish and continually evaluate goals and progress.
- **Respect** will develop and flourish through the Montessori practice of grace and courtesy among students, faculty and parents/guardians.
- **Celebration of Diversity** will ensure that students, families and faculty of all means, needs and backgrounds will be welcomed into the school setting.
- **Service-Learning Opportunities** for students of all ages will ensure connection to community and the development of responsible and engaged citizens.
- **Personal Growth and Development** will flourish alongside the academic values of the Montessori method through the Practical Life and Service curricula. Students gathered in this safe and peaceful environment will become engaged and empowered learners.
- **Successful Montessori Programming** will define every aspect of the School. Our classrooms will be populated by Montessori-trained teachers who will utilize the Montessori approach to curriculum development and presentation, thus meeting students' academic, social and emotional needs and expectations. Supporting our Lead Teachers will be Teaching Assistants committed to the Montessori method. All faculty members will be chosen in part for their ability to model core Montessori values. Ongoing team and professional development will be supported to aid in high teacher retention, ongoing success and growth of the Mission.
- **Parent/Guardian Commitment** to the School's Mission and success will be a core element of building and maintaining our school community. Parents and Guardians will be integrated into the School's function, thereby fostering a connection to the education and social development of their children and to the success of the School.

B: GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLAN

The Founding Board

The *Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation* is a registered, not-for-profit organization comprised of the 10 Founding Parents, and established to create and sustain a charter school in Manchester, New Hampshire. The current work of the Foundation is to prepare the charter school application for approval, serve as an ambassador-organization in promoting the School, and select the first Board of Trustees of the *Mill Falls Charter School*. Following the approval of the charter and appointment of the School's Board of Trustees, the purpose of *The Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation* will become one of support and development — for students, teachers and the overall success of the School's Mission.

Brief biographical information of the Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation Board members — the 10 Founding Parents — appears in Appendix A.

Board of Trustees

A nine-member Board of Trustees will govern the *Mill Falls Charter School* with statutory responsibilities pursuant to RSA 194-B: 5 for “general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school.”

The *Mill Falls Charter School's* Board of Trustees will be the guardian of its Mission, charged, by definition, to establish the School, monitor its health and viability, advocate for the School and its students whenever possible, and assess, with regularity the Mission's relevance and vitality.

Trustee selection will be based on personal and professional background as well as a commitment to the School's Mission, support and sustainability. Trustees will represent the diversity of stakeholders, contributors and the community. Four (4) Trustee positions will be for parents of children attending the School; four (4) Trustee positions will be for business community members, corporate sponsors, local community members, and/or philanthropic sponsors; one (1) position will be for the Head of School. The Board reserves the right to alter the makeup of its governing body as per the School's needs.

The Board of Trustees may establish ex officio board members and/or advisors who will be non-voting.

The Board will have officers including: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Role descriptions for Board officers will be developed by the Board and approved as part of its operational guidelines.

The Board of Trustees will establish governing policies and bylaws, including policies that establish subcommittees and standing committees of the Board. Initial subcommittees will likely include: Board Recruitment, Finance, Marketing & Development, Curriculum, Student Recruitment, and Community Liaison, among others.

The Board will hire and oversee the Head of School, with Board Officers working most directly with this person. During the planning year, the Board will establish roles reserved for the Head of School and those for the Board. The Head of School will be empowered to direct and implement many operational decisions (e.g. day-to-day issues that arise in matters relating to curriculum, personnel, and daily school business and organization), but will always be responsible to the Board, in ways clearly defined. As such, methods of communication and reporting will be established for a successful and productive relationship with the Head of School.

It is expected that the roles reserved for the Board will include, at a minimum:

- Hiring of the Head of School
- Approval and oversight of annual budget and fund-raising programs
- Setting policy (e.g. code of ethics, personnel manual, etc.)
- Appointment of Board advisory members
- Delineation of educational priorities
- Oversight for the School's growth plan
- Establishing a professional salary and compensation program
- Reviewing and approving significant contracts (e.g., for facilities and benefit programs)
- Oversight of major appeals
- Any other matters prescribed in statute or rule.

The Board of Trustees will meet monthly during the school year to discuss School operations, hear reports, and take action as per its governance functions. The Officers may be called upon to meet more frequently. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of Board members (a quorum) at each meeting. "Present" will apply not only to those physically present but also to those who hear and participate through alternative means (e.g. conference call, video, email, etc.). The Board will obtain contracted services to assist in its work, as needed (e.g. consultants/experts in governance, curriculum development, setting of benchmarks, development and board training).

It is anticipated that a variety of contracted support services, in small amounts, will be necessary for the successful operation of the School and Board. Support personnel will provide office services as necessary (e.g. bookkeeping, business, purchasing, payroll, secretarial services, and the like).

The following principles of good practice for the *Mill Falls Charter School* are based on guidelines from the National Association of Independent Schools. The Board and the Head of School will work in partnership in fulfilling these principles.

1. The Board shall oversee the *Mill Falls Charter School's* Mission and objectives.
2. The Board shall review and maintain bylaws, and establish policies and plans consistent with the Mission.
3. The Board shall be accountable for the financial well being of the School, including capital assets, operating budgets, fund-raising, and endowments.
4. The Board shall select and support the Head of School.

5. The Board, or a committee of the Board, shall conduct a written annual evaluation of the performance of the Head of School and work with the Head of School to establish goals for the following year.
6. The Board shall evaluate itself annually and establish goals for the following year.
7. The Board shall keep full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies.
8. The Board shall work to ensure that all of its members are actively involved in the work of the Board and its committees.
9. The composition of the Board shall reflect a balance of expertise and perspectives needed to achieve the Mission of the School.
10. The Board shall develop itself through ongoing education, new trustee orientation and leadership succession planning.
11. The Board shall assure compliance with applicable laws and regulations and minimize exposure to legal action.

C: METHODS BY WHICH TRUSTEES AND THEIR TERMS ARE DETERMINED

The Board of the *Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation*, the non-profit entity comprised of the 10 Founding Parents submitting this charter school application and overseeing the School's development, will appoint the School's initial Trustees. The overarching goal in selecting Trustees is finding members who support the Founders' vision and have a commitment to the School's Mission and goals. Founders will seek Trustees who bring professional expertise, wisdom, educational, financial and governance experience to the Board of the *Mill Falls Charter School*. Appointment of Trustees will require approval by a majority vote.

Trustees of the *Mill Falls Charter School* will have terms of three (3) years. The initial Board will have staggered term completion to facilitate transition. Terms can be renewed by nomination and majority vote of the Board.

The Board of Trustees of *Mill Falls Charter School*, once operational, will select and appoint future Trustees, define future Board terms, and vote on policies for Board governance and filling vacancies. For purposes of conducting business, the Board will be subject to New Hampshire Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees who must be physically present or participating through video or voice communication systems. Records and minutes of meetings will be kept in accordance with statutory guidelines.

Board members are expected to regularly attend board meetings. The Board will consider regular participation to be crucial in order to ensure success of the Board's effort and the School overall. Board members who miss 50% or more of meetings may be replaced.

Openings on the Board will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Board. Board members elected to fill out the term of a Board member will have a term that completes the remainder of the prior trustee's term.

D: GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES TO BE USED, OR POTENTIAL LOCATION IF SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

Since beginning work on this Application, the Founders have been investigating potential sites in Manchester for the *Mill Falls Charter School*. Through research and visits to many Montessori schools (both private and public) and other New Hampshire charter schools, we have assessed our real estate needs regarding classroom, administrative and outdoor space. We have spoken with the Manchester School District and Mayor Ted Gatsas about possible district or city space, particularly as they consider redistricting in light of an evolving population and changes in city building use. We have also had some conversations with private property owners. The site search will intensify once the charter has been granted.

The typical Montessori elementary classroom is approximately 1,200 square feet. We will require additional space for offices and must have flexible outdoor space. In time we will need library, resource and technology rooms, kitchen and a multipurpose/gym area.

Initially, we anticipate leasing a site that offers some room for growth, handicap accessibility, playground and parking space. Over time, we hope to acquire land and construct a modular building. We see this as an affordable means of creating an energy efficient, use-specific facility. Many charter schools both in New England and across the country have utilized this approach with great success. We will seek a site that is easily accessible by all members of the community, by district bus routes and in close proximity to the highways that circle the city.

E: MAXIMUM NUMBER, GRADES OR AGE LEVELS AND, AS APPLICABLE, OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PUPILS TO BE SERVED

The Basic Plan

The planned opening of *Mill Falls Charter School* is September 2012. In our first year, the School will serve elementary-age students in grades 1-3 in mixed age lower elementary classrooms. In the first year, we will offer spaces across all three grade levels, but anticipate that the number of grade 3 enrollees will be lower, relative to enrollees for grades 1 and 2. By year three, we expect to introduce our first upper elementary classroom, which will grow to serve students in grades 4-6.

Also in year three, we plan to introduce kindergarten to establish *Mill Falls Charter School* as a complete elementary school, in keeping with the state's standard for kindergarten to be fully incorporated into the public school system. The *Mill Falls Charter School's* kindergarten, along with private Montessori preK-through-kindergarten schools, will feed students into our lower elementary program moving forward. Though we will be open to applications across all grades in the early years of operation, once the School fills to capacity, admission will be determined by available space, and therefore, for most students, the entry point will be in either Kindergarten or 1st grade. However, the Head of School will have some discretion in choosing to extend the opportunity for older students to apply, based on available space. In these circumstances, the Head of School would evaluate each potential student's educational experience to determine the appropriate fit with the Montessori pedagogy. Should the number of potential students exceed the available spots, a blind lottery will be conducted to determine which of the older student(s) would be invited to enroll. (*Also see Admission Procedures, page 27*)

Once established, the Board and our educational team will examine the feasibility of adding a middle school program for 7th and 8th graders. This will most likely be after our 5th operating year, at the time of our charter renewal.

In our first year, we expect to have approximately 60 students, and by our fifth year we expect to be a Montessori community of nearly 200 learners, K-6th grade.

Ramping Up Within the Montessori Approach: Building the School Community

The Montessori pedagogy is significantly different from that of a traditional classroom, in part because it builds on students' Montessori-specific experience year after year. Therefore, the method of ramping up a Montessori school is slightly more complicated than a ramp-up program for a more traditional approach. Montessori experts agree that it can be challenging for most children beyond 2nd or 3rd grade to enter into the tradition if they have not had previous exposure.

Our School will begin by filling the lower elementary classrooms in the first few years of operation, in order to build a cohort of Montessori-experienced students who will graduate into our upper elementary program. We will then move quickly to introduce kindergarten, aimed at creating a student body that has, for the most part, been trained in the Montessori method from the very start of their education (some privately educated, others educated at *Mill Falls*).

We have planned our growth keeping in mind the following:

- The need to grow at a reasonable and responsible rate to best serve and support our students, their families and our Faculty.
- The need to integrate students with and without Montessori experience during the first few years of the School's existence.
- The need to establish multi-aged classrooms with the goal of 24 students with one Lead Teacher and one Assistant Teacher per classroom.

As with all charter schools, any student can apply for available spaces within the *Mill Falls Charter School*, and should the number of applicants exceed our capacity, our classrooms will be populated by children chosen via a lottery system, organized by grade. Like any charter, we can expect that our student body will be a mix of many kinds of learners, from many different backgrounds. In our early years we expect to have some students with Montessori experience, and some without.

Evidence from other independent charter schools in New Hampshire shows limited attrition. We recognize that families move, however, as a state-issued charter, *Mill Falls Charter School* will be able to continue to meet our students' educational needs wherever they reside in New Hampshire. In Manchester, there is considerable movement of students from school to school. While transportation can sometimes be a challenge when these families move, it is expected that all students within the Manchester district will have access to district busing. (*See Transportation, Section L*)

Our Students: Drawn Together from Many Corners

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will be a welcoming community with a diverse student body. To be successful, we recognize the need to begin as a modest-sized school as we will be mixing learning styles, experience, economic status, race and ethnicities — differences that often divide communities. We will have to grow responsibly, making certain to provide sufficient resources to our students, their families and the School's faculty and staff.

With no public Montessori schools in the State, only a small percentage of New Hampshire families have the resources necessary to send their children to private Montessori programs. We see the *Mill Falls Charter School* as an option for *all* families interested in a Montessori education, and are committed to bringing Montessori public.

To aid in the transition that some of our students with no previous Montessori experience may encounter during the School's first few years, our lower elementary students will have full access to the key Montessori-specific materials used by pre-k and kindergarten students. Additionally, students' personal learning plans will ensure that they are helped into the Montessori approach in whatever ways are determined to be necessary. There are many public Montessori schools that integrate tutoring (both support and enrichment) into their overall approach that will serve as a resource for us as we develop this program. Beyond the students' initial entry to the *Mill Falls Charter School*, the tutoring program will be available at each step of the way, as a means of providing support, resources and exciting challenges to students at all levels of accomplishment.

Shape and Size of Our Classrooms

As stated earlier, the Montessori classroom is a mixed-age classroom. Over time, the goal is that each classroom will become a community of learners, and that students remain together (as much as possible) with the same teachers and classmates as they

progress through each 3-year block (grades 1-3 and grades 4-6). Once we are past our first few years, this goal will be achievable at the *Mill Falls Charter School*.

To build successful Montessori teaching environments, we will aim to have twenty-four (24) students in each lower and upper elementary classroom, and eighteen (18) students in our kindergarten class. Each classroom will have one (1) Lead Teacher and one (1) Assistant. This class size plan will provide teachers with opportunities to provide individualized attention to their students and to observe each child, each day. It will also enable small-group work, as well as full-group work and projects. Most public Montessori schools around the country strive for that approximate number, though during the School's growth years there may be classes that are slightly larger, or slightly smaller. We will have additional teacher presence as needed during those growth years.

By year five we expect to have one (1) kindergarten classroom, four (4) lower elementary classrooms and three (3) upper elementary classrooms. At that point we hope to begin to develop the middle school at *Mill Falls Charter School*.

F: CURRICULUM

The following information maps out the curriculum proposed for the *Mill Falls Charter School*. We begin with an explanation of the Montessori classroom, roles of Montessori teachers and overarching goals of the program.

The Montessori Classroom: A Prepared Environment

Dr. Montessori believed that children learn best in what she termed a "prepared environment," one that makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an organized fashion. Today this is described widely as child-centered education and active learning. The beautiful classrooms are filled with manipulatives — hands-on learning materials developed by Dr. Montessori, as well as other supplementary resources, all of which encourage even the youngest students to use all five senses to address concepts they will come to master. Teachers present these materials to their students, individually and in small or large group settings. Through order, repetition, exploration, manipulation and communication, younger students begin to get an idea of their place in the world. Many of the materials used by students as they progress are self-correcting and begin with basic concepts, and then move toward more complicated principles. At each stage, Montessori students naturally move away from the materials, realizing that their mental processes are faster than the manipulatives.

In the Montessori classroom the teacher does not stand at the front of the room expecting that everyone *will* be or *can* be learning the same thing at the same time. Students progress at their own pace with a clear, personal learning plan, and individualized attention is built into the methodology. The child's independence is respected and celebrated. Students are allowed and encouraged to move freely in their

environment, spending as much time as needed with particular materials or working on projects. Dr. Montessori believed strongly that movement is far more productive for students than a sedentary approach where children are expected to remain in their seats. A visitor to a Montessori classroom might observe many subjects — math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc. — simultaneously being studied by individual students or small groups of learners, independently and with their teachers.

Of course there are ground rules for the learning community and clear expectations on the part of the children and educators. The Montessori method fosters freedom of choice — what students want to learn — but also insists on the development of well-balanced learners. Children and their teachers develop a work contract and chart progress to ensure growth and success in all areas.

Traditionally, the Montessori workday is divided into multiple work blocks, which at the elementary level are 3-hours long, slightly shorter for the kindergarteners. These extended work periods allow students to explore materials and concepts deeply and independently. It is here where children develop concentration, focus and inner-discipline.

The multi-age classrooms further assist in solidifying the learning process — the older children help teach the younger children, and what better way is there to build maturity, nurturing, leadership skills and mastery of subject than by classmates educating one another. Students model work habits, social and language skills and a shared culture of positivism and support develops for all. Ideally, to be competitive later in life, children need to develop a strong sense of self and an ability to work with others.

The Teacher's Role: Observer and Guide

The job of the Montessori teacher is to follow each child's progress, to create an environment where materials are made available and presented to the students when they are ready to progress, and to encourage children to complete each phase of their work. Montessori teachers are charged with meeting the students' physical, mental and emotional needs, with designing individual and group learning opportunities, and with creating extensive documentation of the progress and activity of all those in the classroom. Ultimately, Montessori teachers support their students in ways that lead the children toward their own successes.

These educators know when to step in, and when to take themselves away. They trust and respect the child, so that the children will trust and respect themselves and others around them. Social responsibility is part of every aspect of the Montessori method, grace and courtesy part of school culture. Because most of the Montessori materials are self-correcting, they afford children the ability to learn on their own initiatives, thus enabling teachers one on one contact with children requiring more assistance.

Traditionally, there are no grades or other forms of extrinsic reward or punishment, subtle or overt, in the Montessori model. But the public Montessori school must merge

the Montessori methods of assessment — the teacher’s observation, record keeping, portfolios and a growing selection of Montessori-oriented assessment materials — with standardized testing, to meet state and national requirements. Dr. Montessori did not believe in academic testing for children. However, she believed that children should learn to be a part of their national culture. Standardized testing is now a central component of our national educational culture, and therefore the *Mill Falls Charter School* will incorporate the required standardized testing into its approach and curriculum.

Montessori: Guiding Children Toward Their Full Potential

The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each child reach his/her full potential in all areas of life. The overarching effect of this *whole child* approach is that Montessori children become independent, lifelong learners, who take responsibility for themselves, for their classmates and for their environment. Montessori students experience learning as something to be loved and cherished, something that is beautiful, and something they are doing for themselves.

G: ACADEMIC AND OTHER LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a broad description, by subject, of our goals and approach to the K-6 grade curriculum. It represents a merging of the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum* with *Montessori Scope and Sequence*. Please note that a more complete curriculum will be established during our planning period as we assemble our team and work with Montessori consultants experienced in charter school development. This will give our teachers and supporting staff voice in the process of curriculum development, and provide an important opportunity for team building, consensus building, and the opportunity to incorporate a wide selection of ideas put forth by experienced team members.

Please also see the attached Scope and Sequence Chart, which appears in Appendix B and visualizes the following narrative.

Language Arts

Goals:

- Students will read at or above grade level with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment in a way that makes meaning clear.
- Students will write effectively and creatively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will practice oral presentation across all curriculum areas to develop purposeful and articulate communication skills.

Curriculum:

Through use of manipulatives and a classroom environment rich in reading materials, our students will develop both encoding and decoding skills. Phonics, grammar, punctuation, word study, etymology, reference/research skills and daily writing are introduced as spelling skills develop. Students will obtain a rich vocabulary and

sophisticated oral and written skills. Children will learn to be reflective about what they read and write and to make connections between literary themes, genres and their everyday lives.

Mathematics

Goals:

- Students will demonstrate solid and applicable understanding of key concepts and principles central to the study of numbers, geometry, algebra and problem solving.
- Students will gain an appreciation for and understanding of the history of mathematics and its applications.
- Students will participate in peer teaching to enable mastery of concepts at each level.

Curriculum:

Utilizing the Montessori method, an extensive set of manipulatives and the study of the history of math, our students' understanding of mathematics will move from the very concrete to the abstract understanding of numbers, geometry, algebra and problem solving. Through individualized and group lessons, students will learn both static and dynamic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in the development of sound arithmetic skills. They will learn and manipulate fractions and decimals, explore concepts of equality and equivalence, geometric and algebraic concepts and principles, often utilizing self-correcting Montessori materials as well as group teaching, peer teaching and tutoring in order to master their skills.

History

Goals:

- Students will achieve comprehension of time and its passage.
- Students will develop a core understanding of the relationships between time, people and history.
- Students will have an understanding of, and appreciation for diversity and its role in societal development, locally and globally.

Curriculum:

Our Montessori curriculum is grounded in cultural studies and awareness through the stories of time, life and civilization. The study of history begins with the concept of passage of time, then geologic time and the study of civilization throughout history. Through use of the *Great Lessons* developed by Montessori, children will attain a grasp of the formation of the universe and celestial bodies, including our sun and Earth. Later, with the use of timelines for these areas of study, as well as other materials and student research, our learners will come to understand how life developed on Earth and the role history plays in the development of culture and the impact of one's personal history on one's own development and civilization as a whole.

Geography and Culture

Goals:

- Students will experience the earth as a globe, one made of sandpaper to distinguish land and water, and later one made smooth with colored continents. They will

experience the continents as puzzle maps after making the transition from globes to flat maps.

- Students will study basic principles of mapping of the earth through simple map making, puzzles and other materials.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of landforms by building topographical maps.
- Students will explore the relationships between basic human needs and resources and the development of cultures, states and countries.
- Students will conduct an in-depth study of one of the seven continents to demonstrate their understanding of this area of study.
- Students will draw flat maps of the continents using templates of the puzzle maps and in the upper grades display geographical knowledge by creating flat maps without guides or templates.
- Students will create personal timelines developed with the understanding of civilization's timeline.

Curriculum:

Utilizing the Montessori approach to integration of geography and culture, our students will see and understand the relationship between human labor and economic development. By examining "fundamental needs" — food, shelter, transportation, clothing, art, religion, friendship and character — children come to appreciate how all humans are united through our common, fundamental needs. This area of study explores the interconnection between physical boundaries (through the study of maps, land forms, earth features, etc.) and the development of countries, capitals, language, economics, government and culture.

Science

Goals:

- Students will experience the distinction between Life Sciences and Physical Sciences.
- Students will explore Life Science through the study of humans, animals and plants.
- Students will experience Physical Science through experiments with liquids, solids and gases and in the various states they can manifest.
- Students will learn and practice the Scientific Method.
- Students will study the history of science and how it impacts our world.
- Students will follow the development of the earth and earth materials.
- Students will learn and practice the scientific method.

Curriculum:

Students will begin their study of science with botany, zoology, biology, and earth science through the exploration of history, discovery and the use of categorization and naming. They will employ the Scientific Method as they move through these lessons and into the more advanced areas of life science, earth science, physics, chemistry, human biology and the plant and animal kingdoms. These concepts are reinforced by the use of experiments and Montessori impressionistic charts designed to help children grasp complex/abstract phenomena. Additionally, the approach will integrate hands-on study, by focusing on process and techniques of discovery.

Practical Life

Goals:

- Students will experience concentration and greater skill through self-chosen work.
- Students will develop fine and gross motor skills and the fundamental movements we make as they learn to care for themselves and others.
- Students will develop executive functioning skills by experiencing tasks that require motor planning and have a beginning, middle and end.
- Students will care daily for their school environment, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Students and Faculty will work collaboratively to establish green practices within the school setting.
- Students will work collaboratively to establish a caring community by developing and demonstrating grace and courtesy skills and respect for all members of the community.

Curriculum:

A unique element in the Montessori tradition is the area of Practical Life where skills pertaining to care of one's self, the environment and all living things are taught with the goal that students become fully capable and responsible adults. It is in Practical Life where our youngest students develop their fine and gross motor skills learning to dress, pour, sort, wash and dry dishes and prepare simple foods, among other basic activities. As they mature, our students will also aid in maintaining their School both inside and out, all with an emphasis on being stewards of their community and surroundings. Students and Faculty will develop Green practices within the school setting to foster an understanding of how to minimize our impact on the natural world. Practical Life activities encourage independence, responsibility, self-discipline and self-reliance, and aid in the development of concentration and cooperation, thus expanding students' social and emotional education and growth. It is also here where students develop and practice skills of grace and courtesy. By establishing a school-wide atmosphere of kindness and respect, children will work cooperatively with Faculty and parents to create a safe and secure learning environment where differences can be recognized and valued, and diversity celebrated. This prepares the students for the experience of community service.

World Languages

Goals:

- Students will gain exposure to and proficiency in one or more foreign languages, developing skills in speaking, writing and reading.
- Students will be able to communicate daily needs and wants in a foreign language.
- Students will have a basic knowledge of foreign cultures.

Curriculum:

One or more foreign languages will be integrated into all classroom levels to expand the minds and hearts of our students. Through the use of supplemental Montessori materials, other self-correcting resources, as well as individual and group teaching, students of all ages will work toward proficiency in reading, writing and communication skills in the language(s) studied. Students will begin with basic

vocabulary and conversational practices. During the elementary years, students will formalize existing skills and learn more advanced concepts. In addition, students will focus on the culture of the countries where these foreign languages are spoken. The study of foreign language will enable our children to communicate with others within and beyond their immediate community, with an aim toward the development of a global citizenry.

Civics and Service

Goals:

- Students will practice core values of kindness and consideration in the classroom and beyond.
- Students will study the history of service and community building.
- Students will understand, appreciate and participate in community service.
- Students will understand and appreciate diversity of all kinds and its impact on *Mill Falls Charter School*, as well as the greater local and global communities.
- Students will participate in community service and service learning programs and reflect upon those experiences.
- Students will participate in community projects that reinforce their understanding of the importance of caring deeply for our environment.

Curriculum:

Service and responsibility for others is a core Montessori value and as such will play a key role at the *Mill Falls Charter School*. Our lower elementary students will have ample opportunity to volunteer both within the school community and beyond. As they mature, our students will integrate service learning across areas of their curriculum. Students will be encouraged and supported as they serve their community in ways directly related to their studies. Those service experiences will then be brought back into the classroom through reflection — discussion, oral and visual presentations. The Civics and Service curriculum will teach students to appreciate diversity of all kinds.

Technology

Goals:

- Students will become familiar and comfortable with existing technologies leading to use in research and communication across all disciplines.
- Students will understand the history and impact of technology on human society.
- Students will become proficient in information and source management via the use of the Internet, databases, spreadsheets, graphing and word processing, etc.
- Students will use appropriate technology for research and communication.

Curriculum:

Our technology curriculum will enable our students to work confidently with existing and developing technologies given the interconnectedness of our 21st century world. Computers and software will be used as tools to aid in our students' educational needs and development in areas such as research and communication projects. Students will learn to utilize the Internet; organize data via databases, spreadsheets and graphing tools; and master word processing skills. Additionally, some of the supplementary, self-correcting software developed from within the Montessori community will be used by

our students in support of their studies. The availability of computers and technological study within the school setting will enhance our students' ability to explore, discover and problem solve. This element of our curriculum is especially important, as we recognize that many of our students may not have access to appropriate computer literacy development at home. Technology is the backbone of our new economy and evolving culture and all students must be taught to be informed and responsible consumers.

Visual and Performing Arts

Goals:

- Students and their teachers will integrate arts education across the curriculum, enhancing all areas of study.
- Students will understand the historical development and context of the visual and performing arts.
- Students will use visual and performing arts to explore and enhance story-telling skills alongside the development of their creativity, communication and technology skills.

Curriculum:

We will integrate the arts across the curriculum, enhancing all areas of study. The role of visual and performing arts will be integral for our students as it is for Montessori students around the world. Story telling through words, visuals, music and performance will be utilized as teaching tools by Faculty. It will also be used creatively by students as a means of articulating their understanding of civilization and culture, reading, writing, math, and science. The history of visual and performing arts will also be integrated into the curriculum. In addition, students will have the opportunity to explore their individual interests in each of these areas through research, electives, individual and group projects. While developing their artistic communication skills, students will be expected to utilize technology in the study, practice and production of their creative work.

Physical Education and Health

Goals:

- Students will participate in a basic physical education program aimed at meeting the health needs of children and early adolescents.
- Students will understand human development through an age appropriate approach, exploring and promoting healthy sense of self.
- Students will understand the value of teamwork and sportsmanship via cooperative games and team sports.

Curriculum:

While building a healthy sense of self through physical activity and fitness, our students will also have the opportunity to learn the importance of team building and teamwork through cooperative games and group sports. Our physical education program will be geared toward building physical strength and coordination to the best of each student's abilities, rather than competitive play. Our students will be given a physically enhanced and rewarding experience that contributes to a lifetime of healthy and active living. We will utilize programs such as Coordinated Approach to Child

Health (CATCH) and FitnessGram, or other nationally used, evidence-based curricula and tools. Our age appropriate Health curriculum will explore human development including friendship, adolescent development, peer pressure, drug and alcohol education, sexuality, nutrition, stress reduction and balanced, healthy living.

H: ACHIEVEMENT TESTS TO BE USED TO MEASURE PUPIL ACADEMIC AND OTHER GOAL ACHIEVEMENT INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO OBJECTIVE AND AGE-APPROPRIATE MEASURES OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS, INCLUDING SPELLING, READING, EXPOSITORY WRITING, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, SCIENCE, AND MATHEMATICS

In the Montessori classroom, the child is observed every day, and those observations are recorded by the classroom teachers and serve as a core reference for developing lesson plans and progress assessment. In our *public* Montessori setting, we will also utilize additional means of formal and informal assessment both to satisfy national and state requirements, and to quantitatively measure each child's progress. As per 194-B:8, V, "At least annually, and near the end of each school year, a chartered public school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil, as specified in RSA 194-B:3 II(h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited, to the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state."

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will use assessment methods that correlate with skill areas across the curriculum. The results will be used to make important educational decisions and adjustments to the individualized learning plans, thereby ensuring academic success.

Assessments will be conducted when our students first join the school community to determine the best ways to reach them and identify their skill levels, especially, though not limited to, areas of reading and math. As the number of public Montessori schools increase, so, too, do Montessori-gearred assessment tools. We will utilize evaluation products throughout the year, such as those for literacy, developed by Marie Clay, among others, alongside the Richardson Mathematics Assessment or similar standardized tests that are employed by Montessori and non-Montessori schools alike. During the planning period, the *Mill Falls Charter School* will further develop and evaluate assessment tools, schedules and practices for our students.

While our youngest children will play a modest role in developing their individualized learning plans, as our students mature their role will become significantly more meaningful. Older students and their teachers will develop the programs, and work together to ensure that the set goals are met. Several times per year, reports will be issued for student and parent review. Additionally, teacher conferences will be held with students and their parents/guardians. It is expected that these conferences will

take place at least twice per year: in the early fall to establish academic, personal and social growth goals and then again in the spring, to review progress and plan for students' summer activities.

Throughout the year, students will be shown many ways to present and reflect on their accomplishments. They will write weekly in their reflective journals across many areas of the curriculum. One significant role of this journaling will be to aid students, teachers and parents/guardians in evaluations. Teachers will guide students as they develop their portfolios designed to capture and highlight pivotal lessons, projects, and touch points that characterize the students' journey each year and show the students' ability to organize what they have learned. These tools, and others that may develop during our planning period and beyond, will enable teachers and their students to articulate growth and identify difficulty, thus ensuring that the most successful learning can occur for each child.

While the *Mill Falls Charter School* Board and Faculty will work together to finalize an annual assessment calendar, it is likely that it will resemble the following:

- **September Assessment** – Richardson or other similar assessment test to aid in establishing an individualized learning plan for each child, with particular focus in the areas of literacy and math.
- **Daily Observations** and recording of those observations using Montessori Records Express (or a similar computer-based program) providing teachers with checklists and other means of adjusting the personalized learning plans and facilitating the teachers' work in recording and communicating each student's progress. Reports generated from this system will be shared regularly with students and parents/guardians.
- **Student Reports, Journaling, Essays, Oral Presentations** will provide our students, their teachers and parents/guardians with a powerful means of assessing working knowledge across all areas of the curriculum throughout the year.
- **Progress Reports** based on observation and linked to the individualized learning plan will be analyzed by teachers, students and parents/guardians. Issued approximately 3-4 times per year, these will assess academic progress as well as personal growth and development.
- **Teacher Conferences** will be held at the beginning and end of each academic year with students and their parents/guardians to review learning plans, goals and progress.
- **Standardized Testing** will begin in third grade with the required New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), and will be given in accordance with the state's timelines. Additionally, any state and national testing requirements will be integrated into this schedule as dictated by the tests.

I: FOR SCHOOLS OFFERING HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS, GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION FOR ITS PUPILS.

Not Applicable.

J: STAFFING OVERVIEW, INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

To ensure that students at *Mill Falls Charter School* are supported in their academic endeavors and personal growth, we will seek highly qualified, nurturing educators who will treat them with dignity and respect. Our students will feel safe, encouraged and thereby free to mature, develop and reach their full potential.

We will seek educators who will serve as leaders, guides and role models, and who will challenge our children to challenge themselves. Our classrooms will be populated as follows: One (1) Lead Teacher and one (1) Assistant Teacher per classroom.

Our Lead Teachers will hold, at minimum, 4-year liberal arts degrees and will have or be willing to pursue Montessori training. They must understand and believe in the Montessori philosophy and materials and be familiar with individualized observation and record keeping. They must also be able to adapt Montessori methods and curriculum to the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum* and visa versa. *Mill Falls Charter School* teachers will be inquisitive, reflective, creative problem solvers, committed to the School's Mission.

Our Assistant Teachers must demonstrate their ability to embrace the Montessori approach and will be expected to fully support the *Mill Falls Charter School* Mission.

As per New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:14. IV, a minimum of 50% of our Lead Teachers will hold New Hampshire teaching certificates or have at least three years of teaching experience.

Additional support for our students will be offered through an extensive tutoring program. The purpose of this program will be to provide both enrichment for those who need additional challenges and opportunity, and support for those who need additional one-on-one/small group work to aid in their progress. Our tutoring program will utilize the skills of college and graduate students, teachers, volunteers, and community mentors.

Our Head of School will be Montessori trained and hold, at minimum, a 4-year liberal arts degree and have considerable experience in the Montessori setting. He or she must be able to merge and manage the requirements of an independent New

Hampshire charter school, with the Montessori approach in an urban setting. At the onset, the Head of School will be the liaison for special education issues.

Professional development will be a core element at the *Mill Falls Charter School*, aiding in high teacher retention and the creation and maintenance of a positive atmosphere. This will also enable ongoing support, assessment and improvement of the Mission and goals. It will substantively provide a means of evaluation and improvement in the work of those charged with teaching our children and ensuring the success of our School.

K: PERSONNEL COMPENSATION PLANS, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR LEAVES AND OTHER BENEFITS, IF ANY.

Salary

Our Head of School and Lead Teachers will be paid a salary. The salaries of these full-time personnel shall be paid bi-weekly (assuming approval is granted by the Commissioner of the Department of Labor).

Assistant Teachers, paid Tutors, and all non-teacher personnel, whether full-time or part-time, will be paid on an hourly rate as employees or as independent professionals based on negotiated rates.

Vacation

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will publish an annual calendar of holidays and vacations during which the School will officially be closed. Full-time teachers will also receive a maximum of two (2) days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave days must be used during the school year in which they are accrued.

Sick Leave

Full-time salaried teachers will receive five (5) sick days per school year. Sick leave is cumulative from year to year up to a maximum of twenty days. Part-time teachers will receive two (2) sick days per year. For purposes of sick leave for part-time teachers, one day will equal the number of hours in that employee's regularly scheduled work day.

Retirement

The School intends to participate in the New Hampshire State Retirement Program for public teachers according to state requirements for our Full-time salaried teachers.

Other Benefits

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will offer health and other benefits to its full-time, salaried employees. Such benefits may be offered as a choice system with a specific annual election or as a specific insurance plan provided by the School with an employee contribution. Board policy and availability of specific benefit programs will determine the specific benefit type offered. Board policy and the requirements of specific benefit

programs will determine whether, and to what extent, part-time personnel will be eligible for benefits and at what percent of full-time equivalent allocation.

General Provisions

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and rules related to pre-employment screening, hiring, employment compensation and leave, and reserves the right to amend the above personnel provisions as necessary to comply with applicable laws and rules, and as otherwise necessary.

L: PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, INCLUDING REASONABLE PROVISION FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S OWN RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT IN WHICH THE CHARTER SCHOOL IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED

As mentioned in Section D of this application, the site of *Mill Falls Charter School* will be finalized during our initial planning period, giving us well over a year to do so. We will seek a centrally located site both to accommodate the resources of the Manchester School District, and for ease of access for families traveling from outside Manchester.

We have had several initial meetings with Manchester Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tom Brennan, and members of his team, and have discussed the issue of transportation, to establish clarity on this issue, among others.

For purposes of transportation, *Mill Falls Charter School* will follow the guidelines of 194-B:2,V which states: "Pupils who reside in the school district in the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the charter school." As a result, students attending *Mill Falls Charter School* who reside in the host district shall ride district transportation with the charter school providing for added route costs, if so billed.

For students attending the *Mill Falls Charter School* from outside the host district, we will serve as an open enrollment school under RSA 194-B:1,VI. Given the very limited funding per student, and the lack of guarantee for any additional funding above the state allotment per student, students from outside of the host district must either request their assigned districts to transport them, or arrange for their own transportation. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will make a reasonable provision from its own budget to establish a system that facilitates ride sharing between families of students from outside the district, such as creating an online database or handbook.

M: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES RELATED TO COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION

The Montessori method embraces diversity. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will celebrate diversity in all its forms. The School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of the School or in any other way that is prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees will develop and adopt a policy and will have administrative procedures to address any concerns.

N: METHOD OF COORDINATING WITH PUPIL'S LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) FOR MATTERS PERTAINING TO ANY REQUIRED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING METHOD OF COMPLIANCE WITH ALL FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO EDUCATIONALLY DISABLED PUPILS.

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting.

Charter Public Schools & Special Education

As an open enrollment school, the *Mill Falls Charter School* will accept applications from any child who is a New Hampshire resident and will discuss the school with any interested parent. In accordance with New Hampshire law (RSA 194-B:8), the *Mill Falls Charter School* will not discriminate against any child with a disability as defined in RSA 186-C. Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:11, III, when a child with disabilities attends a chartered public school, all current options available to the parent and the school district are retained.

School District Special Education Responsibility

ED 1104.01, effective 6/28/08, sets forth the following sequence of the special education process:

- (a) Referral;
- (b) Evaluation;
- (c) Determination of eligibility;
- (d) Development and approval of the IEP;
- (e) Placement;
- (f) Ongoing monitoring of the IEP; and
- (g) Annual review of the IEP.

It is clear pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, III, that decision-making responsibility for the special education process for children with disabilities attending a public charter school remains with the child's sending school district. In addition, RSA 194-B:11, III provides that the sending school district remains responsible for the funding for

children with disabilities attending a chartered public school. Any federal funding or other funding available to a sending district related to special education, to the extent and in a manner acceptable to the funding source, shall also be directed to the receiving chartered public school on an eligible per pupil basis pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, IV. These important provisions allow the responsible sending district and the *Mill Falls Charter School* to cooperate creatively to meet a student's special education needs, which are not part of the School's charter. The sending district will be required to provide the *Mill Falls Charter School* with a complete copy of each student's IEP for implementation and monitoring purposes.

Charter School Responsibility & Method of Coordinating with Student's Sending School District

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will respect the sending school district's statutory responsibility for special education decision-making and funding. The primary responsibility of a public chartered school with regard to special education is coordination with the student's sending school district and, in cases involving services provided during school, oversight of the implementation of the IEP on a day-to-day basis. As a result, the *Mill Falls Charter School* will appoint a liaison to collaborate with the sending school district on individual students' special education matters and implementation of the IEPs of students who attend the School. The Head of School shall be designated the special education liaison. After it becomes clear which districts will have special education students regularly placed at the *Mill Falls Charter School*, it is the goal of the School to move to the model of having staff from sending districts paid by those sending districts, but housed inside the School, following the *Seacoast Charter School* approach.

The responsibilities of the *Mill Falls Charter School* liaison will include:

1. Notifying districts about requests for admission for any student with an IEP.
2. Providing information about the *Mill Falls Charter School* to the sending district and parents or legal guardians of children entitled to special education.
3. When invited by the school district or parents/legal guardians, attending meetings for the purpose of district review of choice requests whenever possible.
4. Receiving a copy of the current IEP from the sending school district, and reviewing it with each teacher and any staff involved in its implementation.
5. Contacting special education administrators or their designees at each sending district to establish the best way to coordinate the services for a particular student (e.g. determining who should be contacted, and the best way to reach them).
6. Maintaining an informational record of the current contact person from each sending district responsible for special education and making contact with such people as needed.
7. Alerting the sending district to any individual student issues that rise to a level of concern needing district attention and/or necessitating a referral.
8. Assisting the sending school district in developing the IEP when requested.
9. Notifying the sending school district of concerns about a current IEP and

requesting a review of the IEP when necessary.

10. Making recommendations for services or accommodations based upon the School's observations of an individual student and continuing to dialogue about concerns until they are reviewed.

11. Being available to the sending district to review the student's progress under the current IEP and to make recommendations.

12. Working with the sending district to develop procedures designed to ensure that individualized education programs are monitored in a regular and systematic manner.

0: ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

We are committed to building a diverse community of learners and their families who embrace the Montessori approach to education and recognize the unique journey that this opportunity provides and requires. Admission to the *Mill Falls Charter School* shall be open to any student who resides in the State of New Hampshire. Methods of admission shall not be designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

Our process will be based upon the unique approach to education that Montessori offers, and will require education of prospective students and their families. Additionally, the success of the School will depend enormously on the commitment of parents and guardians to volunteer and support the School's operation.

Admission Procedures:

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will follow the basic method of admissions that defines charter schools nationwide:

- Admission shall be blind.
- Should the number of applicants exceed capacity, students will be chosen by a lottery system, with a wait list developed from the lottery overflow.

At a minimum, the admissions process will include the following:

- 1: Prospective students and their families will tour the School and attend informational meetings at which the Montessori approach and school expectations of students and parents/guardians will be explained.
- 2: Application packets with information about the School, its philosophy and expectations of attending students and their families will be shared, along with student-related policies. Parents will be asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the School's Mission and expectations as part of the admission process.
- 3: Interested families will then submit their application.
- 4: A committee will review the applications to be sure all information is complete.

5: Should applicants exceed the number of allotted slots, a formal lottery, organized by grade, will be held. Those not accepted in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery.

6: All accepted students will receive notification. Those who have been wait-listed will be notified.

7: Soon after the admission process is complete, the *Mill Falls Charter School* will hold meetings for admitted students and their families.

The Board of Trustees of the *Mill Falls Charter School* will establish an Admissions Committee. We reserve the right to have the Admissions Committee further develop and amend the specific admissions process during the planning year.

Enrollment Provisions

- *Mill Falls Charter School* will offer automatic re-enrollment to its students, provided they are in good standing. Families will have to provide a letter of intent by a stated date preceding the lottery, so there is clarity about available spaces.
- *Mill Falls Charter School* will admit from the wait-list should space become available after the lottery.
- Siblings of children already enrolled at the School will receive preference.
- The Board will reserve the right to give preference in enrollment to children of School Faculty as part of the employee benefits package.
- Children of the Founders² of the *Mill Falls Charter School* will receive priority for placement, within a reasonable ratio of the student body, as a means of recognition of their sweat equity in establishing the School.

P: PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT GOVERNANCE AND DISCIPLINE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES TO BE USED FOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, INCLUDING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION.

Inherent in the Montessori approach, and a core value of the *Mill Falls Charter School* is the development of student leadership skills within the classroom environments and schoolwide. In multi-age classrooms, *Mill Falls Charter School* students will learn from and lead one another as they progress academically, and develop socially. Individual students will have means of communicating their concerns and a student organized governing council will provide the opportunity for the student body to explore and address issues, concerns and priorities directly related to them.

It will be a priority at the *Mill Falls Charter School* that students are physically and emotionally safe while at school. In our planning period, a code of ethics will be

² Defined as persons who have volunteered 200 hours or more toward the upstart of *Mill Falls Charter School* between Sept. 2010 and Dec. 2011.

established to address this priority both with regard to infringements on safety and respect, and to create clear and meaningful methods of problem solving.

To do so, we will draw on Dr. Maria Montessori's work which strongly emphasizes peace and conflict resolution. She developed many tools to help children and their teachers resolve disagreements and address problems and issues that arise in the school setting.

To facilitate communication skills, even our youngest students will be taught to utilize these Montessori resources. For example, the *Peace Table* offers a space away from the work area, neutral territory where children in disagreement can talk about their feelings and eventually find solutions. The *Peace Loft* or other *Peace Spaces* provide places where children can go to remove themselves from a difficult situation, or just take some quiet time to regroup before returning to work and/or addressing a difficulty. These tools provide students with a means of monitoring their own behavior. Of course, as in all aspects of life, there will also be ample places to practice simple conflict resolution outside of these designated areas – the playground, the lunch table, etc. Additionally, there are opportunities for mediation conducted by teachers for the younger students, and by students, when appropriate, for our older students. As the children get older, they will study and integrate methods of conflict resolution to ensure that the educational community buys into the method of problem solving. In the first days of school, teachers will explain the tools and work collaboratively and interactively with their students to establish basic classroom rules and guidelines to be followed by all. Our children will learn to problem solve and achieve resolution in the context of our safe and peaceful environment.

Disrespectful or continually disruptive behavior will not be accepted. All issues will first be addressed in the manner described above. Consequences for disrespectful or continually disruptive behavior will depend on the severity of the offense. The School's written code of ethics, will outline appropriate responses to disrespectful or continual disruptive behaviors, and will include parental involvement and, at its most severe, removal from the school community.

Q: METHOD OF ADMINISTERING FISCAL ACCOUNTS AND REPORTING, INCLUDING A PROVISION REQUIRING FISCAL AUDITS AND REPORTS TO BE PERFORMED BY AN INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. The School will maintain accurate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations. An annual financial report will be provided with audit by an independent certified public accountant.

The Board will appoint a Treasurer to provide the oversight necessary for monitoring the financial status of the School. The Treasurer shall report the financial status of the School to the Board at least monthly. The Board shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the School, including policies on conflicts of interest for Board members and Faculty. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the bi-weekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors.

A general account will be set up for the administration of funds, and the Treasurer and named members of the Board will have check-writing authority. Each individual with check-writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with the guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Except for emergency purchases approved by the School's authorized personnel (up to a maximum to be established by the Board), all expenditures and contracts will be handled through an encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and status of account balances.

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:10, I-V). This law requires an annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process. The School will also comply with all requirements set forth in Ed 318.07 regarding the contents of its annual report.

The Board will select an independent auditor annually to complete the required annual audit and report. The audit will address accounting practices and review the School's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with applicable generally accepted accounting principles. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year. The Board will review and respond to the audit report, if necessary, and include the audit results in its annual report.

R: ANNUAL BUDGET, INCLUDING SOURCES OF FUNDING

Please see the budget that appears in Appendix C.

The included budget reflects estimated expenses for our planning year, and for the subsequent 5 years of operation.

We have developed a list of our most likely and most important Mission-driven plans and costs, recognizing that the budget as represented surpasses the expected income in the first few years. *Appendix C* also includes expected sources of revenue related to the federal start-up grant, and the state per-pupil allotment based on our projected enrollment. Work to raise the additional funds necessary to support the budget has already begun and will increase in intensity once the charter has been granted. During our planning period we will also examine the feasibility of additional revenue sources,

including extra-curricular activities, which might bring income as well as exposure to the School.

As mentioned in the introductory section of this application, we have entered into this project with the full understanding that the state per-pupil allotment is rarely enough to support a New Hampshire independent charter school's full goals and mission and guarantee sustainability. We will offset this gap through a variety of means, including grant monies, curriculum partnerships, as well as private and corporate contributions. Supplementary fundraising is critical to the long-term viability and success of the School. This need not be in the form of one high dollar investor, rather we hope to cultivate an informed and committed community of supporters for *Mill Falls Charter School*.

From the outset, *Mill Falls Charter School* Founders, Board Members, Staff and parents/guardians will understand the need to augment the state-provided funds to deliver the quality and variety contained in the curriculum that is at the very core of this project. Contributions by those who join the School community will take many forms — time in the classroom, assistance in various areas dependent on expertise (computer support, construction, etc.), and some parents may consider financial contributions if they are able. All donations will be tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Once the *Mill Falls Charter School* has been established, the *Manchester Montessori Charter School Foundation* will function as the not-for-profit organization, separate from the *Mill Falls Charter School*, whose mission will be to aid in the School's economic viability. In that role as the School's development arm, the Foundation will seek the additional support of community members and businesses by emphasizing the unique character of the School, its individualized learning approach and the resource and value it brings the city and state. School-focused fundraising will include events small and large, aimed at financial gain and the solidifying of the School community and Mission. Additional funding will be sought from local and national granting organizations that support both Montessori endeavors and charter schools, particularly those in urban settings, serving a diverse student body. We anticipate that a portion of all money raised will be used to establish an endowment fund.

S: SCHOOL CALENDAR ARRANGEMENT AND THE NUMBER AND DURATION OF DAYS PUPILS ARE TO BE SERVED PURSUANT TO RSA 194-B: 8, III.

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will follow a 180-day school year in accordance with the RSA 194-B:8, III, and expects to follow the calendar of our host district in order to best coordinate transportation services. Any school-specific changes to the schedule will be monitored carefully to ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours.

It is expected that days will begin at approximately 8am and end at 2:30pm, though some flexibility may be required to meet our host district's bus route schedule. Should transportation issues result in lost educational hours, we will address this loss and amend our students' school hours.

T: PROVISION FOR PROVIDING CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, the *Mill Falls Charter School* will be a public school afforded the same protections as all other public schools under RSA 507(b), which provides for limited general liability for the charter school and its agents. The Board will procure, and provide evidence of, adequate insurance coverage as required by the State, including but not limited to general liability for the School.

U: IDENTITY OF CONSULTANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, IF KNOWN

We are fortunate to have already identified and met with many advisors and consultants willing to share their wisdom and experience with us as we navigate through the process of bringing this idea to life.

The Montessori world offers us many experts, educators and administrators with rich experience, and because there are so many public and private Montessori schools in the New England region we are able to draw on many local resources. Among these, we have identified the following consultants and friends of the *Mill Falls Charter School*:

- **Charles Terranova** has over 38 years of experience as a Montessori teacher, consultant, teacher-trainer and school evaluator. He is Montessori trained from toddler through upper elementary and has experience at every level of school functioning. In his current position at the *Tobin School* in Cambridge, MA, he is the lead Montessorian during the district school's changeover from a traditional elementary to a Montessori school. Charles develops and adapts Montessori materials for his classrooms and other schools, and specializes in curriculum development, student evaluation and professional development for staff. He also consults in areas of board education and training. Charles works worldwide with communities, educators and parents committed to the Montessori approach. We are very fortunate to have already begun our work with Charles, and look forward to an ongoing relationship with this dedicated educator.
- **Gail Bannon** is the Founder, Director and Head Teacher of the *Bedford Montessori School*, which is now in its 26th year of operation. Gail is a New Hampshire native and has a keen sense of the role Montessori can play in the lives of children and their

families in and around Manchester. She has developed innovative methods of integrating art into every aspect of the preschool-through-K curriculum and often trains and consults with other Montessori teachers and schools in this area of expertise. She is the Vice President of the New Hampshire Montessori Association. Gail has already generously shared with us the wisdom and resources she has accumulated after a professional lifetime as a Montessorian and has pledged to continue to aid and inspire us.

- **Elizabeth Slade** is a Montessori educator and consultant who has worked in both the private and public sectors over the last 24 years. She has helped convert two public schools to Montessori, coordinating the Montessori training and developing programming, and she now runs New View Montessori Consultancy. Elizabeth has expertise in the development of benchmark standards and merging *Montessori Scope and Sequence* with public school curricula, among many other areas. She is currently working on projects to address approaches for students who are struggling to keep to their grade level, and has a long-term consulting assignment at the *Hill View Montessori Charter Public School* in Haverhill, MA. In initial conversations, we have discussed ways in which we could work together to build a successful public Montessori model.

- **Christine Brown** is the Owner, Director and Head Teacher at the *Merrimack Valley Montessori School* in Salem, New Hampshire. Originally a middle school/high school science teacher in her native England, Chris completed her Montessori training after her four children went through the *Merrimack Valley Montessori School* and joined its staff in 1994. She is the President of the New Hampshire Montessori Association. Chris has already been a wonderful resource for our Founders team.

- **Lisa Charest** is a Montessori Teacher with a Master's Degree and Montessori Certification. She taught for several years at *Merrimack Montessori School* in Haverhill, Massachusetts. After taking some time to raise her two sons, she joined the staff at *Merrimack Valley Montessori School* in Salem in 2010. She will continue to work with us as we move forward.

- **Seacoast Center for Education, Inc.** is a Montessori elementary teacher education program located in Stratham, New Hampshire. We expect to work with the Center during the charter school development period, and we hope they will be a strong supporter of our effort and a good source for training and teacher recruitment.

Our work in preparing this application and exploring the issues facing our teachers, students and families has given us the opportunity to reach out and meet with many key people in the Manchester community and beyond. Some are community leaders and generous volunteers, others serve on the Manchester School Board, and still others work in the district or with non-profits serving the city and state. Some of those who have expressed their deep support for the project, and with whom we will continue to consult, include:

- **Sarah Ambrogi** is a practicing lawyer in Manchester, New Hampshire and a Manchester School Board Member. She was the first elected official we approached with our idea, and she has been a wonderful supporter and advocate of the project. We look forward to continuing to work with Sarah and her colleagues as we move forward.

- **Kim Calhoun** is a Social Worker with the Manchester School District currently working with the refugee and minority populations in Manchester. We look forward to working with Kim and her colleagues as we reach out to leaders in the New American community, and individuals with strong ties to those they serve.

- **Eleanor Dunfey-Freiberger** is a Professor of Ethics and Civic Engagement at Southern New Hampshire University. Among the many academic areas she has been involved in during her more than 30 years at SNHU, Eleanor has spearheaded the *Service Learning Initiative* and has worked tirelessly as a bridge between the university and the community. Her work has inspired our approach to civics, service and community and will continue to do so as our work progresses.

- **Trini Tellez** is a Family Practice Physician now working as the Director of the Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. She is committed to issues of access and fairness in education for all and of course is a great advocate for many of the poorest and often voiceless citizens in our state. She has already begun to share her ideas about working and communicating successfully with those she works with and in whose interests she serves.

- **Rosemary Shore** founded and ran ChildrenFirst, Inc., one of the nation's first and largest networks of backup child-care centers from its inception in 1992 until 2004. During her tenure, ChildrenFirst, Inc. grew to serve more than 250 corporate clients in ten top metropolitan markets across the U.S. and Canada. We have already called upon her expertise in the development of the business plan for the School's first years and beyond.

We are also very fortunate to have a lawyer and financial expert among the founding members, and access to accountants, marketing experts and even certified green architects through our founding group. As we work to get established, we will continue to formalize our relationships with professionals in these areas as well as in the areas of Human Resources, Marketing, and teaching English as a second language.

In addition, we hope to develop curriculum partnerships with institutions (such as the Manchester Community Music School and the Currier Museum of Art) as well as with individuals to provide meaningful complements to our Faculty and curriculum.

V: PHILOSOPHY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND RELATED PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The students of *Mill Falls Charter School* will achieve the greatest success when our teachers and families work together. We see parents/guardians as key participants in the building of the school community and the success of the program. The regular presence of our students' parents/guardians will be part of the landscape of the *Mill Falls Charter School*, not an exception.

Parent/guardian involvement will begin even before admission. As part of the enrollment process, parents/guardians will be asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the Mission and expectations of the students and their families. We will ask that parents/guardians participate in school activities as schedules allow. We will request that they be ambassadors for the *Mill Falls Charter School* and that they volunteer approximately 40 hours of labor over the course of the school year, which of course can and will take many shapes and forms.

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will work to accommodate the different needs and situations of families and will value and celebrate the variety of ways our families will be able to contribute to the education of their children and the school overall. We will have parent participation on our board (*see Governance, Section B*) and we anticipate the establishment of a parent organization to create an opportunity for support, discussions, problem solving and parent education.

Parents/guardians of children at *Mill Falls Charter School* will receive regular reports on their children's academic and emotional growth (*see Assessment, Section B*). We are fortunate that the Montessori model offers so much in the way of communication and constant evaluation. By design it helps parents/guardians become involved and engaged in their children's life at school and their overall education. The Montessori approach empowers both parents and their children to become advocates for their education, while encouraging respectful and thoughtful dialogue. We will expect that parents/guardians will work with us to ensure that communication is two-way, by offering a variety of means for that communication to take place (e.g. written feedback, surveys, and meetings).

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will be committed to the education of everyone in our community — our students, our teachers and our parents/guardians. We will seek to bring a variety of educational opportunities to the School, and aim to shape the School as a place where people from within and beyond the school community come together to engage, experience, and grow. Professional and family education will deepen the understanding of the Montessori approach, highlight issues faced by our students (e.g., the role of technology, issues of respect of others and self), and facilitate ways families can enhance the work done at school. It will help them engage in their children's educational journey, from our youngest students to our most mature.

Ultimately, we will capitalize on our diverse experiences and strengths to build a clear mission and a strong school community. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will be a community that will lead by example.

W: PLAN TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND PUPILS

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will employ many forms of outreach to recruit and inform potential students and their families of the opportunity the School will provide. Because the *Mill Falls Charter School* stands to be the first charter school in Manchester, and the first public Montessori in New Hampshire, we will need to aid parents/guardians and our potential students in their understanding of the School. Work in this area will begin as soon as the charter has been granted.

Utilizing literature and organizing gatherings at homes, libraries, places of faith, and other venues, we will introduce the Montessori method and the *Mill Falls Charter School* approach, Mission and goals. Working with community leaders, we will develop outreach materials and approaches appropriate for various audiences. Once the School is in operation, we will offer tours and observation opportunities as well.

We will also employ new technologies, creating an informative website, among other tools, to help students and their families assess the School and make an informed decision before submitting their application materials.

The Board will most likely have a recruitment committee and will partner with several service organizations working in and around Manchester and beyond to build our student body. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will establish relationships with members of the Manchester School District as well as other districts, and with potential feeder schools (including but not limited to private Montessori pre-k/kindergarten programs in the state).

X: GLOBAL HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE

The *Mill Falls Charter School*, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district which sends its students to the charter School, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "Indemnified Parties") from any and all claims, demands actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter School, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils. The School shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties' own acts or omissions.

Y: SEVERABILITY PROVISIONS AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

If any part of the charter contract is determined to be invalid or illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation or illegality shall not affect the remaining portions of the charter contract, which shall remain in full force and effect. Any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

Z: PROVISION FOR DISSOLUTIONS

If the *Mill Falls Charter School* ceases operation, the Board shall consult with an attorney and the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met.

Upon the dissolution of the School, the assets remaining after the payment of all its liabilities, and the return of any loaned items to rightful owners, shall be distributed to such organization or organizations operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes that qualify as an exempt organization within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to state or local government, for a public educational purpose.

AA: IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL TO A CHARTER CONVERSION SCHOOL, PROVISION FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUPILS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ATTEND AND TEACHERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO TEACH AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL

Not Applicable.

BB: A PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE SCHOOL'S PUPILS AFTER THE CHARTER SCHOOL MAY CEASE OPERATION

In the event that *Mill Falls Charter School* shall have cause to cease operation, the Head of School will work with the Board to develop a student transfer process and advise all parents/guardians, Staff and Faculty of the process to be followed. To complete each student's personal file, parents/guardians shall be asked to provide a statement of intent regarding their children's education, moving forward. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will obtain parent/guardian permission for release of information in order to notify the new schools of the impending transfers. *Mill Falls Charter School* Staff, Faculty and Board will make every effort to be available for consultation, sharing

students' portfolios, individualized learning plans and other relevant materials with the receiving school. It is important to remember that our students' Montessori experience will be linked to the *NH Core Curriculum*, and so though they may be more practiced in independent work and have developed other Montessori-related skills, it is expected that these children will easily matriculate into other schools and be at or above grade level.

Each family will also receive notice by mail, in a timely fashion, advising them of the dissolution of the School and the plan for student transition. The *Mill Falls Charter School* will also help guide families toward options that may best match their needs and abilities academically, and if appropriate, geographically. And of course the School will ensure that the receiving schools have appropriate information to facilitate the students' transitions.

CC: IN ADDITION TO AN APPLICATION, EACH CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, SHALL PREPARE A PROPOSED CONTRACT.

Not Applicable.

DD: AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN WHICH CLARIFIES EXPECTATIONS FOR EVALUATING THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM AND WHICH CONTAINS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT A FULL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN SHALL BE DEVELOPED AND READY TO IMPLEMENT PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE OPENING.

The *Mill Falls Charter School* will provide the New Hampshire State Department of Education with reports on our programs and progress annually. Utilizing a variety of assessment tools and data collected from our students, Faculty/Staff and parents/guardians, we will share information about our educational impact, parental involvement, outreach methodology and an overall analysis of our goals. In addition, our annual reports will inform the Department about our student enrollment, financial operations and governance.

This reporting will address the following questions:

- 1: Is the School making progress toward achieving our Mission?
- 2: Is the School responsibly using public funds?
- 3: Is the School promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
- 4: Is the School sustainable.

Our accountability plan will be fully developed prior to the date of opening.