

Site Visit Final Report & Procedures Form: BVSD Accreditation

School Name: Community Montessori
Dates of Review: January 17 and 18

Signature of Team Chair and Reviewers	Gender Male/Female	Race/Ethnicity
Team Chair: Phil Katsampes	Male	Caucasian
DAC Representative: Julie Gullett	Female	Caucasian
Licensed Staff Member: Tiia Norsym	Female	Hispanic
Licensed Staff Member: Alice Renton	Female	Hispanic
Education Center Rep: Dr. Judy Slinger	Female	Caucasian
Montessori Consultant: Dr. Martha Urioste	Female	Hispanic
Montessori Educator: John Fowler	Male	Caucasian
DAC Staff Liaison Certification by Date_____		(signature)

Statement of Confidentiality: Review Team Members agree to conduct the site visit with objectivity and rigor, adhering to the highest standards of integrity and honesty in maintaining the confidentiality of the findings.

Summary of Findings and Implications

1. School Improvement Design – Are the actions appropriate to the intended goals?

Achievement: Yes, actions are appropriate. Focus on writing for a variety of authentic purposes and audiences, writing instruction best practices, and targeted instruction for struggling writers will lead to an increase in writing skills and knowledge.

Organization: Yes, actions are appropriate. CM will improve student climate through their implementation of Anti-Bias Curriculum, use of consistent Class Meetings, training in Restorative Justice for staff and parents, and community celebration of diversity.

Equity: Yes, actions are appropriate. Focus on Sheltered Instruction techniques, creation of Spanish/English vocabulary lists, and connection

with ESL/Spanish resources in the larger community will lead to many NEP and LEP students making more than a year's growth in one school year.

2. Implementation of TIES/SIP/Accreditation Portfolio – Is progress being made in the implementation of the actions?

Achievement: Yes, excellent progress is being made. Observation provided evidence that teachers are developing individualized plans for offering writing activities that focus on authentic purposes and audiences. Observation provided evidence that targeted instruction is occurring for struggling writers by offering small-group, differentiated instruction in the classrooms. Best Practice writing instruction was observed throughout the CM classrooms.

Organization: Yes, excellent progress is being made. Observation provided evidence that teachers were implementing Anti-Bias Curriculum in classrooms. Teachers reported consistent use of Class Meetings. Restorative Justice training has been offered to classroom teachers, assistants, and parents. A strong celebration of diversity can be observed throughout the school.

Equity: Yes, excellent progress is being made. Observation provided evidence that teachers are implementing Sheltered Instruction techniques, including the use of concrete materials for concept formation, and individualized and small-group lessons and sequence. Outstanding connections are being made with ESL/Spanish resources in the larger community, primarily under the direction of the CM Community Liaison. Also, Spanish/English vocabulary lists were observed in classrooms with significant numbers of English Language Learners.

3. Results of Prior Year's TIES/SIP/Accreditation Portfolio – Have the actions resulted in improved student learning and reduction of patterns of inequity among subgroups of learners?

Achievement: In the area of writing, for the 4th grade cohort in the 2006/2007 school year, CM saw an increase in the percentage of students who scored proficient or above on the CSAP. They saw a WI increase of 3 points, which was slightly below their goal but nonetheless healthy.

CM is continuing their work on writing. They determined that it is more beneficial to expand their writing goal to encompass a larger group of students and grade levels.

Equity: CM saw outstanding progress in their goal of ELL students making more than a year's growth. In the 2006/2007 school year, 91% of LEP or NEP students made more than a year's growth.

Organization: CM saw improvement on 50% of the Student Climate Survey questions they set as goals. They are continuing their climate work on similar questions that measure teasing/making fun.

4. Are the goals focused on the priority challenges of the school?

Achievement: Yes, looking at the data, a possible downward trend is occurring in writing scores over the past 3 years. This is a priority challenge.

It is important to recognize that the demographics of CM have changed significantly. New challenges are evolving in the area of supporting low-income students in literacy. Continuing the existing strategies for supporting all students in writing progress is recommended.

Equity: Yes, primary literacy scores show an initial achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students. This is a priority challenge.

Organization: Yes, several critical questions relating to teasing/making fun reveal a possible downward trend in positive responses. This is a priority challenge.

We recommend that CM continues to keep a close watch on the student climate for the younger primary grades that are not reflected in the BVSD Student Climate Survey. Changing demographics in the younger grades could manifest into climate issues as these younger students continue on into the older grades.

Recommendations

5. Celebrations: Strengths and Achievements

Achievement

Both reading and writing CSAP scores as measured by weighted index are high, with reading scores exceeding those in writing. Writing scores have declined slightly over the past three years but remain well above the state average.

The three writing achievement strategies listed on the school improvement plan are found to be appropriate, and the review committee feels that full implementation of them has a high chance of positively affecting student achievement in writing. Those strategies are:

- Write everyday
- Re-examine current writing instruction
- Provide additional targeted writing instruction for striving writers

Write Everyday:

It is very evident that students are writing everyday, throughout the day. Students are engaged in skill work including vocabulary, grammar, and conventions along with process writing that leads to publishing.

Re-examine Current Writing Instruction:

Teachers shared that they have created individual writing plans, and ongoing collaboration about writing instruction is a reality. The staff is in the process of a language arts learning materials adoption which is also fueling the dialogue about which materials will best support writing instruction “in the Montessori way.”

Provide Additional Targeted Instruction for Striving Writers:

This is evidenced throughout the day as teachers support individual and group writing activities.

Children become writers as a result of acquiring certain basic skills and attitudes. These are then integrated and honed in a variety of ways. The following skills and practices are a taste of a wide range of activities and are evident at Community Montessori:

- The three- to six-year-old child learns to form words with the movable alphabet.
- Children learn to identify the function of words or parts of speech through the application of symbols to sentences.
- Children learn to identify the parts of a sentence – subject, predicate, types of phrases, et al, via charts on which those parts are arranged.
- Children made frequent and meaningful entries in personal journals.
- Specific writing skills such as introduction and voice are taught during writers’ workshops.
- Research and research writing are evident at all levels.

Individualized support is likewise evident throughout the school.

Equity

Montessori approach and prepared environment are a strong framework for English Language Learners:

- Concrete materials for concept formation
- Starting at age 3 for full benefit of three years' oral language development
- Individualized and small group lessons and sequence
- Child works at his/her own pace
- Freedom of choice within a structured environment
- Safe, comfortable, nurturing environment
- Multi-age/multi-skill level classrooms allow for heterogeneous and homogenous groupings
- Building foundations of language
- Respect and development of the child's native language and home culture

Collaborative approach among classroom teacher, ESL teacher, and Native Language tutor to meet each student's individual needs:

- Language development profile
- Preview/review in native language
- Pull-out or push-in for ESL time – small group or one-on-one
- Flexible
- Scheduled plan time

A special strength of Community Montessori that impacts all areas of this review is Parent Involvement. We want to acknowledge the important role of Rosa Invernizzi, the Community Liaison, in helping to build the parent community as well as the dedication of the SIT/PTA members with whom we met.

Organization

MODELING – DAY ONE – No evidence of any negative behavior: Why?

Montessori-prepared environments provide students with space to work and space for movement, which supports positive behavior.

- Aesthetic beauty of Montessori classrooms foster respect, care of environment, and sense of community.
- Multi-aged classrooms create community of caring – older students model and care for younger students.

Student leaders are courteous, capable, and respectful.

- **During walkthrough – very mature**
- **Student leaders use problem-solving explanations on playground – wear hats, are peer mentors, activity coordinators (no problems).**

Primary teacher was observed using native language models and respecting native languages. For example singing Spanish songs and serving tea to a visitor in her native language.

Montessori approach to working with small groups was observed. Students choose to work together. Students enjoy helping younger children.

Lower elementary lesson on community:

- **Modeled living in another country**
- **Other children had input.**
- **Older children help P.E. teacher to prepare for gym in lunchroom.**

Adults and the principal at Community Montessori are professional and positive and are excellent role models.

Parents are supportive, sensitive, caring, and action-oriented in their continuous role modeling.

- **Parents are frank, transparent, and willing to move forward with creative ideas.**
- **Models for respect, caring, and kindness**

Community liaison is a strong link with parents, teachers, community – models, translates expectations, activities to parents.

A major strength of your organization is your modeling. We witnessed ongoing modeling between:

- **student / teacher**
- **teacher / student**
- **principal / teacher**
- **principal / teacher / parent**

An additional strength is that you have implemented clear and concise rules and expectations of all students. *Your school organization goals are adequately addressed through the:

- **Montessori model of respect, grace, and courtesy**
- **The Anti-Bias Curriculum**

- Restorative Justice
- Second Classroom meetings

6. Challenges: Questions to Promote Continuous Improvement

Achievement

We want to encourage you to stay strong and true to the Montessori model as you focus on your three target areas. We suggest the following challenges:

- Continue to look for meaningful ways to support learning for all levels of writers.
- Continue the brave dialogue about your writing practice. What is working? What is not working? What do we still need to know more about? How do we support ELLs within the Montessori framework? What measures (in addition to CSAP) can be used to measure progress towards writing goals?

Equity

Continue with Professional Development and implementation of Sheltered Instruction techniques:

- Continue to offer training in Sheltered Instruction techniques
- Create opportunities for structured student/student interactions, utilizing new vocabulary sentence structures and reinforcing concepts
- Create opportunities for student/student interactions, utilizing new vocabulary, sentence structures, and key academic concepts.
- Vocabulary development across levels, i.e. direct vocabulary instruction, Montessori vocabulary cards, content word walls, and personal dictionaries organized by content theme
- ESL teacher to have Montessori materials so there is continuity

Parental Involvement

- Continue fostering personal relationships among all parents; for example, room teams and social events.
- In communicating with parents, be sure to include phone numbers as well as emails and website.
- Encourage the district to provide a set of headsets.
- Pursue additional ways to expand on soccer opportunities.
- Continue tamale-making project – unique part of your school community!

Organization

How do you continue to infuse the district curriculum while still maintaining the Montessori Model?

A few of the behavior situations we saw occurred when there was a break from the Montessori Model and were related to unengaged kids who distracted others in a disruptive way and interrupted activity, due to the lack of a viable plan for movement.

7. Attach Observations' Form

Release of Report: In accordance with the intent of Colorado law and State Board of Education Rules, a summary report will be issued to the Superintendent and the District Board of Education. As a public document it will be available to the school accountability committee and others who may be interested.

Record of Accreditation Team's Observations from the Site Visit:

Equity Goal	Achievement Goal	Organization Goal
Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Teachers endorsed in ESL- Students work in small groups to meet individual needs.- Individualized approach to each child- Students displayed self-disciplined behavior during group time.- Montessori educational approach offers concrete experiences, hands-on materials, practical life	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Writing embedded and integrated throughout the day (e.g., grammar boxes, journal writing, research)- Commands that are kinesthetic—kids act them out- Classrooms use Daily Oral Language program.- Grammar skills, sentence analysis, and writing skills were embedded throughout the day and across	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CM has invited Susan Sparks as support and affirmation of teacher climate.- Lower elem. teacher reading story about M.L.K.- Primary teacher doing a group lesson in English and Spanish - a song chosen by "Anglo child" sung in Spanish- Primary teacher encouraging use of Native Language- Primary: Children playing together

<p>skills, & sensorial experiences in Math.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment is supportive, positive affect - Native language and cultures are valued. - Native language content literacy—support bags for home - ESL teacher time planned very carefully—with teacher-collaborative push-in and pull-out based on need - Developing higher-level thinking skills through the concrete activities—content not “dumbed down” or simplified - Montessori materials offer an excellent base for multicultural learning. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking for structured student-to-student interactions: Think-Pair-Share - How are students paired-up? 	<p>levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing WI for females (matched group cohort 2005-2007) shows an increase from 105 to 109. - Writing WI for males (matched group cohort 2005-2007) is stable (from 100 to 97). - Writing WI is stable for matched group cohorts from 2005 to 2007 (102 WI). <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We didn’t see peer editing or revising. - We didn’t see written responses to reading or literature groups, but that doesn’t mean that they are not in practice; this may be more an oddity of timing rather than a challenge - (Conversations revealed that both editing and lit groups are in place. We just didn’t see them.) - How do you deal 	<p>on the playground—adequate supervision, adequate equipment—Rosa was role model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code of respect: the way children use materials/put materials away - Code of Respect: the way Primary children behave during lunchtime—walking peacefully in line—welcoming responsibility down hall to rooms—respectful to each other - Montessori approach to working in groups—children choose to work together—children enjoying helping younger children - Student leaders—problem-solving, explanations on playground—wear hats as peer leaders—said it was “boring” because there are no problems - Grace and courtesy among
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When does direct instruction happen for ELLs? - Concept/Content Word Walls and Webs for L2 English development— vocab development - Graphic Organizers not observed - SIOP Methods - Beware of “digital divide” - Parents: continue fostering personal relationships. - More soccer?? In PE? Parents? Community Schools? - Rosa: audit 3-6-year-old Montessori training? - 	<p>with timeline of CM ending at 5th grade?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do older grades need a unique, more open structure? Should all older grades look a little different? - How does Montessori align with writing best practices? (Our feeling was that the ongoing dialogue of the school addressed these questions.) - Maybe a connection with other Montessori public schools? This is always a good idea. 	<p>primary children—they ask to sign guest book and offer tea. Upper elem. students offered tea as well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent volunteers are positive role models for respect, caring and kindness. - Older children help PE teacher to prepare for Gym in lunchroom. - Primary playground has adequate equipment for children, and fence provides safety for all children. - Parent leadership is strong foundation for positive school climate—willing to be frank, transparent, and committed on behalf of all students. - Aesthetic beauty of Montessori classrooms fosters respect, care of environment, and sense of community (plants, aquariums,
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		<p>pictures).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students leaders are courteous, capable, and respectful—during walk-through, they were very mature.- Principal is excellent role model in her leadership role—staff development priorities demonstrate sincere effort to create successful destratification.- Parents are supportive of destratification of the school and illustrate their sensitivity toward inclusion of all parents.- Adults at CM are professional and positive and good role models.- No evidence of negative behavior- Children are playing respectfully during lunchtime—in hall—on playground.- Primary children taught to take care of
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		<p>classroom— washing dishes, sweeping, and cleaning materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community Liaison is strong link with parents and translates important school values, expectations, and activities to parents.- Montessori multi- aged classrooms create community of caring—older students help younger students.- Montessori prepared environments provide students with space for work/movement. <p style="text-align: center;">■</p>
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