

River Valley Charter School

Annual Report

2010-2011

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Jeanne Schultz, Director



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Author Carolyn Coman discusses her book, *The Memory Bank*, at the River Valley Charter School on April 13, 2011.

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INTRODUCTORY DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

River Valley Charter School, situated in Newburyport, is a regional school serving Newburyport, Amesbury, Salisbury, Newbury, and West Newbury. The school has been in operation for 12 years, with our current charter term ending on June 30, 2014. As of August 1, 2011, River Valley served 288 children in kindergarten through grade eight, its chartered grade span. In the elementary grades, each head teacher works with a full-time assistant teacher. The Middle School (grades seven and eight) consisted of 55 students, as well as a team leader and five full-time teachers. Our full-day kindergarten program served 32 students.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I am pleased to present the River Valley Charter School Annual Report for 2010-2011. This was an exciting year for River Valley, as we expanded our facility – adding a new gymnasium, as well as art and music rooms.

As a public Montessori school, our challenge is to remain faithful to the Montessori philosophy while meeting the requirements placed on all Massachusetts public schools, including the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the MCAS, and No Child Left Behind. I am pleased to report that River Valley is meeting this challenge. As shown in this Annual Report, River Valley maintains a highly qualified, Montessori-trained faculty and adheres to the Montessori tradition in its teaching and learning activities, while its students consistently score well on national and state-level standardized tests.

River Valley families remain highly engaged in the school community. While not required, this year, 66 percent of River Valley families reported a total of 5,841 volunteer hours, and 72 percent made a donation to the River Valley Foundation.

River Valley is financially sound. As a public charter school, River Valley's finances depend on enrollment, responsible budgeting, and state funding levels. With a current wait list of 748 students, River Valley will continue at full enrollment. The administration and Board of Trustees have continued to manage our budget conservatively this year. As of June 30, we estimate that the school's net assets are \$1,539,581, ensuring organizational viability in the face of a difficult financial outlook for 2011 and beyond.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wish to thank Jeanne Schultz and the faculty and staff of River Valley for their hard work and excellent results. Finally, I wish to thank the parents who have entrusted River Valley Charter School with their children.

Scott Jordan, Chair
River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant, productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PLANS

The following sections report on our progress toward Accountability Plan goals and provide additional data in regards to the Common School Performance Criteria. The numbered items correspond to the River Valley Charter School Accountability Plan, dated September 29, 2009, on file at the school and at the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Faithfulness to the Charter

River Valley's mission is to provide an authentic and complete Montessori program within the public sphere. It is also to integrate regional history, culture, and ecology into the learning process, so that students become aware of both the larger world beyond school and their places in it. This, in turn, is key to the last part of the school mission, which is preparedness for future schools, careers, and civic life.

Accountability Plan Objective 1: Meet nationally recognized standards for high-quality Montessori education

Measurement 1.1: Eighty percent of the pedagogical criteria will be met as determined by an independent Montessori audit done every two years.

Elizabeth Slade, a nationally recognized Montessori consultant, conducted our Montessori audit in January 2011. Ms. Slade used the Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools checklist to evaluate our program and found that we met 95 percent of the criteria listed. Below is a summary of her commendations.

- Environment is one of the key aspects of a Montessori program and is seen as an integral part of the students' education. River Valley has a lovely, warm feeling throughout. Spaces are clean, organized and welcoming. Parents, children and staff all seem to feel at home in the school, with a positive and happy countenance. The children clearly owned the space, offering unsolicited directions or assistance as hosts and hostesses of the building.
- Another essential aspect of a Montessori program is the trained guide who holds a deep understanding of the mission. All of the classrooms in the school are led by teachers with or in Montessori training, the majority of whom have been at the school for more than three years. In addition, they all have an assistant teacher or a co-teacher working with them full time.
- Dr. Montessori describes in her writing a process a child goes through called "normalization." A "normalized" classroom environment then is one where all or most of the children have come to a place of self-regulation with a focus on learning. This is a great achievement for any classroom or any school. Throughout each classroom visit, it was evident that River Valley has reached normalization within the classrooms and throughout the school as a whole. There were no students who were intentionally disruptive to the classroom, with a majority focused on learning.
- All human beings have a need and a tendency towards order, and Montessori schools respect and reflect this need through the creation of a predictable and established routine. This keeps the emphasis on the learning and student energy focused on solving academic problems instead of environmental problems. Procedures and routines of the school, as well as in each classroom were clearly understood and embedded into daily living. The students knew and followed them without reminders from adults, often reminding one another.
- The value on the arts is apparent, with beautiful spaces for Art and Music as well as high quality instruction.
- It is evident that significant resources have been invested in supporting struggling students. Support is available at each level in both math and literacy, as well as a full time school counselor and a full special education staff.
- Parents are very happy with the school and the quality of education their children are receiving. They appreciate the school's intimate climate and that their children are known and cared for at River Valley.

Measurement 1.2: Maintain membership affiliations with the American Montessori Society

As required by our Accountability Plan, we are a professional affiliate school member of the American Montessori Society (AMS), taking advantage of the resources available nationally from this organization for the benefit of teachers and parents. In addition, River Valley is also a member of the International Montessori Council, the Montessori Schools of Massachusetts and the North American Montessori Teachers' Association.

Accountability Plan Objective 2: Acquire and maintain community partners for both curriculum and service in our surrounding region. River Valley teachers will individually cultivate curriculum partners, as well as create opportunities for community service.

Measurement 2.1: School records will reflect the development of at least three curriculum partners for each level as well as the involvement of the school in community service.

Partnerships are a key component for the teachers, students and parents of River Valley Charter School. It is through the interactions with community organizations within our region that we are able to enrich our curriculum and, in turn, serve our community. Through the relationships we develop, we are meeting the goals of our mission: to be rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

We identify two types of partnerships as part of our Partnership Program. The first type of partnership is the classroom curriculum partnership, which is developed and established with environmental and historical associations and human service organizations both national and international in scope. Partnerships in this area are within individual classes or are school-wide in nature. The second type is a school-wide partnership. This type consists of relationships with schools and universities, local community groups, Montessori organizations and training centers, and human services groups. These partnerships address the school-wide community and benefit both the partner and River Valley.

This year, we continued our partnership with the Newburyport Tree Committee. Elementary 2 (E2: grades four through six) students researched more than 100 possible sites and then planted approximately 60 trees throughout Newburyport. Our students have planted close to 600 trees since this project began in 2005.

Pen pals connect our children to others in the world. Kinderhaus students have a partnership through the Journey North program, a pen-pal project through which students learn about the annual migration pattern of the monarch butterfly. Elementary 1 (E1: grades one through three) students have a partnership with Donna Seim, a local author in Newburyport, who has connections with Providenciales Primary School in Turks and Caicos Islands. Through this partnership, students have learned about another culture by exchanging letters. Donna also visited this class three times during the school year to read her own works and those of the children.

River Valley hosted two authors this year who presented to our Kinderhaus through E2 students. Award-winning author Carolyn Coman shared her latest book titled “The Memory Bank” and discussed the writing process with students. Through a partnership with the Newburyport Literary Festival, author Jana Laiz visited the school and provided students with copies of her books. She talked with younger students about wildlife conservation in regards to her “Elephants of the Tsunami” book and shared her story of hope in the face of slavery in the 1800s with our older students, as well as providing writing exercises.

Our Middle School students participated in a model United Nations simulation at Northeastern and Bentley Universities, debating and providing leadership for their representative countries. Students worked with the Troop Support program of Salisbury to collect and send more than 20 goodwill packages to soldiers overseas. Our partnership with the Salvation Army opened opportunities for enrichment within both organizations. In December, students rang bells and then, in the spring, the Salvation Army opened their facilities to our students for their Hunger Awareness Dinner. Students donated more than 200 cans/boxes of food from this event, along with half of the proceeds raised to the Salvation Army. They also collected healthy snacks for school lunches and delivered them to this agency. A group of Middle School students also reached out to the Nock Middle School in Newburyport to share ideas about community service and the annual Hunger Fast. This has helped to open lines of communication, and will hopefully develop into a more involved partnership in the future. Boating safety is another area in which our partnerships reached out into the community. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary used our facility for a spring boat safety course, which attracted students and parents from around the area.

Elementary 2 and Middle School students prepared and served meals through the Newburyport soup kitchen program. They participated in serving both lunch and dinner on an ongoing basis.

One of our E2 classes participated in a local Farmer’s Market to sell handmade goods in order to raise money for the Red Cross International for tsunami victims.

The Art of Expression group in our Middle School worked with a local designer to create their own fashion designs and business vision statements.

Through a grant from Salem State University, River Valley created a model program for student teachers to show the integration of literacy into the sciences. One E2 class created field guides of our school grounds, including stories and artwork, to share with Salem State professors on a monthly basis. An E1 class focused solely on our pond, also generating scientific research and works of creative writing and art. Another E1 class integrated their study of the cosmic water cycle with the arts.

One of our E1 classes worked with the Audubon Society to co-create a unit on pond study. They worked on tracking animal and plant life and food webs and shared curriculum ideas and projects.

Our Kinderhaus and E1 students participated in a peace project called “Sing Peace Around the World” in honor of the United Nations’ International Day of Peace in September.

This year, at the request of a Middle School student, we began a partnership with Sustainable Harvest International. A team of parents, students and a Middle School teacher traveled to Panama to help improve farming practices and living conditions. This group would like to resume the project during the next school year.

Our partnerships strengthen our ties to the community, and our students develop skills in becoming self-reliant, productive members of society. These partnerships fulfill the requirements laid forth in our charter: to acquire and maintain curriculum and community service partnerships in the community. Teachers and students are actively involved in the development of the partnerships and share ownership of the work done for the community at large.

Classroom Curriculum Partners 2010-2011						
Curriculum Partner	Focus Areas	School-Wide Involvement	Kinderhaus	E1	E2	Middle School
American Montessori Society, NYC	Professional Development, Dissemination	X				
Amoskeag Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NH	Marine/Estuarine Ecology (salmon nursery and release program)			XX		
Bentley Model UN, Bentley University, Waltham	Global Studies, Leadership Initiative					X
Sue Doyle, Naturopathic Physician, Newburyport	Personal Health, Education			XX		
Free the Children	International Children’s Rights Organization					X
Historic New England, Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm, Newbury	History, Ecology, Agriculture, Culture				X	
Joppa Flats Education Center, Mass. Audubon, Newburyport	Bird Banding, Research, Ecology			X		X

Curriculum Partner	Focus Areas	School-Wide Involvement	Kinderhaus	E1	E2	Middle School
Journey North	Ecology (monarch butterfly migration), Cultural Exchange (pen pals)		X	X		
Kids as Peacemakers, Newburyport	Peace Education	X				
Maudslay State Park, Newburyport	Ecology (forests and fields study)			X	XX	
Montessori Schools of Massachusetts	Professional Development, Dissemination	X				
National Park Service, Augustus St. Gaudens NHS, Cornish, NH	Arts and Science Integration into Historical Context of Memorials and Legacy Project					X
Newburyport Fire Department	Health, Safety, Community		X			
Newburyport Preservation Trust (Saving Our History)	History, Culture, Local Schools, Curriculum			X		
Newburyport Tree Committee	Ecology (tree planting project)				XXXX	
Opportunity Works, Newburyport	Community Building, Cultural Awareness					X
Overlook Farm, Heifer International	Global Studies, Leadership, Culture, Hunger Awareness Meal				XXXX	X
Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newbury	History, Culture, Ecology (understanding our barrier island)			XXX	XX	X
Pennies for Poverty, Newburyport	Community Service Opportunities for Students			X		
Salem State University	Collaborative Faculty Grant*, Dissemination, Interns**, Reading/Writing Course Site	X		* **	* **	
Donna Seim, Newburyport Author and Providenciales Primary School, Turks and Caicos Islands	Literacy, Cultural Exchange (pen pals)			X		
Trustees of Reservations, Newbury	History, Culture, Ecology				XX	
United Nations Association of Greater Boston	Global Studies, Leadership					X
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary	Boating Safety					X
United States Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Parker River Wildlife Refuge	River Study, Ecology, Geology, Professional Development	X				
Veterans for Peace	Culture, Community			X		
Totals		5	2	17	18	9

As required by our charter and Accountability Plan, River Valley students remain highly committed to community service. They have greatly exceeded their goals for community service hours again during the 2010-2011 school year. This can be seen when looking at the hours reported for our exit-level students (Kinderhaus, grade three, grade six, and grade eight). Our 32 Kinderhaus students had a total of 176 hours this year, which averages to more than five hours per child. Our 33 E1 students performed 6,036 hours, for an average of 183 hours per child. Our 34 E2 students had a total of 6,286 hours, for an average of 185 hours each. Finally, our 28 Middle School students performed 4,662 hours of community service, for an average of 166.5 hours per student. Overall, our exit-level students performed a total of 17,160 hours of community service this year, an increase of more than 900 hours over last year's total. While this number is impressive, it does not even include non-exit-level students in grades one, two, four, five and seven.

River Valley students are genuinely interested in using their talents and resources in service to their school and home communities. The modeling by parents and faculty in their service to the school and the community at large has been an inspiration to our students, who have become involved in humanitarian work through both classroom activities and personal endeavors. Their involvement is a work of the heart that has helped create a school culture for generosity for other humans' needs and for the care of the environment both near and far.

Our school community is committed to the concept of giving both time and money. Closely related to many of our curriculum partnerships, these outreach activities are diverse and also meet a particular need of the partnership. The philosophy behind community service at River Valley is that the projects are student driven and grow from their work in the curriculum. This approach leads to experiences of substance for our students. The widely held view of community service as a service-learning component in education best describes these experiences. Following are examples of community service projects completed by our students during the 2010-2011 school year.

Environmental Projects

- Weekly recycling by our Green Team, an interactive program for students and teachers to learn how to reduce, reuse, and recycle classroom materials.
- Two E1 classrooms raised salmon fingerlings and released them into the Merrimack River. They also worked with the Parker River Wildlife Refuge to educate the general public by enhancing their ongoing exhibit and enjoyed visits from a park ranger.
- Another E1 class worked with the Refuge to learn about caring for animals in protected wildlife areas and also cleaned up the beach.
- Middle School students worked with the Newburyport Parks Commission to help maintain a portion of the rail trail and to make improvements on the equipment shed and garden area at a local park.

Humanitarian Projects

- Jump Rope for Heart/Hoops for Heart event raised funds for the American Heart Association and continued to create awareness for healthy heart behaviors for children.
- A class coordinated a school-wide weekly collection of food for the Pettengill House, a local food pantry for those in need.
- Classes continued their work in intergenerational activity at Atria Merrimack Place, a retirement facility in Newburyport. Students read with the elders and listened to stories about their life experiences.
- Our students donated more than \$250 to Heifer International through their fund-raising efforts.
- E1 students raised awareness and funds for Pennies for Poverty and collected toiletries for donation to the Salvation Army.
- Middle School students worked with disabled clients of Opportunity Works in Newburyport to design and facilitate a movement/exercise program to address a variety of physical and social needs for classes of up to 40 people.
- One of our E1 classes collected winter coats for local families in need.

- Middle School students provided activities for residents at Port Rehabilitation, such as playing board games, decorating cookies and creating holiday projects.

International Projects

- Middle School students once again participated in the Free the Children project. Students hosted a Hunger Awareness Dinner at the Salvation Army and took part in a 24-hour Vow of Silence to raise money for Free the Children.
- Our students' 2010-2011 trick-or-treat efforts resulted in a gift of more than \$300 to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. The money helps children in developing countries survive through the provision of vaccines, nutrition, and shelter.

Also, there are many ongoing community service projects within the school. Volunteer efforts included: classroom-to-classroom "reading buddies," set-up for concerts and other events, our "flag team" (students who raise and lower the American flag on the school's front lawn each day), and older students acting as escorts for Kinderhaus children during dismissal.

The relevance of curriculum partnerships and community service learning projects is ultimately global in perspective. The work focuses on leadership, implications for peace education, and connections for learning about cultures, governments and peoples of nations throughout the world and their relationships to the Merrimack River Valley region.

Implementation of Mission, Vision, and Educational Philosophy

River Valley Charter School provides a 21st century Montessori education that prepares students to be compassionate citizens with the skills to be effective, responsible leaders in a rapidly changing, deeply interconnected world. Our students are known for their academic strengths, self confidence, critical thinking and enthusiasm for learning, and they excel at the high schools of their choice. Our educational program exemplifies academic excellence as a nationally recognized public school that demonstrates faithfulness to Montessori methodology while delivering the academic rigor defined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Our ongoing curriculum partnerships provide students with the opportunities to learn about the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

Implementation of the Governance/Leadership Structure

The River Valley Board of Trustees may consist of up to 17 members, as well as three non-voting, ex officio members (including the school Director and a faculty representative). The work of the Board is done through eight committees. These committees are: executive, grievance, director evaluation, committee on trustees, accountability, finance, development and site. Board members usually participate on at least two committees, which generally meet once a month, or as needed. The Board developed a five-year strategic plan in 2009-2010, and has implemented the first phase of this plan during the 2010-2011 school year.

Academic Program Success

The River Valley Assessment Toolset combines the Montessori Scope and Sequence with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and provides integrated learning objectives for each of the planes of development served by the school. Our assessment system measures a set of character-building and developmental skills that promote student success as well as academic achievement.

Accountability Plan Objective 3: RVCS students will realize their individual potential in academic, personal and social development.

We've seen our alumni students realize their individual potential as they move forward in their academic careers after graduating from River Valley. These students benefit from a high-quality Montessori education as they move on to other schools. This is evident in the many accomplishments of our graduate students. Outcomes expected from a Montessori education include academic preparation, intrinsic motivation, civility,

social responsibility, autonomy, leadership skills, confidence, creativity, originality, and spiritual awareness. We define spiritual awareness as a basic appreciation for life and the human condition.

Students from the River Valley graduating class of 2011 have been accepted at some of the top regional private schools, including Governor’s Academy, St. John’s Prep, Phillips Andover, Berwick Academy and the Clark School.

Measurement 3.1: We expect at least 80 percent of our students exiting each level to meet or exceed the documented learning objectives for each of the four levels (Kinderhaus, Elementary 1, Elementary 2, and Middle School) in each of the following areas: mathematics, language arts, cultural (science and humanities), critical thinking, creative problem solving, and personal and social development (self-motivation, self-reliance, respect for the prepared environment, and community service).

In 2010-2011, River Valley students have exceeded exit-level goals in most areas. Students reached 80 percent across all levels and in all areas, with the exception of creative problem solving for our kinderhaus students.

These assessments are determined by the classroom teachers based on information from student portfolios, daily observations and recordings, curriculum tracking sheets, and progress reports, all components of the River Valley Toolset.

A whole-child approach to assessment, which includes the River Valley Toolset as well as external standardized tests, is used to measure a child’s progress throughout the year as well as to determine student retention. Comparisons of internal assessments against external test data show strong correlations, indicating evidence of the viability of our assessment Toolset. In other words, a Kinderhaus student with low TerraNova test scores will most likely demonstrate similar performance weaknesses on his progress report, student portfolio and other Toolset documentation. Based on this evidence, this child may be retained or be considered a candidate for additional support services.

The results for 2010-2011 are as follows.

Percent of Students Who Met or Exceeded Documented Learning Objectives				
	Kinderhaus	Elementary 1	Elementary 2	Middle School
<i>Mathematics</i>	97	82	100	100
<i>Language Arts</i>	97	91	100	100
<i>Cultural (Science and Humanities)</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	97	100	100	100
<i>Creative Problem Solving</i>	78	97	100	100
<i>Personal and Social Development</i>				
• <i>Self-Motivation</i>	97	94	100	100
• <i>Self-Reliance</i>	87.5	91	100	100
• <i>Respect for the Prepared Environment</i>	100	97	100	100
• <i>Community Service</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	100

Notes to the table:

Cultural (Science and Humanities): At the Middle School level, these two subject areas are averaged together. All of our Middle School students have met or exceeded the documented learning objectives for both science and humanities.

Critical Thinking: Teachers use their observation logs and student portfolios to support their evaluations of these life skills.

Creative Problem Solving: Teachers use their observation logs and student portfolios to support their evaluations of these life skills.

Self-Motivation: This information is derived three times a year from individual student progress reports, and it is based on teacher observations. In Kinderhaus, this information comes from the progress report section called “work habits.” For E1 students, this information comes from the progress report sections called “personal development” and “work/study habits.” For E2 students, this information comes from the progress report sections called “personal/social development” and “work habits.” For Middle School students, this information comes from the progress report section called “personal development and life skills.”

Self-Reliance: This information is derived three times a year from individual student progress reports, and it is based on teacher observations. In Kinderhaus, this information comes from the progress report sections called “work habits.” For E1 students, this information comes from the progress report sections called “personal development” and “work/study habits.” For E2 students, this information comes from the progress report sections called “personal/social development” and “work habits.” For Middle School students, this information comes from the progress report section called “personal development and life skills.”

Respect for the Prepared Environment: By this we mean exhibiting appropriate behaviors so that every student can focus on learning, respect for the learning environment and materials, respect for others, and completion of the work cycle. This information is derived three times a year from individual student progress reports, and it is based on teacher observations.

Community Service: The River Valley Charter School Accountability Plan requires that students perform a total of 50 community service hours before graduation (pro-rated for students new to the school). All of the 28 graduating Middle School students acquired the desired number of hours, which means that 100 percent of the students had achieved the goal.

Measurement 3.2: Eighty-five percent of students will meet or exceed the national average on the TerraNova test annually.

River Valley administers the TerraNova test every year to every student. We use test results as an analytical tool to aid in setting future goals with the child. These results are also monitored over time to see the child’s progress and to determine appropriate instructional strategies.

Analysis of TerraNova testing for the 2010-2011 school year indicates that the Median National Percentile scores for River Valley students had a low range of 41.0 (which occurred in first-grade math) to a high range of 90.7 (which occurred in eighth-grade language). *At least eighty-five percent of students met or exceeded the national average on each test*, with students in Kinderhaus and grades two through eight scoring at 50 percent or higher.

The TerraNova test has been given every year since the inception of River Valley Charter School. Following a thorough summary of this data, we can make the following generalization:

- *The longer students attend River Valley, the higher their performance on the TerraNova test.*

Median National Percentile 2010-2011 – River Valley					
	Reading	Language	Math	Science	Social Studies
Kinderhaus	71.7	N/A	64.5	N/A	N/A
1st Grade	48.0	N/A	41.0	N/A	N/A
2nd Grade	59.0	N/A	65.0	79.0	63.0
3rd Grade	75.0	51.0	57.0	73.0	55.0
4th Grade	70.5	58.0	66.0	67.5	75.0
5th Grade	79.0	80.0	73.0	80.0	75.0
6th Grade	82.0	84.0	85.0	77.5	88.5
7th Grade	85.0	89.0	88.0	77.0	73.0
8th Grade	86.0	90.7	85.0	86.3	76.0

TerraNova Achievement Test, Version 3 – this test was norm-referenced in 2007.

MCAS

A total of 190 River Valley students in grades three through eight participated in the MCAS test in spring 2010. The results of these tests have been compared to state averages, as well as analyzed longitudinally to identify strengths and weaknesses of our academic programs.

Using the CPI calculations from the 2010-2011 No Child Left Behind Report Card for River Valley Charter School and for the state, one can see that River Valley students outperform their state peers on 13 of the 14 tests. Test scores remain “very high” in ELA and “high” in Math.

Following is a table of scores for the spring 2010 MCAS for both River Valley and the state. Note the small sample size (*n*) for River Valley, which is between 28 and 35 students.

Percentage of Students’ Scores on MCAS in Each Category									
	River Valley					State			
	<i>n</i> =	A*	P	NI	W	A*	P	NI	W
3 rd -Grade Reading	33	3	61	30	6	14	49	30	8
3 rd -Grade Mathematics	33	12	48	24	15	25	40	24	11
4 th -Grade ELA	32	0	38	63	0	11	43	35	12
4 th -Grade Mathematics	33	0	39	61	0	16	32	41	11
5 th -Grade ELA	35	14	51	34	0	16	47	28	10
5 th -Grade Mathematics	35	29	37	31	3	25	30	28	17
5 th -Grade Science and Technology/Engineering	35	17	49	34	0	15	38	36	11
6 th -Grade ELA	30	37	60	0	3	15	54	21	9
6 th -Grade Mathematics	30	43	33	13	10	27	32	25	16
7 th -Grade ELA	28	18	79	4	0	11	61	21	7
7 th -Grade Mathematics	28	14	64	21	0	14	39	27	19
8 th -Grade ELA	31	26	65	10	0	17	61	16	7
8 th -Grade Mathematics	31	35	52	10	3	22	29	28	21
8 th -Grade Science and Technology/Engineering	31	3	52	42	3	4	36	41	19

(Key: A= Advanced P= Proficient NI= Needs Improvement W= Warning)

*In grade three, the highest category of proficiency is termed P+, meaning Above Proficient.

River Valley vs. State (CPI Scores)														
Grade	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	8
Test	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	Sci.	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	Sci.
River Valley	87.1	80.3	80.5	79.5	89.3	87.1	88.6	97.5	87.5	98.2	91.1	96.8	94.4	81.5
State	85.8	83.8	80.1	78.7	84.2	77.4	79.7	86.8	79.7	88.6	76.1	90.4	74.8	71.0

- On ELA tests, River Valley students scored an average of 5.58 CPI points higher than their state peers in all grades.
- On Math tests, River Valley students scored an average of 10.58 CPI points higher than their state peers in grades four through eight.
- On Science and Technology tests, River Valley students scored an average of 9.7 CPI points higher than their state peers in grades five and eight.

Comparative Grade-Level Data: River Valley vs. Sending Districts and State

River Valley draws the majority of its students from Newburyport and Amesbury; these sending districts account for 56 percent and 17 percent of River Valley’s overall student enrollment, respectively. Following is a table of CPI scores for the spring 2010 MCAS for River Valley, its sending districts, and the state.

River Valley vs. District and State (CPI Scores)														
Grade	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	8
Test	ELA	Mth	ELA	Mth	ELA	Mth	Sci	ELA	Mth	ELA	Mth	ELA	Mth	Sci
Amesbury	89.2	90.1	81.2	82.4	90.6	79.4	87.3	89.0	71.4	90.1	81.8	92.0	74.4	75.8
Newburyport	88.0	85.0	81.3	77.8	86.8	79.2	85.8	91.4	81.7	96.3	90.5	96.9	88.0	85.9
Pentucket	91.4	86.5	89.2	84.8	92.7	86.4	90.3	94.8	88.7	92.4	77.9	95.3	83.8	87.4
Triton	89.0	89.1	85.3	86.1	92.0	87.5	89.4	94.2	91.1	92.3	82.0	93.9	80.9	77.7
River Valley	87.1	80.3	80.5	79.5	89.3	87.1	88.6	97.5	87.5	98.2	91.1	96.8	94.4	81.5
State	85.8	83.8	80.1	78.7	84.2	77.4	79.7	86.8	79.7	88.6	76.1	90.4	74.8	71.0

- River Valley students outperformed their Newburyport peers in nine out of 14 tests.
- River Valley students also outperformed their Amesbury peers in nine out of 14 tests.
- River Valley students scored higher than their state peers and peers from all sending districts on the following tests: sixth-grade ELA, seventh-grade ELA, seventh-grade Math, and eighth-grade Math.

River Valley vs. Districts (CPI Scores) Students with Special Needs, Grades 3-8		
Tests	ELA	Math
Amesbury	68.5	55.4
Newburyport	67.5	57.6
Pentucket	77.5	61.9
Triton	74.2	66.5
River Valley	80.3	69.1

- River Valley students with special needs in grades three through eight outperformed their peers from all sending districts on both ELA and Math tests.

Median Student Growth Percentile

In 2010, River Valley Charter School’s median student growth percentile (SGP) in the aggregate for English Language Arts was 51.0 for students across all grades, according to the No Child Left Behind Report Card. Students with disabilities had an SGP of 50.0 for ELA.

The aggregate SGP for all students in Math was 66.0 in 2010. Students with disabilities had an SGP of 61.0 for Math.

Measurement 3.3: School will meet federal criteria of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts each year.

River Valley did make AYP in English Language Arts, according to the 2010-2011 No Child Left Behind Report Card. In addition, student performance was rated as “very high” in this report, and the school has been identified as “no status” in ELA for accountability purposes.

Measurement 3.4: School will meet federal criteria of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Math each year.

River Valley also met AYP in Math in 2010-2011 and earned a “high” performance rating on the NCLB Report Card. The school has also been identified as “no status” in Math for accountability purposes.

Curriculum

In a Montessori education, curriculum, instruction and assessment are purposefully integrated. The River Valley curriculum integrates the Montessori Scope and Sequence with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This allows us to demonstrate clearly our accountability to public education standards and assures that our students will be fully prepared to enter the next phase of their education – public or private – when they graduate from River Valley. The whole-child approach of the Montessori curriculum integrates the development of self-reliance, independence, and respectfulness with academic work. As the child matures, he begins to use his personal and social skills to inform and evaluate his own work through individual and group self-assessment.

An interdisciplinary approach arises naturally from Montessori’s Five Great Lessons and from the project orientation of the Montessori curriculum. For example, two of the lessons are the Story of Language and the Story of Numbers. As young elementary children study the Story of Language, they develop an understanding of grammar, imagining the first words that were uttered and what parts of speech they might have been. As they study the Story of Numbers, they might practice writing and computing in Egyptian, Chinese, and Roman numerals. This work is also integrated into continent studies.

In the summer of 2010, Montessori Made Manageable worked with the school to provide a K-8 curriculum correlation between the National Common Core Standards and the Montessori Scope and Sequence. In June 2011, we realigned the document with the Massachusetts Common Core Standards. The document will be made available on our school web site for September 2011.

A pilot program in Spanish was conducted for Middle School students and represents a curriculum change for the 2010-2011 school year.

Instruction

Students are respected as both unique and competent, with an innate desire to learn. They are empowered to direct their own learning within the structure of the curriculum, with the close guidance of the teacher, and with an understanding of their individual learning styles. (In many Montessori schools, teachers are referred to as guides.) Each student has an individual learning plan, the design of which he takes an increasingly active role in as he matures.

Long work periods are a primary means of enabling focused, self-paced work in a Montessori school. Students are given a three-hour block of time devoted to learning, preferably in the morning. Despite the limited school day, the demand for special subjects (art, music, and physical education), and the difficulties in juggling schedules of part-time specialist teachers, all classrooms have the mornings undisturbed.

River Valley utilizes multi-age classrooms with three-year age spans in the elementary program and two-year spans in the Middle School to maximize curriculum options, encourage cooperation, and foster self-confidence in students who serve as role models. Our Elementary 1 program has had the full spectrum of 6- to 9-year-olds since opening. Elementary 2 started with 9- to 11-year-olds and expanded to ages 9 to 12 in the second year.

Middle School started in 2001-2002 with seventh grade and reached its full capacity of seventh and eighth grades in 2002-2003. The Kinderhaus is a one-year program due to current early childhood funding restrictions.

Classrooms are arranged in learning centers, with clusters of student-sized tables and open areas for floor work. Students are allowed to move about the classroom and choose resources, working individually or in small groups. We were fortunate to be able to specify the build-out of the property we are leasing and so could design classrooms that are large, open, and light-filled and that include a “practical life” area with a sink, counters, and a tiled floor. Each class has the flexibility to set up its space as desired. While each classroom has a distinct personality, they all include live plants and animals, beautiful aesthetics, space divided according to areas of study, and a peace corner or quiet area.

Montessori materials are designed for many levels of understanding, beginning with the concrete and moving to the abstract. Materials are self-correcting and reinforce autonomy, confidence, and self-motivation. We budgeted for and acquired a full complement of the beautiful and scientifically designed Montessori materials before opening in September 1999; our budget provides for maintaining this inventory. Our teachers and Montessori auditors have been pleased with how well stocked our classrooms are.

“Going out” is a basic Montessori element of experiencing the world outside the classroom in a meaningful way. Depending on the age of the student, this can mean anything from counting fish stock in a local river or serving meals at a soup kitchen to taking stewardship of farmland or apprenticing to a tradesperson or artisan.

River Valley teachers are expected to track individual student progress using the River Valley Toolset, which will be outlined in the Program Evaluation section. They must also guide students in their mastery of the concepts required for our documented learning objectives. These are conveyed to teachers through ongoing faculty meetings and to students through individualized learning plans and progress reports.

Classroom and School Environment

River Valley students must abide by a Code of Conduct that embraces the Montessori philosophy of grace and courtesy. Furthermore, faculty and parent handbooks set the tone for behavior and involvement. The Montessori environment is a balance of two interdependent elements: students’ freedom to explore and think for themselves and their responsibility to work and learn within the community. With the autonomy to manage time and make choices, students acquire a sense of ownership for their own growth and development. They accept responsibility for setting goals and completing assignments, as well as for being contributing members of the group.

The classroom culture helps free teachers from constant disciplining and allows the students to concentrate on their work. This culture promotes an atmosphere of order, calm, and civility. There are three overriding expectations for students’ behavior while at school:

- **Purposeful activity:** Students are engaged in their studies. Positive attitudes toward work develop as part of the classroom culture and are inculcated from the first day.
- **Responsibility:** Students take an active role in their own education. They help create their individual learning plans and weekly work plans. They learn to contribute to the maintenance and management of their own communities. They are expected to contribute to the larger community.
- **Respect:** Students are respectful of themselves, others, each other’s work, their classrooms and materials, and the environment.

In continuing with a multi-year plan of establishing a school-wide behavior management system, we continued to implement an Open Circle program in our Kinderhaus and elementary classrooms. This program promotes a common language of behavior and communication between students and adults. Our Middle School uses a similar process to enable students to meet weekly to discuss their needs as a community. A Kinderhaus teacher and our guidance counselor participated in training programs this year.

During the 2010-2011 school year, there were no instances of student disciplinary actions such as suspensions or expulsions.

Diverse Learners

Our Montessori philosophy strives to focus on the individual strengths of students, including those who may be at risk. We are in the process of rewriting our own District Accommodation Plan to specifically document our abilities to address all learners, including special education and English Language Learners.

In order to support all learners, River Valley has a pre-referral process which is initiated through the Student Support Team (SST). Within this group, specific accommodations such as provision of graphic organizers or study guides, use of instructional technology, and tutoring are discussed as options to improve student success and achievement prior to a special education referral. An inclusion model is successfully used to integrate services into the classroom setting.

While we do not currently have any ELL students, we continue to provide ongoing category 1-4 training as required by the DESE. If necessary, we will assess the English language proficiency of any student whose home language is not English.

Our special education program continues to be assessed annually through a self-study as well as through feedback from the Parent Survey. On April 13, 2011, the River Valley Charter School participated in its site visit for the Special Education Mid-Cycle Review from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The summary report indicates one criterion which was not implemented. The Special Education Department has already put in place steps for corrective action, including further professional development for staff who lead the IEP meetings. The next Coordinated Program Review will be in 2014.

Professional Climate

Teacher Evaluation

As part of the faculty evaluation process, the Board, along with the Director, developed a five-year Strategic Plan for the school. Within this plan, strategic goals were identified in five areas: student outcomes, staff, leadership, facility, financial resources, and community. The Director shared these goals with the staff and worked closely with them to implement these strategies through our faculty goal-setting process. Examples of this include preparation for our Montessori audit, charter school site visit, mid-cycle review and NAEYC accreditation.

This year, the Director met with each faculty member during the school year to review and clarify their professional goals pertaining to the Strategic Plan. Lead teachers mentor assistant teachers throughout the school year. In May, teachers summarized the year's goals in a meeting with the Director, who provided narrative feedback to each teacher with copies kept on file. The standards used for evaluation purposes are stated in our faculty goal-setting documents.

As a means of improving instruction and as part of our formative teacher evaluation process, the Director, Curriculum Coordinators and Assistant Director carry out classroom observations. Montessori training center supervisors visit and assess their student teachers who are in the process of completing Montessori training. Our Middle School teachers participate in peer evaluation discussions on effective teaching methods. Additional evidence pertaining to the capabilities of our teachers can be found in our Montessori audit reports.

At River Valley Charter School, teacher evaluation is a formative process. Teachers are given feedback as a means of improving instructional skills and overall student performance.

Professional Development

In 2010-2011, River Valley had a multi-faceted focus for professional development, including health and wellness, literacy, technology, Montessori methods, and special education compliance.

An executive coach from Nautilus Leadership presented a two-day seminar on personal growth and leadership skills to our faculty and staff. The school also provided a year-long yoga program for interested staff members.

In a continued partnership with Salem State University, our teachers participated in workshops on guided reading. We continued to develop the school's literacy library and purchased \$22,000 worth of books for our newly expanded library. One of our teachers initiated a book discussion group to review "The Café Plan," which outlines reading strategies.

In the area of technology, teachers attended workshops on Google Docs, SmartBoard use, and our new wi-fi and server systems. Our leadership team also attended Edline and Administrator's Plus information sessions to learn more about our student management software. Our math coach also serves as a classroom technology assistant to help teachers manage the new technologies acquired this year. Teachers also took part in continuing professional development in the use of our record management systems, MRX and ESPED.

Our Montessori audit suggested a refresher course in Montessori methods. Consultant Elizabeth Slade delivered a two-day, in-depth workshop on Montessori philosophy and methods. She will continue to work with the school for four and a half days in the coming school year. We also had three teachers participating in Montessori training online, and three other teachers working toward Montessori certification at the Seacoast Center.

The special education department chair at Salem State University, Johanna Morgen, observed our special education processes and worked with our three case managers on streamlining procedures, recognizing best practices within the program, and facilitating IEP meetings. Additionally, our staff members attended a one-day compliance training session.

Throughout the year, teachers participated in classroom observations at local Montessori schools in order to observe best practices. Our literacy coach spent a day at Tobin Montessori in Cambridge to work with their literacy coach and curriculum director.

Teachers attended the following professional development courses: Word Finding and Intervention for Students with Language Disabilities, Positive Discipline, Dietary Guidelines, Building Alliances and Positive School Culture, MCCPSE Instructional Forum on Charter School Education, Addressing the Needs of ELL Students, the Nurtured Heart Approach, Transforming the Difficult Child, Open Circle training, When Readers Struggle: Teaching That Works, Essential School Health Services and DESE data collection training.

In the spring, 10 of our teachers attended the annual Montessori Schools of Massachusetts Conference. Three of our staff members attended the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England's spring conference. Our Middle School language arts teacher attended the Literacy for All conference in Providence, RI, and one of our E2 teachers participated in the Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers conference and an Ocean Literacy Summit.

Our Director, along with three Board members, attended leadership workshops through the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association in the fall. Our Director also attended the American Montessori Society's national conference in March in Chicago (along with a teacher presenter) and the District Attorney's Anti-Bullying conference in August 2010. She participated in the following webinars: a charter school review webinar through the DESE, a charter school review through the New York State Education Department, and a DESE presentation on the new Recruitment and Retention Plan.

As part of our professional development and to foster collaboration, teachers meet four times a month to discuss curriculum, program, and practice. One monthly meeting is for the entire faculty, the second monthly meeting is a grade-level curriculum meeting facilitated by our literacy and math coaches, the third meeting is a grade-level program coordination meeting, and the fourth meeting is a collaboration between the lead teacher and her assistant. The special education case managers meet monthly with the Assistant Director and with classroom teachers to discuss program needs.

The two-day seminar presented by the executive coach from Nautilus Leadership set the tone for a professional climate of collaboration and leadership within curriculum and instruction. Throughout the year, teachers attended conferences, seminars and webinars pertaining to their individual professional goals. We ended the year with a Montessori refresher course that allowed teachers to reflect on their year's practice and to use that information to provide inspiration for the coming year. This creates a purposeful learning environment among teachers and students and also helps us to retain quality faculty and staff.

Assessment and Instructional Decision-Making

As a Montessori school, River Valley uses formative assessment daily to inform instruction for each child. Observational data is recorded to track a child's progress through the Montessori lessons. Feedback is bidirectional, and is used to adjust the child's lessons to his or her current need. Twice a year, students in grades one to three are given the DRA test as a benchmark assessment. Results are used to provide additional tutoring services as needed. In math, we collect data from ALEKS and Study Island in grades six through eight to monitor student progress and to provide additional support.

As a form of external assessment, River Valley uses standardized test scores such as TerraNova and MCAS to determine student and school performance. Thorough and ongoing analysis of this test data by the school director and faculty is conducted in order to review our academic programs for quality and effectiveness.

After a continuing review of our Middle School program, we know that students are in need of additional mathematical support. Therefore, as a means of improving individual student performance, River Valley continued use of the Study Island program, tutoring services and an additional web-based program, ALEKS. These programs help Middle School students to improve their knowledge of pre-algebra and algebra and to operate at an individualized pace. From each student's results, teachers and administrators used the evidence to guide and inform future instruction.

Program Evaluation

The River Valley Toolset is an internal assessment system based on our documented learning objectives. The Toolset integrates the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks with the related Montessori lessons to provide learning objectives for each of our exit levels: Kinderhaus, grade three, grade six and grade eight. Our learning objectives are in line with those of the state, yet we establish an individualized rate of learning based on the understanding that each child learns at his or her own pace.

As part of a Montessori teacher's training, they build their own albums of lessons for each subject area. These albums are comprehensive lesson plans that are systematically arranged to maximize learning. The lessons within these albums are listed on the curriculum tracking sheets used by teachers to document individual academic success in relation to learning objectives.

Each Montessori lesson has prerequisites that the child must meet, and these accomplishments must be observed and recorded by the teacher prior to introduction of a new lesson. This year, teachers revisited the observation component of our assessment system to provide consistency in data collection. Specific aims, or learning objectives, for each lesson are identified, which explicitly state the targeted skills that should be demonstrated by the student. Over time, the instructor utilizes a three-period lesson: introduction of new material, observation of the student successfully using the material, and a student presentation to the teacher or peers to show the student's mastery of aims set forth in the lesson.

The standards for measurement within the River Valley Toolset are based on the Montessori lessons, the learning objectives, and the curriculum tracking sheets. We use a four-point scale to define levels of proficiency on our progress reports. A four-point system is used consistently at all levels, K-8, on the tracking sheets and the progress reports. The four-point scale for Middle School progress reports is based on numbers. We saw a need to convert to a numerical system so that high schools receiving our transcripts could easily translate our

standards of measurement and levels of proficiency. Middle School tracking is accomplished by using learning objectives and the Montessori Scope and Sequence in conjunction with progress reports.

The definitions of our four-point scale are listed here for clarification.

River Valley Charter School Standards for Measurement	
I	Introductory Level -The student is developing a knowledge base for further exploration.
W	Working Level -The student has a knowledge base for further exploration. The student is moving towards independent practice of skills.
P	Proficient Level -The student consistently demonstrates skills and understanding. The student is capable of self-directed exploration.
A	Application Level -The student is internalizing and assimilating knowledge. The student is able to effectively share knowledge and creatively apply understanding.

Organizational Viability

River Valley strives to provide a strong and reliable infrastructure to support the school’s learning community in both the short and long term.

Accountability Plan Objective 4: River Valley strives to provide sound financial management with progress toward financial independence from economic and political climates.

Measurement 4.1: Consistent demonstration of sound fiscal practices through annual independent financial audits with no material findings

The Board of Trustees and school leadership implement effective internal controls and systems to enable responsible financial oversight of the School. School administration and trustees follow applicable federal and state guidance in performing their duties. The School’s financial statements are audited annually by an independent auditor, and its fiscal year results are also reported to the DESE through its Charter School End-of-Year Financial Report. The School’s audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2010, performed by independent auditors, was issued with no material findings, reportable conditions or instances of noncompliance.

The financial position of the School continues to be stable, with no need for borrowing to fund operations anticipated at this time. Since inception, through conservative budget practices and fiscal responsibility, the School has accumulated net assets of \$1,539,581 and a total cash position of \$674,753 as of June 30, 2011 (unaudited). This provides the School with protection from possible negative impacts from local and state economic conditions for tuition revenue, the major revenue source. The School has no long-term debt. Liabilities are largely limited to short-term accruals. Cash flows have always been adequate to support the academic and administrative operations on a quarterly basis. The Board of Trustees approved a budget for the year ended June 30, 2011 with an additional \$550,771 for capital improvements for an expansion of our lease space with full funding being provided from the Capital Reserve.

Measurement 4.2: Consistently balanced annual budgets that demonstrate careful management of resources with a three-month cash reserve for operating expenses

The School uses conservative budget techniques and develops a budget that is realistic and in support of student academic achievement. The Executive Director seeks the input of the School’s leadership team in assessing and determining the School’s areas of priority for the upcoming school year. The budget planning process begins in February each year with the Finance Committee meeting to discuss the financial outlook and strategic decisions determined by the Board of Trustees. Due to the uncertainty of the upcoming tuition revenue projections, three budget scenarios were created based upon information from the Massachusetts Charter School Association as well as the general information provided by the DESE. Expenses for the coming year are level funded based on actual and historic data. A draft budget was discussed at the April Board Meeting, when the Board of Trustees

approved the salaries line to begin hiring for the next school year. The budget is refined as more information is received. The final budget is approved and voted on by the Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting in June.

The budget presented for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012 school year reflects a planned enrollment of 288 students. Revenues have been budgeted at \$3,455,736 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, an increase over the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011 budget of \$8,615. The Board of Trustees have approved an operating budget for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012 with expenditures of \$3,455,736, a decrease from the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011 budget of \$542,156. The large decrease was due to the Board of Trustees approving a budget for the year ended June 30, 2011 with an additional \$550,771 for capital improvements for an expansion of our lease space with full funding being provided from the Capital Reserve.

The School will continue its record of fiscal responsibility through conservative budgeting, accurate fiscal management and continued development efforts toward future independence and sustainability.

Accountability Plan Objective 5: River Valley strives for long-term retention of highly qualified faculty and administration.

Measurement 5.1: Minimum 75 percent per year retention of faculty and administration, exclusive of life changes

In June 2011, the Assistant Director left River Valley Charter School to accept a promotion in another school district.

Additionally, three faculty members finished the 2010-2011 school year but will not be returning in the fall; one was a full-time assistant teacher, who accepted a promotion out of state; one of our part-time tutors left to open her own Montessori school; and another part-time instructional aide left to find a full-time teaching position.

Thus, our 2010-2011 faculty retention rate is 93 percent, and our administrative retention rate is 83 percent, both exceeding our goal of 75 percent.

Accountability Plan Objective 6: River Valley will provide professional development opportunities for faculty and administration to meet the needs of the school.

Measurement 6.1: Minimum 75 percent of faculty meeting their individual professional development goals each year, with documentation (Faculty Goal Setting and related documents) thereof on file.

Our global goal for all faculty this year was preparation for and participation in our Montessori audit and charter school site visit. One hundred percent of our faculty and administration met this goal. Professional development is designed around faculty input, and documentation of professional development activities and faculty goal setting is on file at the school.

Measurement 6.2: Minimum 80 percent of the Kinderhaus and Elementary lead teachers Montessori trained or in training for the level they are teaching.

This past year, 100 percent of our Kinderhaus and elementary lead teachers were Montessori certified and/or in training for the level at which they taught.

Accountability Plan Objective 7: River Valley's wait list will continue to be adequate to meet the school enrollment objective.

Measurement 7.1: Minimum of two applications per opening each year

In June 2010, 31 students graduated from River Valley. Withdrawals over the summer of 2010 equaled two. An additional six students transferred after the school year began in September. This created a total of 39 openings for the 2010-2011 school year.

Applications that were lottered in February 2010 totaled 169. The existing wait list prior to this lottery numbered 592. The total number of applications available for this school year was 761. For 39 openings, that is

a ratio of 19.5 applications per opening in the school; this well exceeds our requirement of having two applications per opening. Significant local advertising, opportunities for parent observations, and a strong reputation in the community have resulted in large numbers of applications. We expect the interest in River Valley to remain high in future lotteries.

Accountability Plan Objective 8: River Valley will have a high rate of returning students.

Measurement 8.1: At least 85 percent of non-graduating students returning each year, excluding relocation

Only two non-graduate students completed the 2009-2010 school year but did not return for the 2010-2011 school year, for a student retention rate of 99 percent. This well exceeds our goal of 85 percent. We feel that our strong academic program and school culture continue to promote the reputation of our school, which results in high rates of retention.

Accountability Plan Objective 9: Board of Trustees that provides appropriate stewardship of the school, conducting an external audit of Board operations every two years

An external audit of the Board of Trustees was conducted in August 2010 by Marci Cornell-Feist of The High Bar. The full Board, including the school Director, participated in a self-assessment in the form of an online survey. The assessment was designed to be a tool to: define excellence in charter school governance; provide a clear path to reaching “the high bar”; calibrate the Board perceptions and those of the school Director; provide a backdrop for creating annual Board level goals; and track progress over time.

Measurement 9.1: Achievement of 75 percent of goals as set during annual Board retreat

The Board of Trustees has achieved 100 percent of the following goals set at the July 2010 annual Board retreat as part of year one of the school’s Strategic Plan:

- **Board Leadership:** Build and sustain an effective Board with the skills and capacity to drive the school to a full realization of its mission and vision. The Board added seven members, developed and implemented an orientation program, and developed processes to ensure best practices in governance.
- **Development:** Create a sustainable development culture for the school community. The Board clarified and resolved the roles and inter-relationships of the Board, Foundation and school leadership and created a comprehensive development plan and budget.
- **Finance:** Support the goals of the Strategic Plan by operating in a transparent, fiscally responsible manner through the application of financial best practices. The Finance Committee reviewed and approved the annual budget and business management policies, and they are working with administration to establish regional salary and benefit norms.
- **Educational Program:** Our educational program exemplifies academic excellence as a nationally recognized public school that demonstrates faithfulness to Montessori methodology while delivering the academic rigor defined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Common Core Standards). The Board prepared for and participated in the Montessori audit and the charter school site visit, approved the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and supported the school Director in articulation of our Montessori program within the public school context.
- **Student Outcomes:** Our students possess a love of learning, commitment to community, and academic skills to excel at the high school of their choice. In 2010-2011, the Board developed the following shared definition of academic excellence: *River Valley Charter School provides a 21st century Montessori education that prepares students to be compassionate citizens with the skills to be effective, responsible leaders in a rapidly changing, deeply interconnected world.*

Measurement 9.2: 75 percent intra-term trustee retention

The Board of Trustees had an intra-term trustee retention rate of 77 percent, as three Board members stepped down prior to the end of their terms for personal and professional reasons. We have recruited a strong group of seven new Trustees, who were trained during a June orientation and have already stepped into active roles.

Accountability Plan Objective 10: We will continue to foster River Valley Charter School as a model for public Montessori programs through dissemination of best practices.

Please see “Dissemination” on page 24.

Accountability Plan Objective 11: We will expect high levels of family participation at all levels of school life.

Measurement 11.1: Minimum of 80 percent of families contributing volunteer hours

Families are a critical component of River Valley’s organizational viability. Family support helps us provide many school activities and programs that would not occur otherwise.

A goal of attaining high levels of active family participation, both in community service and by financial contributions, is an important component of our Accountability Plan. This year, 66 percent, or 124 families, recorded a combined 5,841 hours of service. Due to a changeover in personnel tracking our family volunteer hours, we believe that this percentage is actually higher, but many hours went unrecorded.

Measurement 11.2: Minimum of 60 percent of families meeting the 40-hour volunteer service requirement

This year, 35 percent (66 families) completed their required 40 hours of parent participation.

Measurement 11.3: Minimum 70 percent of families contributing money to the annual giving program

This year, 72 percent of River Valley families donated to the Annual Fund.

Policy Decisions

The Director communicates with the Board Chair and Executive Committee regarding suggested policy changes. Requests for revisions or new policies are submitted to the appropriate Board committee. The committee makes a recommendation to the full Board, which votes to approve or amend the policy. The Board made the following major policy decisions in 2010-2011.

- Approved the 2010-2015 River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees Strategic Plan (September 2010)
- Approved the 2010-2011 Annual Plan consistent with the Strategic Plan (September 2010)
- Accepted the representations of management and the expression of the opinions made by Ambrosi Donahue Congdon & Co., P.C. as embodied in the financial statements, schedules, and independent auditor’s reports for the year ended June 30, 2010 (October 2010)
- Approved a capital expenditure of no more than \$30,000 for the purchase of a new phone system and wireless system (November 2010)
- Approved the Development Committee Job Description, Policy on Rights of Donors, and Policy on Gift Acceptance (November 2010)
- Approved Cash Disbursement Policy (December 2010)
- Approved RVCS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (December 2010)
- Reviewed comments on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan from the state, administration and RVCS community in May 2011 (December 2010)
- Approved Procurement Policy (January 2011)
- Accepted a grant of \$5,000 for general educational purposes from the Charles F. Small and Marianne Small Charitable Foundation (February 2011)
- Approved payment of Johnson Paving invoices in the amount of \$20,771 for capital work performed on the property pavement (February 2011)
- Approved RVCS 2011-2012 calendar (March 2011)
- Approved FY 2011 development budget (March 2011)
- Retained Ambrosi Donahue Congdon for the fiscal year audit for years ended June 30, 2011 and 2010 (March 2011)

- Approved a salary expense of \$2,037,577 for fiscal year 2011-2012. This approval is contingent upon final tuition figures received in June 2011 and adjustments may be made based on this information (April 2011)
- Accepted the report of the Grievance Committee with amendment: The administration establish a process to review changes to charter school law and ensure the school is in compliance (April 2011)
- Adopted the River Valley Charter School 457 (b) Plan, an unfunded, eligible deferred compensation plan pursuant to Section 457 (b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, for the benefit of a select group of its management or highly compensated employees (April 2011)
- Approved draft of Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan revised on April 27, 2011 (May 2011)
- Approved the revised RVCS Enrollment Policy (June 14, 2011)
- Approved the Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan revised and approved by DESE (June 14, 2011)
- Expended \$25,000 for the Kindergarten site improvement and requested the Foundation contribute \$15,000 (June 14, 2011)
- Approved the Kindergarten Site Improvement Plan (June 14, 2011)
- Approved confirmation of the Trustee slate for three-year terms (June 14, 2011)
- Nominated Germaine Koomen as Faculty Representative for 2011-2012 (June 14, 2011)
- Nominated officers for 2011-2012 (June 14, 2011)
- Nominated committee chairs for 2011-2012 (June 14, 2011)
- Proposed Human Resources Committee become a committee and nominated Joyce O'Connell as Chair of the committee (June 14, 2011)
- Approved the Cash Receipt Policy (June 14, 2011)
- Approved the expenditure of 1/12 of current budget for July 1 if the SY 2011-2012 budget is not adopted by June 30, 2011 (June 14, 2011)
- Approved the FY 2011-2012 budget (June 24, 2011)
- Allowed administration to manage costs within the approved FY 2011-2012 budget (June 24, 2011)

Amendments to the Charter

No amendments were made to the school's charter in 2010-2011.

Complaints

The Grievance Committee of the Board of Trustees received one formal complaint this year. A perspective family questioned the school's enrollment process. At step one, the Director met with the family and agreed to make changes to the school's enrollment policy. The family took the complaint to a level-two grievance. The Board of Trustees Grievance Chair investigated the complaint and deliberated in open meeting, coming to a conclusion which supported the actions of the Director. The family then took the complaint to the DESE, who made further recommendations to the school. River Valley's enrollment policy was amended to meet the Department's requests. In the complaint to DESE, an additional topic was introduced referencing the lack of a school lunch program. River Valley, though not part of the Federal School Lunch Program, has been providing breakfast, lunch and/or snacks to any child in need on a daily basis. DESE requested that the school work with the Federal School Lunch Program to demonstrate compliance with school lunch regulations.

Oversight

The school and the school's leader are evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees. In April, the Board issued an online anonymous survey to families of students at the school. The Board's Executive Committee evaluated the school's leader using input gathered through separate online surveys issued to trustees. The Board Chair met with the Director to review the findings.

Board Planning

In 2010-2011, the Board of Trustees implemented the first year of the school's Strategic Plan. Progress toward these goals is described above in Measurement 9.1. The Board attended a June 2011 retreat to establish goals for the 2011-2012 school year.

Family Engagement

River Valley conducts an annual parent survey to measure the rate at which families are satisfied with the school's programs. A total of 134 parents participated in our 2010-2011 survey. The results stated that 93.9 percent of the parents strongly agreed or agreed that the school's mission is clearly focused on desired student learning. Additionally, the survey showed that 91.3 percent of parents would recommend RVCS to another parent for their child.

The school involves families as partners in the education of their children by providing parent education, as well as ample volunteer opportunities in the classroom, on field trips and through school-wide activities. All parents are members of our Parents' Alliance and are encouraged to become members of the Board of Trustees and its committees

Safety

River Valley developed its Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan this year in order to clarify the definition of bullying and identify steps toward corrective action. Through education, discussion, training, and supervision, we provide a safe environment for students and staff. Additionally, we have a school-wide safety plan that is reviewed each year, and we collaborate with MEMA on evacuation plans in case of an event at the Seabrook nuclear facility. River Valley addresses the social, emotional and health needs of its students through comprehensive health, guidance and psychological services.

Employee Qualifications

The school employs faculty who are highly qualified and Montessori certified. River Valley also provides certification opportunities for teachers and administrators. Documentation of employee credentials are kept on file at the school. Additionally, all employees must undergo a CORI background check.

Financial Oversight

In order to establish priorities within each year's budget, the Director and Business Manager collect information. The school Director and Business Manager each track and collect local economic and political news in order to carefully plan their upcoming revenue sources. River Valley Charter School has the added challenge of drawing students from five local districts and, thus, must look at news from each area. The Director uses a faculty budget survey tool to assess the needs of the teachers and their classrooms. The Business Manager reviews technology needs with our IT consultant, and those needs are also factored into the overall budget process. The Director also performs research and analysis of comparable salaries in the local area. Based on all of this information, the Director and Business Manager collaborate to identify priorities and allocate funding.

The information is presented to the finance committee, and all Board of Trustee members are invited to participate in the discussion. As a result of these meetings, the school prepares an annual operating budget of revenues and expenses. The budget is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees at the June Board meeting and modified throughout the year, as necessary. The Board's finance committee meets to review a report of the actual revenue and spending compared to the budgeted amount each month and also to discuss cash management. Financial statements displaying budget vs. actual results, cash flow and a statement of net assets are prepared quarterly by the Business Manager and reviewed by the Board Treasurer and presented to the full Board of Trustees at a monthly Board meeting.

Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Strategies for Prior School Year

The school follows its Recruitment and Retention Plan to attract, enroll and retain students. Efforts include publicizing our enrollment lottery throughout the region, offering information sessions to prospective parents and providing a rigorous and engaging academic program to ensure student retention.

Dissemination

Measurement 10.1: River Valley will open its classrooms to observers from October to June with an average of 10 visitors/month.

This year, River Valley welcomed an average of 12.5 visitors per month into its classrooms.

Measurement 10.2: River Valley will make at least one presentation at regional and/or national conferences annually.

In March 2011, E1 lead teacher Karen Popken was invited to the American Montessori Society's national conference in Chicago to present a hands-on "Water, Water Everywhere" science program to 90 Montessori teachers.

Measurement 10.3: River Valley will support 100 percent of requests from state, national and international organizations for information regarding charter/Montessori pedagogy.

An important part of River Valley's charter is dissemination of information about our "Montessori made public" pedagogy throughout the local and national community. River Valley Charter School defines best practices as activities that contribute to developing high-quality curriculum, instructional strategies, forms of assessment and leadership for the school that promote the ideals of our mission statement. In sharing our educational practices with outside educators, institutions, and the general public, we have become a model for Montessori education in the public and private sectors.

The Director attends local Chamber of Commerce meetings and Newburyport Community Non-Profit Agency meetings to foster cooperation among local non-profit organizations. She also sits on the board of the Massachusetts Charter School Association and speaks regularly on local radio station WBNP to discuss educational matters with the public.

Four alumni students from Newburyport High School worked with our Middle School teachers and students this year as part of an intern program. We also hosted an intern from the University of New Hampshire and five student teachers from Salem State University.

The Director is also a member of the Newburyport Rotary Club. Her involvement led to River Valley being chosen to host an author for a day as part of the Newburyport Literary Festival. We also hosted a Rotary luncheon in January, which brought in community members to hear an MUN presentation by our Middle School students. This visit encouraged one Rotarian to award the school a \$5,000 Foundation grant. Additionally, members of the Rotary Club participated in "Read Across America" at River Valley, a program in which volunteers came into the school to read to our students.

We continue to distribute our DVD, "Building the Future," to highlight our "Montessori made public" program.

The Director spoke at the Newburyport Commission for Diversity and Tolerance's Annual Peace Awards Ceremony in May, while two of our Middle School students received awards. In June, the Director attended a ladies' tea sponsored by the Salvation Army to network and participate in a discussion on community service.

Through our Celebration of Learning process, each eighth-grader invites a community member to participate on his or her panel, giving this visitor the opportunity to witness the high-quality level of expectations for our graduating students. This year, panel attendees included many teachers from area schools, a former professional ballet dancer, a local musician, a former U.S. military pilot, and author Andre Dubus III. Also, Secretary of

Education Paul Reville spent an afternoon observing our programs and sat in on one of our Celebration of Learning presentations.

We assisted Mill Falls Charter School in Kingston, New Hampshire with their charter application process. We also provided guidance in setting up their financial systems and their 501(3c) Foundation. The school has received its charter and will be the first public Montessori charter school in New Hampshire.

Our guidance counselor and Middle School coordinator visited public and private high schools in the area for the purpose of disseminating materials about our curriculum and programs in anticipation of those schools receiving applications from our graduating students.

River Valley Views, monthly tours of the school, are offered to various members of the community and local region as a means of sharing our best practices. Visitors spend time in classrooms at each grade level, observing students and seeing public Montessori in action. We have invited other educators from private and public schools, executives, higher education faculty, politicians, local school committee members, and local and state government leaders to both River Valley Views and private school tours throughout the year.

One of our teachers disseminated best practices through her participation in Harvard University's educational rounds.

River Valley provided copies of its last three Annual Reports to educators at the University of Massachusetts-Boston to assist in collaborative research on charter schools in Massachusetts.

Our Kinderhaus program welcomed a group of teachers from a local elementary school in December, who observed our students at work and collaborated with our teachers.

In April, our former Director brought a group of teachers from the Carlton School in Salem for a two-day visit to observe our classrooms to aid in their efforts to develop a multi-age program of their own. River Valley provided several documents and policies, such as our family and faculty handbooks, accountability plan, progress reports and Annual Reports.

In May, two teacher/owners of Kentmont Montessori in Brownsville, Texas, spent three days shadowing our Middle School teachers and learning about our program. We provided them with documentation on all Middle School procedures, specifically our Celebrations of Learning, to assist them in adding their own Montessori middle school program.

In June, the new middle school principal from the Pentucket school district visited our Middle School to observe a Celebration of Learning event in preparation for facilitating a similar practice in her school. Subsequently, our Director was invited to participate as a panelist in Pentucket's Habits of Learning program.

Another interesting form of dissemination is a project by an alumni student to travel to Nepal and teach English to Tibetan refugees. The former student credits his work with the Model UN at River Valley with inspiring him to take on this challenge. Newburyport Magazine's Summer 2011 edition quotes him as saying: "That, more than anything, got me interested in trying to do more."

River Valley also participated in other dissemination activities, including participating in surveys, continuing our community outreach program, and providing teacher training and professional development opportunities.

In January 2011, our Director was part of the site visit team sent by the Charter School Office to the Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School in Haverhill.

River Valley was featured in an article in the Fall 2010 edition of Public School Montessorian. The article focused on best practices in service learning.

FINANCIALS

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL			
Statement of Net Assets: June 30, 2011 (Unaudited)			
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash :			
Unrestricted		\$	562,718
Capital reserve			112,035
	Total cash		674,753
Charter School Tuition Receivable			376,876
Accounts receivable			4,071
Prepaid expenses			8,212
	Total current assets		1,063,912
Capital Assets, Net			
			685,241
Other Assets			
457(b) Plan Investments			16,500
Deposits			39,461
	Total other assets		55,961
	Total assets	\$	1,805,114
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts payable		\$	9,809
Accrued payroll			236,980
Deferred grant revenue			459
Other current liabilities			18,285
	Total current liabilities		265,533
Net Assets			
Unrestricted:			741,600
Capital reserve			112,035
Invested in capital assets			685,241
Temporarily restricted			705
	Total net assets		1,539,581
	Total liabilities and net assets	\$	1,805,114
** Please note that this statement is preliminary (unaudited). River Valley Charter School's financial year ends June 30, 2011 and additional adjustments may be required.			

River Valley Charter School

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets for the Year Ended June 30, 2011 (Unaudited)

July 2010-June 2011

Operating Revenues:

State allocation for tuition	\$	3,143,052
Federal government grants		121,665
Program service fees		72,204
Private grants		47,497
State government grants		23,200
Total operating revenues		3,407,618

Operating Expenses:

Salaries		2,034,278
Occupancy		461,266
Fringe benefits		210,484
Payroll taxes		98,290
Direct program contract professional services		92,256
Other instructional services		70,980
Maintenance of buildings and grounds		61,394
Utilities		53,938
Information management and technology		53,477
Depreciation		45,216
Instructional supplies and materials		44,648
Contract professional services		38,814
Staff professional development		36,537
Insurance		26,178
Office supplies and materials		15,588
Dues and association fees		13,154
Supplies and consumable expenses		12,409
Legal fees		8,176
Equipment lease and rental		7,263
Maintenance of equipment		6,088
Postage and printing		5,599
Meals and lodging		4,387
Travel		4,250
Advertising and recruitment costs		2,160
Contributions to outside organizations		1,188
Other		110
Total operating expenses		3,408,128
Operating Income		(510)

Nonoperating Revenues:

Contributions		34,955
Interest income		9,031
Miscellaneous income		2,641
Fundraising		2,453
Total nonoperating expenses		49,080
Change in net assets		48,570
Net Assets - Beginning of Year		1,491,011
Net Assets - End of Year	\$	1,539,581

**** Please note that this statement is preliminary (unaudited). The River Valley Charter School's financial year ends June 30, 2005 and additional adjustments may be required.**

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

Approved School Budget - Passed June 28, 2011

Fiscal Year July 2011 - June 2012

	Approved Budget Overview 2011-2012 July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012	% of Total Budget 2011-2012 July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012
STUDENT ENROLLMENT	288	
Operating Revenue:		
State allocation for tuition	\$ 3,155,084	91.30
Federal government grants	77,952	2.26
State government grants	21,200	0.61
Program service fees	18,000	0.52
Total operating revenue	3,272,236	94.69
Nonoperating Revenue		
Private grants and fundraising	180,000	5.21
Rental income	1,000	0.03
Interest income	2,500	0.07
Total Nonoperating Revenue	183,500	5.31
Total Revenue	3,455,736	100.00
Expenditures		
Administrative expenses	424,762	12.29
Instructional services	1,872,566	54.19
Other student services	72,608	2.10
Operation and maintenance of plant	650,800	18.83
Benefits and other fixed charges	379,000	10.97
Community service	500	0.01
Non operating expenses	24,000	0.69
Total Expenditures	3,424,236	99.09
Capital and Other Budget		
Other expense	16,500	0.48
Capital expenditures	15,000	0.43
Total Capital and Other Budget	31,500	0.91
Total Expenditures including Capital and Other Budget	3,455,736	100.00
Change in Net Assets	-	-
Unrestricted net assets, June 30, 2011	1,539,581	
Unrestricted net assets, June 30, 2012	\$ 1,539,581	

CAPITAL PLAN

Introduction

River Valley Charter School's Capital Plan has been developing over the past seven years. The Board of Trustees set up a site committee in 2006 to design a school for the future that would allow for expansion, meeting the needs of a Montessori curriculum with classrooms that have an outdoor component and playground space. The underlying criterion was that it be in Newburyport, a community that students interact with on a daily basis and is in the center of our five towns. Concurrently, the administration looked at the needs of an aging building and began planning for future repair and/or replacement of building systems in our 2 Perry Way school building, such as the roof, HVAC system, building envelope, plumbing and electrical systems, and telecommunications systems. As our technology needs expand, that infrastructure will also need review and updating.

Description of the Project

In August 2010, construction began on an addition to our leased building. In December 2010, the Board of Trustees signed a lease for the additional 6,200 square feet of academic space. The addition gave us a new gym, art and music rooms, a new library, four small group instruction/office spaces, and much-needed storage space. Additionally, our landlord revitalized the Kinderhaus space by creating two separate classrooms.

The Current Status of the Project

The addition was completed in December 2010.

The Current Estimated Schedule for the Completion of the Project

The Kinderhaus project will be completed in time for the 2011-2012 school year.

The Current Estimated Cost for the Project

The cost for the additional space included an initial payment of \$295,000, with increased lease payments over nine years. An additional \$150,000 was used for a major acquisition of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment that are appurtenant to the expansion of our current school building. The school will have an option to purchase at the end of the current five-year lease, or to continue to lease. The school's long-term objective is to own a campus.

The cost of the Kinderhaus project is \$21,000. Additional funds will be allocated for instructional materials.

Information on How the School Plans to Finance the Project

The Kinderhaus project was supported by two grants totaling \$15,000 as well as state funding, i.e. facilities allotment.

Capital Project Reserve Account

The Board of Trustees established a Capital Reserve Fund in 2009 with a current balance of \$112,035. We will continue to populate the Capital Reserve Fund each year to provide for high-cost maintenance items and/or property acquisition.

DATA SECTION

<i>Instructional Time:</i>	
Total number of instructional days for the 2010-2011 school year:	180
First and last day of the 2010-2011 school year:	Sept. 1, 2010- June 21, 2011
Length of school day (please note if schedule varies throughout the week or the year):	8:30 a.m.- 3:10 p.m.

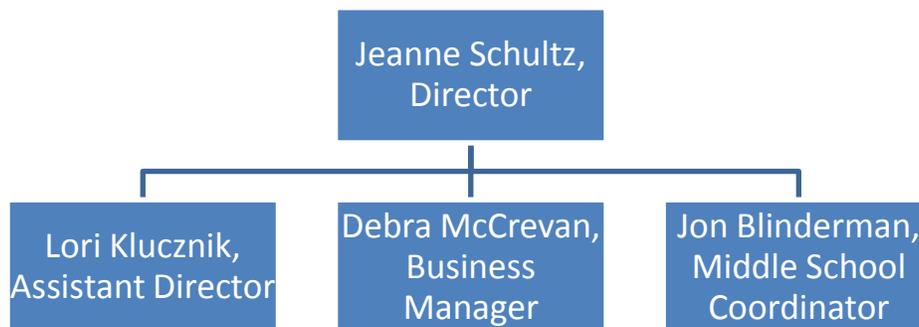
<i>Student Enrollment Information:</i>	
Number of students who completed the 2009-2010 school year but did not reenroll for the 2010-2011 school year (excluding graduates):	2
Total number of students enrolled as of October 1, 2010:	288
Total number of students who enrolled during the 2010-2011 school year, after October 1, 2010:	5
Total number of students who left during the 2010-2011 school year, after October 1, 2010:	5
Total number of students enrolled as of the June 30, 2011 SIMS submission:	288
Number of students who graduated at the end of the 2010-2011 school year:	28
Number of students on the waitlist as of June 30, 2010	748

Reason for Departure	Number of Students
Choosing to keep child in grade level with peers	1
Received scholarship to private school	1
Looking for more structure	2
Moving to school where parent works	1
Moved out of state	1
To be better prepared for high school transition	1
Difficult social adjustment (student enrolled for only one month)	1

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION		
(for students enrolled as of the June 2011 SIMS submission)		
Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	1	1
Asian	7	2
Hispanic	11	4
Native American	0	0
White	257	89
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	12	4
Special Education	61	21
Limited English Proficient	0	0
Low Income	0	0

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR			
Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Director	Acts as superintendent of school	07/01/2009	N/A
Assistant Director	Acts as principal of school	09/01/2001	6/30/2011
Middle School Coordinator	Manages Middle School students, plans trips, and coordinates classes	9/01/2007	N/A
Business Manager	Maintains financial oversight	01/01/2000	N/A

In addition to completing this table, please provide an organizational chart including administrators' names and titles.



TEACHER AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR			
	Number as of the last day of the 2010-2011 school year	Departures during the 2010-2011 school year	Departures at the end of the school year
Teachers	40	0	3
Other Staff	15	0	1

Three teachers left after the end of the 2010-2011 school year for the following reasons: one accepted a promotion out of state; one left to open her own Montessori school; and one left to find a full-time teaching position. Additionally, one administrator left to accept a promotion in another school district.

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Area of expertise, and/or additional role at school (parent, staff member, etc.)	- Number of terms served; - Length of each term, including date of election and expiration
Wendy Carmichael	Co-Secretary	Executive, Committee on Trustees, Grievance	M Ed, MBA, Educational Publishing, Parent	2 terms; 4 years served: 10/5/07-6/30/10
Kate Donlin	Co-Secretary, Chair Accountability Committee	Accountability, Committee on Trustees, Executive	M Ed, Charter School leadership, Literacy Consultant, Parent	1 term; 2 years served: 7/09 – 6/30/12
Christopher Horan	Chair, Site	Site, Development	Commercial Real Estate, Parent	2 terms; 4 years served: 10/5/07-6/30/10
Scott Jordan	Chair	Executive, Finance, Grievance	MBA, Finance, Government, Parent	2 terms; 4 years served: 10/5/07-6/30/10
John Martin	Trustee	Committee on Trustees, Site Committee	Sales & Marketing, Parent	1 term; 1 year served: 7/10-6/13
Joyce O'Connell	Chair Human Resources	Human Resources, Committee on Trustees,	Human Resources	1 term; 1 year served: 7/10-6/13
Francesca Pomerantz	Chair Grievance	Grievance, Committee on Trustees; Accountability	Ed.D; Associate Professor & Chairperson,	1 term; 1 year served: 7/10-6/13
Eric Powers	Trustee	Finance Committee;	Operations, Technology, Parent	1 term; 1 year served: 7/10-6/13
Amy Rasimas	Treasurer	Executive Committee, Finance Committee	MBA, Financial Management, Parent	1 term; 1 year served: 7/10-6/13
Julie Ryan	Vice Chair; Chair COT, Co-Chair Development Committee	Executive, Committee on Trustees, Accountability,	Communications, Marketing, Parent	2 terms; 6 years served: 7/1/05-6/30/11
Jeanne Schultz	ex-officio trustee	Finance, Executive, Accountability, Development, Site	Director, RVCS	2 years served; 7/1/09-6/30/10
Kathy Shorter	ex-officio trustee		Faculty Representative; MBA, M Ed	1 year; 7/10/10-6/30/11
Lesli Suggs	Co-Chair, Development Committee	Development Committee, Grievance	MSW, Non-profit administration, Parent	2 terms; 5 years served: 9/9/06-6/30/12

I. Recruitment Plan

A. Describe the school’s general recruitment activities, i.e. those intended to reach all students.

General Recruitment Activities	
List recruitment activities undertaken each year which apply to all students.	
	At least one month prior to the enrollment lottery, the school advertises the lottery in a local newspaper with distribution in all of our sending districts.
	The school submits press releases with lottery and enrollment information to appropriate local newspapers.
	The school posts its lottery and enrollment information on its public web site.
	The school submits public service announcements about its lottery on local cable access stations.
	The school distributes flyers to area preschools and public libraries within our sending districts.

B. List the goals and strategies the school will implement during the upcoming school year to attract and enroll specific groups of students in order to promote a student population that reflects the demographics of the school’s sending district(s). Create goals and strategies for each of the following categories:

- A. Special education students
- B. Limited English-proficient students
- C. Students eligible for free lunch
- D. Students eligible for reduced price lunch
- E. Students who are sub-proficient (as determined by a previous score of “Needs Improvement” or “Warning/Failing” on the mathematics or English language arts examinations of the MCAS for the previous two years)
- F. Students at risk of dropping out of school
- G. Students who have dropped out of school
- H. Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap

Recruitment Plan – Goals and Strategies	
List goals and strategies for recruitment activities for <u>each</u> demographic group.	
Demographic Group:	According to our 2011 demographic data from our sending districts, we have a higher percentage of special education students (17 percent) than is shown in the comparison median (15.2 percent).
A. Special education students	In 2011-2012, we plan to send flyers to the special education departments of each of our sending districts. Our guidance counselor will visit area pre-schools to inform families about our educational program.

<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>B. Limited English-proficient students</p>	<p>The 2011 data shows little difference between River Valley’s rate of Limited English Proficient students (0 percent) and that of the comparison median (0.3 percent).</p> <p>Our guidance counselor will visit area pre-schools to inform families about our educational program.</p>
<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>C. Students eligible for free lunch</p>	<p>Though we do provide lunch to all students in need at River Valley, our data (0 percent) does not reflect this practice, as families traditionally do not fill out the necessary paperwork. The current comparison median is 8.5 percent.</p> <p>In 2011-2012, we will make a better effort to collect eligibility data from all families to provide a more accurate figure.</p> <p>In 2011-2012, we plan to have a presence at meetings of the Hugh Doyle Resource Center, a clearing house of local non-profit organizations serving families in need in our communities.</p> <p>Our guidance counselor will visit area pre-schools to inform families about our educational program.</p>
<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>D. Students eligible for reduced price lunch</p>	<p>Though we do provide lunch to all students in need at River Valley, our data (0 percent) does not reflect this practice, as families traditionally do not fill out the necessary paperwork. The current comparison median is 8.5 percent.</p> <p>In 2011-2012, we will make a better effort to collect eligibility data from all families to provide a more accurate figure.</p> <p>In 2011-2012, we plan to have a presence at meetings of the Hugh Doyle Resource Center, a clearing house of local non-profit organizations serving families in need in our communities.</p> <p>Our guidance counselor will visit area pre-schools to inform families about our educational program.</p>
<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>E. Students who are sub-proficient</p>	<p>River Valley mainly enrolls students at the kindergarten level each year. Therefore, this category does not apply.</p>
<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>F. Students at risk of dropping out of school</p>	<p>River Valley is a K-8 school, therefore, this category does not apply.</p>
<p>Demographic Group:</p> <p>G. Students who have dropped out of school</p>	<p>River Valley is a K-8 school, therefore, this category does not apply.</p>

<p>Demographic Group(s):</p> <p>H. Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap</p>	<p>River Valley provides a full-day kindergarten program at no charge, as well as a before/after-care program. We feel that this helps to recruit both low-income families and families with two working parents.</p>
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II. Retention Plan

Identify the retention goals and strategies the school will implement during the upcoming school year to maximize the number of students who successfully complete all school requirements and to prevent students from dropping out. The retention plan *may* include activities that address the needs of all students in the school, but *must* be designed to impact the target groups identified above.

Overall Student Retention Goal	
<p>Annual goal for student retention (percentage):</p>	<p>According to the River Valley Charter School Accountability Plan, our goal is for at least 85 percent of non-graduating students to return each year, excluding relocation. We have reached this goal for the past several years.</p>
Retention Plan Goals and Strategies -- List goals and strategies for retention activities	
<p>Successful Academic Program</p>	<p>River Valley will provide a strong academic program to promote student success.</p> <p>The school provides progress reports three times a year to measure student attainment of school requirements. We also provide tutors and other academic supports.</p>
<p>Parent Education and Involvement</p>	<p>River Valley will provide parent education and opportunities for involvement. The school allows for parent input in an annual parent survey.</p>
<p>Student Activities</p>	<p>River Valley will provide opportunities for student involvement in community service and partnerships with local organizations.</p> <p>The school also offers a before/after-care program to support families.</p>