



Accountability Plan 2019-2024

River Valley Charter School (RVCS)			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	Newburyport
Regional or Non-Regional?	Regional	Districts in Region	Amesbury, Newburyport, Triton, Pentucket
Year Opened	1999	Year(s) Renewed	2004, 2009, 2014, 2019
Maximum Enrollment	288	Chartered Grade span	K-8
<p>Mission Statement</p> <p>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.</p>			

Key Design Elements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An educational program based on the Montessori philosophy (page 3, charter application) 2. Elements of the curriculum rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley (page 2, charter application) 3. Critical thinking and problem solving (page 1, charter application)

The charter school commits to meeting Criteria 1 through 10 as outlined in the Charter School Performance Criteria.

Date of Preliminary Department Approval	1/31/2020
Date of Board Approval:	2/25/2020
Date of Department Approval:	3/3/2020

Objectives and Measures related to Mission and Key Design Elements

Objective 1: River Valley Charter School will provide a Montessori learning environment that reflects best practices for public Montessori education. (Related Key Design Element: An educational program based on the Montessori philosophy.)

Measure 1A:

River Valley will alternate between a self-assessment and an external audit of its Montessori program every year using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector’s Essential Elements Rubric. Every year the audit will switch such that there are three external audits and two internal during this charter term.

Annually, River Valley will obtain at least a satisfactory rating in each of the five domains of the rubric (Adults, Montessori Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Leadership & Organizational Development, Assessment). The rating is based on a four-point rubric (unsatisfactory, needs improvement, satisfactory, exemplary), and will reflect the average score of all the standards within each of the five domains*.

**The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector recreated the Essential Elements document to more appropriately recognize the implementation of the Montessori Method in the public sector. Previously the Essential Elements, created by the American Montessori Society, contained 22 elements (of which two were excluded because they did not apply in a public-school environment); the new rubric, redesigned by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, contains 26 standards and a four-point rating scale of each element.*

Measure 1B:

Every year, all grade K-6 lead teachers will self-evaluate their Montessori classroom environment and practices using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector’s Teacher Reflective Practice Inventory. All lead teachers who have been asked to return to River Valley for employment the following year will score at least 80% on the instrument, which includes 22 indicators of Montessori best practices as defined by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.

Data to be reported:

Every year a table will be prepared indicating the rating River Valley Charter School received in each domain of the Essential Elements rubric, based on the annual audit report.

Data collection plan:

- School administration will oversee this annual process.
- The audit will be conducted by an external evaluator every other year and via school-based self-evaluation on the opposite year.
- A table with ratings in the five domains will be included in the school’s annual report.

Data to be reported:

A table and/or graph will be created that (anonymously) includes the individual scores of all grade K-6 lead staff members who have been invited to return to River Valley Charter School.

Data collection plan:

The information will be collected electronically at the end of the year by the Executive Director and stored in a spreadsheet.

Objective 2: River Valley Charter School will provide educational experiences that connect student learning to the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. (Related Key Design Element: Curriculum rooted in the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.)	
<p>Measure 2A: Annually, every grade 1-8 classroom will participate in a minimum of three place-based learning experiences related to the history, culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</p>	<p>Data to be reported: A table that includes identification of the classroom, the grade levels, and the number of place-based learning experiences that occurred, will be included in the appendix of the annual report.</p> <p>Data collection plan: The front office staff will maintain detail documentation of all place-based learning experiences and their relevance in an online file.</p>
<p>Measure 2B: All grade 5-8 students will participate in an annual survey to rate students' understanding of the connection of in-school learning with the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.</p> <p>Ninety percent of the surveyed students will indicate that at least one of their out-of-classroom experiences connected in-class learning to the history, culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. In addition, on a 1-5 Likert scale (with 1 indicating the place-based experience was not relevant to classroom learning and 5 indicating that classroom learning was amplified through place-based experiences which tied learning to the real world), ninety percent of the surveyed students will rate their experiences at least 3.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A table and/or graph will be created by someone on the administrative team indicating the percentage of students who indicate at least one of their place-based learning experiences connected their in-class learning to the Merrimack River Valley. ● A second table/graph will be created indicating the percentage of students' who indicated their place-based experience(s) connected their in-class learning to the real world. <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administration will create and administer a survey each spring. ● Percentages and ratings will be collected, aggregated and tabulated. ● The data will be maintained in a spreadsheet.
Objective 3: Learning experiences at River Valley Charter School will support students in the development of critical thinking and creative problem solving. (Related Key Design Element: Critical thinking and creative problem solving.)	

<p>Measure 3A: Annually, with at least a 50% response rate of River Valley Charter School caregivers, 80% or more respondents will agree or strongly agree in separate questions that River Valley Charter School provides opportunities for their child(ren) to develop critical thinking skills and creative problem-solving skills.</p>	<p>Data to be reported: The percentage of parents/guardians participating in an online survey who agree or strongly agree for each question will be included in the annual report in table and/or graph form.</p> <p>Data collection plan: Following the spring administration of the Family Survey, someone from the administrative team will collect the data from the relevant survey questions: one specific to critical thinking, one specific to creative problem solving. The survey is administered via Survey Monkey and the results are stored in the Survey Monkey application.</p>
<p>Measure 3B: Each year, the overall percentage of grade K-6 students, including River Valley's primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), whose progress report scores show that they usually or consistently demonstrate critical thinking skills (defined as making connections and challenging assumptions, supplying evidence for arguments, and using reflections/feedback as a tool for growth) will increase from the fall to the spring grading period.</p>	<p>Data to be reported: The percentage of students and primary subgroups (high needs and students with disabilities), whose progress report scores indicate they usually or consistently demonstrate critical thinking skills, will be presented in table and/or graph form.</p> <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data is collected online through Rediker's Administrators Plus Teacher Portal in the fall and at end of the year, and is stored in the school's student information system. • Someone from the administrative team will export the data into an excel spreadsheet and manipulate it (to collect the summary information).
<p>Measure 3C: All graduating students will participate in a River Valley Celebration of Learning (COL)* event, and 90%, including River Valley's primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), will earn an average final score of 3.0 or better (out of a 1-4 scale), on a rubric that assesses content and presentation. The presentation is a culminating experience that integrates the River Valley Charter School academic curriculum as well as River Valley's Habits of Learning curriculum, thereby representing application of critical thinking and creative problem solving.</p>	<p>Data to be reported: The percentage of students scoring 3 or better overall, and by subgroup, will be shared via table and/or graph.</p> <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At year end, student scores will be collected and averaged by each student's advisor. • Someone from the administrative team will catalog the data in a spreadsheet, aggregate and graph it to reflect student scores overall and for each of the primary subgroups.

Objective and Measures related to Dissemination:

**Objective 4: RVCS will share its Montessori curriculum with other public schools in Massachusetts over the course of its charter term.
(Relates to Charter School Dissemination)**

Measure 4A:

By the end of the charter term, RVCS staff will deliver at least five mission-related presentations to five different MA public school audiences to disseminate best practices in public Montessori education.

Data to be reported:

Communications, conference or workshop acceptance letters, PDP certificates, and/or documents related to the presentations.

Data collection plan:

- Presentation proposals will be submitted, and acceptance response letters/emails will be maintained by the Executive Director.
- Documentation of the workshops/presentations will be maintained by the front office.