

Free Horizon Montessori



Innovation Plan Application

Approved by Jefferson County Public Schools Board of Education - 5/3/2018
Submitted to Colorado State Board of Education - 6/1/2018



Free Horizon Montessori PK-8 is a proud Associate Member of the American
Montessori Society

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Innovation Plan Cover Page and Checklist

When submitting an innovation plan to the Colorado State Board of Education, the following document must be completed. For additional information about the submission process, please see CDE's Fact Sheet, [Innovation Act Waiver Requests](#). Please do not submit your requests via DropBox or as Zip file.

School Name: Free Horizon Montessori PK-8

School District: Jefferson County R-1

Contact for Innovation Plan (Name, Title, and Email): Kresta Vuolo, Principal,

KVuolo@jeffco.k12.co.us

Please answer the following questions to help CDE review the innovation plan as efficiently as possible.

Is this plan for a new school or an existing school? New / **Existing**

Has the school applied for status as an Alternate Education Campus (AEC)? Yes / **No**

(If yes, please explain: _____)

Has the school been assigned to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan? Yes / **No**

Is the school a recipient of the federal School Improvement Grant (1003(g))? Yes / **No**

An innovation plan ***must be submitted along with the following documents:***

- ☐ A signed resolution from the local school board, signaling approval of the plan and intent to submit the plan to the State Board for its approval;
- ☐ A separate document listing the state laws and State Board rules that the school is seeking to waive, as well as "replacement plans" for each of those waivers (i.e., a description of the manner in which the school will comply with the intent of the waived statutes or rules and will be accountable to the state for such compliance);
- ☐ A separate document showing the school's prior year budget (if an already existing school) and a proposed budget, including funding required for all innovations to be implemented. This budget should include all costs associated with innovations, including staffing costs, and information about any local, state, federal or private funds the school anticipates receiving.

An innovation plan ***must include the following components:***

- ☐ A statement of the school's mission and why designation as an innovation school would enhance the school's ability to achieve its mission;
- ☐ A description of the innovations the school would implement;
- ☐ A description of the improvements in academic achievement that the school expects to achieve as a result of the innovations. For example, a school may expect to see a narrowing in achievement gaps, or a decreased dropout rate, or increased scores on state or local assessments;
- ☐ A list of the programs, policies, and/or operational documents at the school that would be affected by the innovations, and how these would be affected. For example, if a school proposes to extend the school year, that would affect the school's calendar. Other examples of programs/policies/documents that may be affected include the following:
 - ☐ the research-based educational program the school would implement;
 - ☐ the length of the school day and year at the school;
 - ☐ student promotion and graduation policies;
 - ☐ assessment plans; or
 - ☐ staffing and/or compensation plans;
- ☐ The school's prior year budget (if an already-existing school) and a proposed budget, including funding required for all innovations to be implemented. This budget should include all costs associated with innovations, including staffing costs, and information about any local, state, federal or private funds the school anticipates receiving;
- ☐ An estimate of the cost savings and increased efficiencies that the school expects to see as a result of the innovations, if any;
- ☐ Evidence that a majority of the administrators employed at the school consent to designation as an innovation school;
- ☐ Evidence that a majority of the teachers employed at the school consent to designation as an innovation school. (Note: for a school that is seeking to waive one or more of the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, the school plan must include evidence of approval of at least 60% of the members of the collective bargaining unit who are employed at the innovation school. The approval must be gathered by means of a secret ballot vote.)
- ☐ Evidence that a majority of the school accountability committee for the school consent to designation as an innovation school
- ☐ A statement describing the level of support for designation as an innovation school demonstrated by other persons employed at the school, students and parents of students enrolled in the school, and the community surrounding the school.
- ☐ A description of any statutes or any regulatory or district policy requirements that would need to be waived for the public school to implement its identified innovations; and
- ☐ A description of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement at the school that would need to be waived for the school to implement its identified innovations.

Introduction

As one of the oldest Charter Schools in Jefferson County, Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) is an established school providing a comprehensive Montessori experience for preschool through 8th grade students. Since its inception in 2002, FHM has grown from 98 students, to currently serving over 420 students (323 FTE). Through the Montessori philosophy, FHM's mission is to inspire every child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful, and safe environment. FHM executes its mission by providing individualized instruction, engaging curriculum, and a strong community. In addition to the rich experience that students and families encounter, FHM has a track record of strong fiscal accountability and an operational infrastructure that continues to thrive within a complex and changing external environment. FHM leadership, staff and families believe that the opportunity to transition from a Charter school to an Innovation/Option school will only increase FHM's potential to provide an exemplar Montessori experience for all students and families.

FHM is dedicated to an educational model that is challenging, individualized, and has a solid cornerstone of respect and responsibility for oneself, the environment, and those with whom we share the world. FHM's individualized instruction allows for students to progress through an engaging curriculum at their pace. Student achievement is demonstrated through the lens of mastery that easily translates to student success within the framework of State and District standards. This is reflected in FHM receiving a Performance Plan through the School Performance Framework, earning 72.4 out of 100 points in 2017 with ratings of "meets" in overall Academic Growth and Test Participation and "approaching" in Academic Achievement.

In addition to success as a charter school, FHM recently embarked on the Pathway of Continuous School Improvement through the American Montessori Society. The school's adherence to core Montessori principles resulted in being awarded a Level 5 Seal. The Pathway is a ten-level process, culminating with a validation site visit in order to earn full accreditation.

FHM students thrive academically and build leadership in part due to the strong community environment that is encouraged and harnessed at FHM. We are proud of our highly qualified educators who inspire and support each child in reaching their greatest potential. Involved parents advance the value of education through volunteering time and effort while strengthening the connection between home and school. FHM students are happy, excited, inspired, and deeply involved in learning.

Throughout FHM's history, the school has worked to increase and maintain its positive financial standing. Annual budgets align with the school's mission and long-term strategic goals leading to investments and prioritized spending based on the needs identified through the School Performance Framework and annual surveys of staff, parents, and students. At the close of the 2017 fiscal year, FHM had \$7.6 million in total assets and a liquid fund balance of \$1,605,707, including \$720,008 in restricted funds to meet its debt service, TABOR, and operating reserve requirements. Additionally, FHM offers supplemental programs that are responsive to the community's needs and assist the school by diversifying its financial portfolio and thus maintaining FHM's financial sustainability.

FHM is excited about pursuing designation as Jeffco Public School's first Innovation model. FHM believes that it is the perfect time to look towards innovation through Montessori in order to provide greater access and opportunity for students in Jeffco to engage in a Montessori education. Pending approval from the Free Horizon Montessori community (parents, students, and staff), the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education, and the Colorado Board of Education, FHM will convert to being an Innovation/Option school in Jeffco.

Key elements of FHM's proposal include:

- 1. Keeping Montessori educational programming, staffing formulas, mission, vision, and guiding principles unchanged.** *FHM has a proven academic track record for providing quality Montessori within the public sector. Transitioning from Charter to Innovation/Option allows FHM to better leverage district and school resources in supporting and expanding our program.*
- 2. Exchanging its current campus at 581 Conference Place with the vacant school facility located at 15920 W. 10th Ave, Golden, CO, beginning with the 2018-19 school year.**
This exchange will make Montessori education more available to students by having a neighborhood location. The combination of adjusted revenues and expenses paid by the district rather than the school will also result in approximately 8 percent of FHM's annual expenses traditionally used for building payment, maintenance, and operation to be redirected toward educational programming directly benefiting students. This combined with leveraging the resources of the district will ultimately better serve students while expanding innovative opportunities in Jeffco. In addition, the facility at 15920 W. 10th Avenue provides better overall facilities as well as a layout and classroom spaces better suited to FHM's program level configuration and enrollment both now and long-term. In order to reach the same level of educational adequacy at our current location, FHM would need to expend approximately \$7 million in capital improvements.
- 3. Applying for waivers that align with FHM's current structure and allow us to adhere to the fidelity of Montessori as described by the American Montessori Society's Credentialing process.**
The plan includes district and state waivers that address salary schedules, school calendar, curriculum, principal licensure and hiring procedures, teacher licensure and hiring procedures, a school governing body, and maintaining FHM's current programs, such as but not limited to early childhood, before care, after care, middle school, and specials. The waivers contained herein are comparable to those currently in effect under the school's charter.
- 4. Transitioning to a Jeffco Option School with Innovation Status.**
The pathway to Innovation also involves designation of FHM as a Jeffco Option School. This designation provides FHM the ability to continue as a school of choice and offer its continued Montessori education focus.

FHM with its proven leadership, academic, and fiscal track record will partner with the district to fine-tune district policies, processes, and state and district waivers under this new school model to help pave the way for other Innovation School designations in the district. This will be a learning process for both FHM and Jeffco, and each will revisit and make adjustments as needed throughout the first year of implementation as part of the Innovation.

For additional Montessori resources, please see:

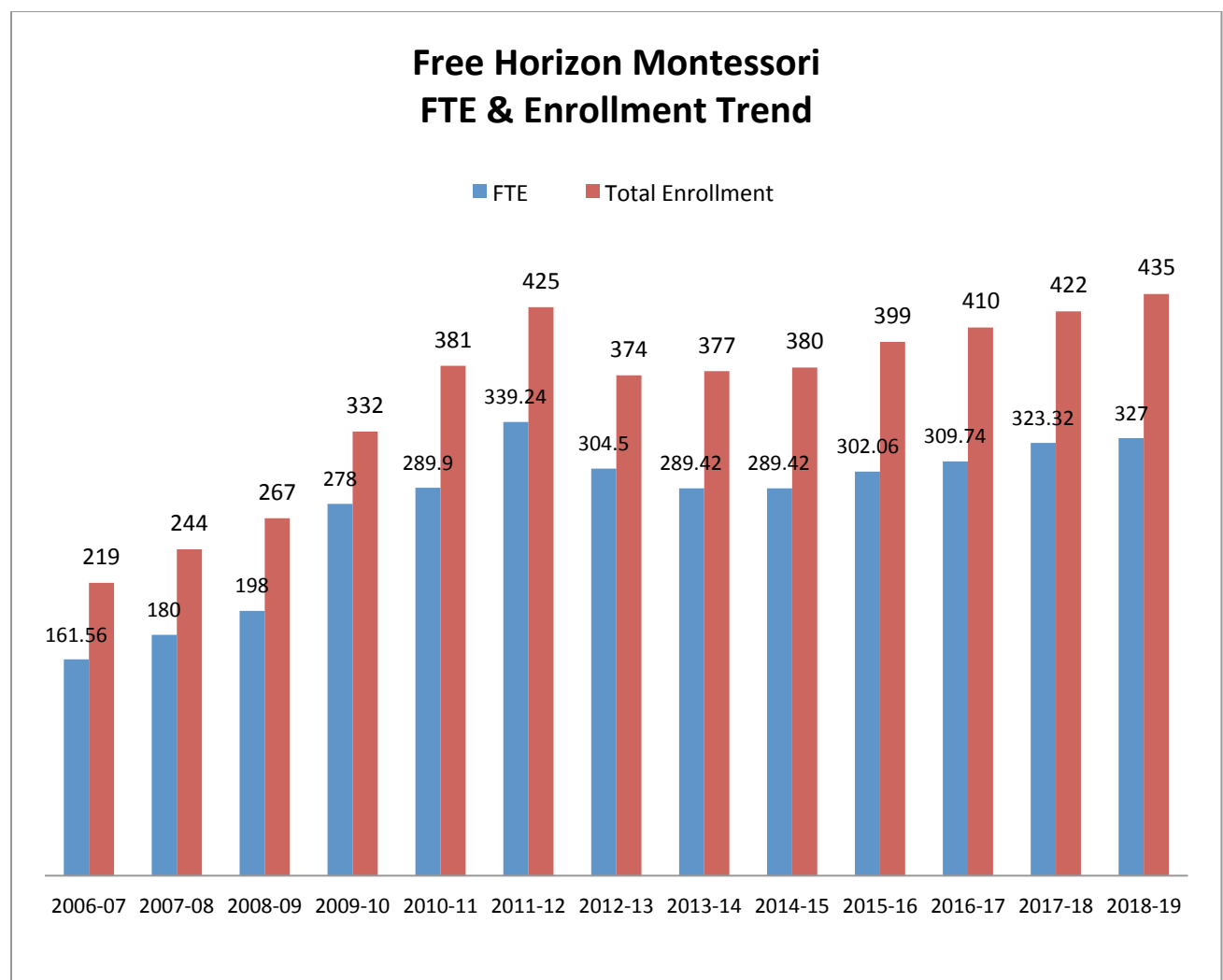
- American Montessori Society (AMS): amshq.org

- The Montessori Foundation: www.montessori.org
- Lillard, Angeline, et.al. "Montessori Preschool Elevates and Equalizes Child Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study." *frontiers in Psychology*, 30 October 2017, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01783/full>
- "An Evaluation of Montessori Education in South Carolina's Public Schools." The Riley Institute at Furman (2017) riley.furman.edu/sites/default/files/docs/MontessoriOverallResultsFINAL.pdf

School Profile

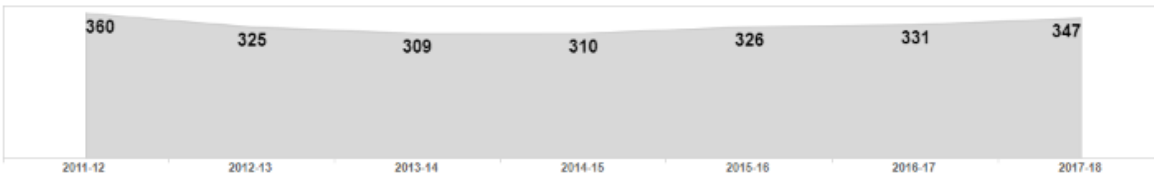
Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) opened as a Jefferson County School District public charter school in 2002-03 serving students in Grades PK-6. FHM expanded to include 7th and 8th grade in the 2011-12 school year. At the time of the 2012-13 charter renewal, the school enrolled 304.5 FTE students, which grew to 323.32 FTE in 2017-18 for a total of 422 students inclusive of FHM’s Early Childhood Education students. In 2017-18, the student body included 21.6% students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch and an English Language Learner (ELL) population of 6%, with ten different languages other than English represented. FHM has 18.7% ethnic minority students and approximately 25% of FHM students represent exceptional learners with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Advanced Learning Plan (ALP), Section 504 Plan, or a combination.

The two charts below represent FHM’s enrollment trend. The first chart illustrates our total enrollment, inclusive of our Early Childhood program, along with our FTE. The second chart from the Colorado Department of Education School View website shows enrollment trends of kindergarten through 8th grade over the past seven years.

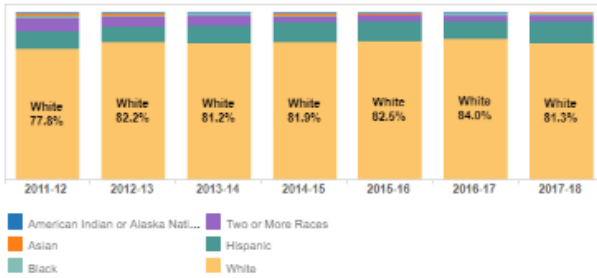


Notes: Counts and percentages are based on the pupil membership information reported in the October Court submission for the designated year. The chart showing enrollment statistics for specific student groups includes two sets of calculations for English learners. One includes students who are currently receiving language acquisitions services: NEP, LEP, FEP M1, and FEP M2. The other definition, which is used for state accountability determinations, includes students currently receiving services as well as those who received services in the past: NEP, LEP, FEP, and FELL.

TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT



ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY



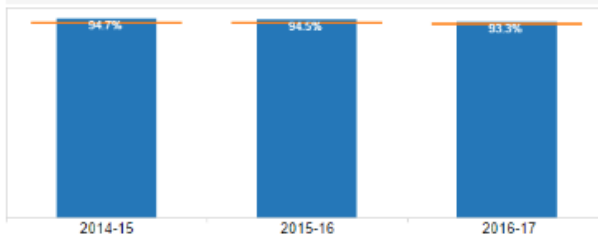
ENROLLMENT BY STUDENT GROUP

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
English Learners (NEP, LEP, FEP M1/M2)	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%	3.2%
English Learners (NEP, LEP, FEP, FELL)	2.5%	2.8%	2.3%	2.6%	3.4%	2.4%	3.7%
Students with Disabilities (IEP)	5.8%	6.2%	8.4%	8.7%	7.1%	8.8%	9.5%
Gifted Students	17.2%	20.6%	18.4%	15.5%	13.8%	11.0%	8.6%
Minority Students	22.2%	17.8%	18.8%	18.1%	17.5%	16.0%	18.7%
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	17.2%	24.9%	25.6%	19.4%	16.0%	22.1%	21.9%

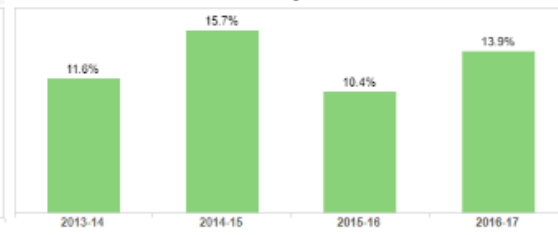
Attendance and Mobility Rates

The rates displayed here reflect information collected by CDE's Data Services Unit, which is published on the CDE Education Statistics page. The orange lines indicate the overall state rates for each year. Mobility rates reflect revised calculation methodology implemented in 2013. See here for additional details: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/mobility-stability/current>

Attendance Rate



Mobility Rate



During the 2011-12 school year, several factors converged that resulted in enrollment reduction for 2012-13. The most impactful was the state funding reductions and rescissions that resulted in all schools in Colorado being faced with tough choices. At Free Horizon Montessori, elementary class sizes were increased to 34 students and Educational Assistants were eliminated from the elementary classrooms. In addition, the principal of six years announced she would retire at the end of the 2011-12 school year. Since that time, classroom sizes returned to the pre-rescission maximum of 30 students and Educational Assistant positions were reinstated, resulting in teachers' ability to truly implement Montessori in the manner it was intended. FHM's enrollment has grown an average of 2% per year since then as well.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement - Through the Montessori Philosophy, we inspire every child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful, and safe environment.

Vision Statement - We seek to transform our community by developing students who pursue their full potential, understand their global responsibilities and respect others, self, and the environment.

Motto - *Montessori for the 21st Century: A Place to Learn, A Place to Belong*

We value:

- *Safe and compassionate environments* that promote exploration, risk-taking, and creativity.
- *Quality and empowering relationships* that are trusting and respectful and give space and structure for each to find their voice and place in society.
- *Personal responsibility where each person is accountable for their decisions and actions within the community.*
- *Holistic perspectives*, because knowledge is comprised of an entangled web of personal awareness and experience that is physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual.
- *Challenge*, as one's potential is only discovered in the place of change and growth.
- *Continuous improvement*, knowing that reaching one goal is just a step toward discovering a new horizon. Our goals guide the direction of life, but living is a process of doing and interacting.
- *Positive problem-solving approaches*, which are determined to look first at the best in people and situations and willingly set aside our egos for the sake of relationship and learning.
- *Proactive partnerships* with students, families, and community.
- *Diversity of people, roles, and vision*, knowing that our judgments have power that can limit and define one's viewpoints for life. We use our judgments as a tool to frame the reality and guide quality decision-making, but reject judgments that limit an individual's potential. We do not know what we do not know.
- *Aesthetic order, organization, and strategic planning* so that we can effectively and efficiently serve the greater needs of our institution and greater community.
- *Wisdom-seeking*, where we continually look for deeper understanding and meaning in life's relationships.

Designation as an Innovation school would enhance FHM's ability to achieve its mission by providing greater depth of financial and support resources and services for our students while implementing a high fidelity Montessori program. This enables the school to allocate funds towards priority actions identified in FHM's Annual Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

Description of Innovation

Educational Philosophy

Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) follows the philosophy and educational pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori. In alignment with Dr. Montessori's beliefs, FHM believes that within each child is the seed of unlimited potential which guides that child into adulthood. FHM emphasizes individualized, mastery-based instruction as opposed to strict curricular-dictated education. In addition to traditional Montessori lessons, FHM uses many types of curricula to meet the needs of each child enrolled at the school.

Each child is educated at his or her own rate of development and demonstrated mastery. The focus at Free Horizon Montessori is to continually stimulate each child through balancing skill attainment with rigor and challenge. FHM's environments are purposeful, enriched, and promote experimentation and risk-taking in accordance with the student's individual developmental level. FHM also actively supports the innate curiosity and independence of students in balance with obligations of responsibility and self-discipline. Generally stated, each student is offered opportunities to expand based upon their own readiness rather than age level or curriculum.

Aware Adult (teacher) is viewed as the link between the student and the content, but not the vehicle. While the adult works to provide a carefully prepared environment enriched with a variety of hands-on learning materials and experiences and provides lessons to students in the use of these materials, the true learning occurs through the student's experience with the materials and lessons, both independently and collaboratively. In Montessori classrooms, teachers act as a guide or facilitator of learning, connecting children to the "just right" level of instruction in order to foster the engagement and risk-taking necessary for learning. This is a foundational life skill that is learned in elementary school, strengthened throughout the school years, and a determinant of future success. Finding one's place in the world and developing skills that support risk-taking, self-challenge, initiative, and respectful and responsible behavior are foundational to academic success; because of this, these skills must be entwined within the very fabric of instruction. There is a lead teacher and one to two educational assistants, depending on class ages, in each classroom.

Highly-trained teachers who hold a Montessori credential are the key to authentic implementation of Montessori education within the general education classrooms. Montessori teacher preparation programs are accredited through the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) and recognized as accredited institutions of higher education by the federal Department of Education. All MACTE-accredited Montessori teacher preparation programs accept federal Pell Grants and student loans using the same eligibility criteria and application through the FAFSA as traditional college and university programs. Many Montessori credentialing programs are housed within universities and lead to a master's degree upon completion, and the practicum (student teaching) component of Montessori certification is double that of traditional teacher preparation programs. As of today, 12 states recognize Montessori credentials from MACTE-accredited teacher preparation programs as equivalent to traditional teacher preparation programs, requiring only passage of the required content exam (such as

the Praxis II) in order to receive a state teaching license. This Innovation Plan includes recognition that any teacher holding at least a bachelor's degree, a Montessori credential from a MACTE-accredited program, and a passing score on the appropriate content exam as accepted by the Colorado Department of Education shall fulfill requirements for teacher licensure.

Prepared Environment (classroom) receives much attention as it sets the academic and emotional climate. Each aspect of interaction between children, children and adults, and children and their classroom environment must be carefully planned and prepared in order to maximize the potential for student engagement and learning. Montessori teachers are trained and learning environments are designed to utilize a rich variety of strategies to deliver the curriculum. The goal is for students to engage in a love of learning throughout their lives. This engagement is evident when one visits FHM's classrooms, observes student work cycles, and interacts with students and instructional staff.

A 2- to 3-hour uninterrupted work period recognizes and respects individual variations in the learning process. In the FHM environment, students have time to work through various tasks and responsibilities at their own pace. During each 7-hour school day, students receive an uninterrupted work period of two to three hours in both the morning and in the afternoon. These uninterrupted work periods are vitally important, as that is when the building of coordination, concentration, independence and order, and the assimilation of information are able to occur.

Free Horizon Montessori classrooms are multi-age and multi-grade. Dr. Montessori identified four planes of development that all people, regardless of culture, experience as they grow from infancy to adulthood. She believed that schools would best serve students by grouping children by these developmental planes rather than by single age or grade levels. Based on this belief, FHM subscribes to mixed-age grouping in its classrooms and multi-year curriculum cycle. The older children at each level naturally help the younger ones, thereby deepening their understanding of concepts as well as developing empathy and leadership. Younger students benefit from seeing higher learning possibilities and working with role models close to their own age.

The Primary program serves children ages three to six. During this time, the child's mind is like a sponge, absorbing all that is within the environment. Materials, lessons, and experiences within the Primary classroom are designed to complement the sensitive periods for development of order, language acquisition, refinement of the senses, and movement. Characterized by concrete thinking and fundamental formation of character, children endeavor to work independently within a structured environment doing real activities with an intelligent purpose and strive for independence: "I can do it myself!" (Note: students in the FHM's early childhood program are cared for under an existing childcare license with Colorado Department of Health and Human Services, License #1512803-DCC.)

The Lower Elementary program serves children ages six to nine, traditionally identified as 1st through 3rd graders. Lower Elementary students continue on a strong academic continuum, with social interactions becoming intensely important as they explore issues of fairness, cooperation, and strive to make decisions for themselves. Lessons provide an introduction to

various concepts that are further acquired through follow up work with the Montessori materials and additional individual exploration.

The Upper Elementary program serves children ages nine to eleven traditionally identified as 4th through 5th graders. Upper Elementary students are ready for intense exploration of abstract concepts as well as those of social justice, historical relevance, and each individual's role within the greater community and society. Extended opportunities for independent study of topics of interest allow students to be inspired by and make connections with the overall curriculum.

The FHM Middle School serves children ages twelve to fourteen traditionally identified as 6th through 8th grade. The Middle School program is a progressive, holistic program founded upon a developmental response to the needs and abilities of the whole adolescent (physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual). The curriculum, which is thorough, challenging, diverse, and integrated, fosters student growth in all areas and prepares them for the challenges they will face as leaders of tomorrow's world. Education at this level continues the Montessori tradition of fully engaging, experiential learning with an emphasis on leadership development, personal responsibility, and rigorous preparation with 21st Century skills. Whether in the classroom or out in the world in any number of internships and off-campus trips, students immerse themselves in meaningful, relevant real-life learning and graduate with the skills to flourish in a variety of high school, college, and professional arenas. While Dr. Montessori's writings describe the ideal age span for the early adolescent (middle school) years to be ages 12 – 15 serving 7th – 9th grades, FHM made the intentional decision to end after 8th grade in order to allow graduates to not only enter high school with their peers throughout the district, but also to have the greatest opportunity for choice enrollment in special programs throughout the district.

Upcoming Changes with FHM's Upper Elementary and Middle School Programs. It is important to note that FHM, from its inception through the 2017-18 school year, served children in 4th through 6th grades in its Upper Elementary program, as Dr. Montessori identified this as the ideal range for this plane of development. Jeffco Public Schools leadership announced in 2016 that they were planning a district-wide shift to move all 6th graders from elementary to middle school starting in the 2018-19 school year. FHM leadership teams began an extensive study process to determine whether to follow suit. The study included financial and enrollment modeling, surveying stakeholders, visiting accredited Montessori programs that serve the same ages and grades as FHM, and forming a committee comprised of teachers (Upper Elementary, Middle School, Specials, and LRT), FHM Board members (parent and wider community), and administrators to examine the possibility from all perspectives. In all cases, transitioning FHM 6th grade students to the middle school program to be consistent with the Jeffco timeline proved to be the most viable option.

Free Horizon Montessori employs an academically-focused scope and sequence that spirals up in complexity in accordance with depths of knowledge – moving from basic recall upwards to complex reasoning and analysis then through critical evaluation and creation of new ideas. Students move

through the curricula in accordance with their demonstrated level of mastery with core content increasing in breadth and depth, and becoming more detailed and integrated with each level. The goal is to create learning environments that teach the whole child and show students how academic skills are integrated in all things and are therefore purposeful and related to the living of everyday life. In that context, basic skills are taught within the studies of Science and Culture. Using this model, a student may well move into the next academic level during a school year, as the curriculum serves more as a scaffolding than a script, and the individual needs of the student must always be supported and challenged. Skills are practiced in class, as well as through independent studies and homework in a connected manner that inspires and empowers students to improve for the sake of better connection with the world.

The instructional strategies used in FHM's classrooms are evidence-based and vary according to the needs of the student. These variations are determined through a collaborative process that takes into account the student's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive ability levels. The collaboration is primarily between the student and the teacher. Each week, students develop a personal work plan that allows them to make limited choices about the work to be accomplished in the days and week(s) ahead. These plans require daily reading, writing, and math, integrated into the cultural and scientific areas of study.

Students and teachers use formative assessment data, past work plans, and other tools to monitor progress and design each week's course of study. As students mature and demonstrate the ability to meet objectives, they earn higher levels of choice on their weekly plans. This planning element is core to FHM's instructional practices, as it requires students to set and prioritize goals, manage their time, and be responsible citizens in the classroom. Through this process, students learn ways of assessing personal progress, which in turn builds internal responsibility, self-efficacy, and ultimately the skills necessary for intrinsic motivation and life-long learning. FHM utilizes the NWEA MAP assessments for all kindergarten through 8th grade students in order to help track student progress as compared with district averages and national norms.

During a daily extended work cycle, students participate in individual instruction, small and large group instruction, and student collaborative work. Though each student receives instruction according to an individualized and differentiated plan, this does not preclude grouping according to skill level or collaboration among students for achievement of a larger project goal. Regardless of the type of instruction, the work at FHM centers on helping students achieve objectives as outlined on their individual plans in addition to the development of non-academic skills as described in the Jeffco Generations Strategic Plan as required in our 21st century landscape.

Montessori classrooms are large and designed for autonomous movement of students. The rooms have individual, small group, and large group work areas and provide opportunity for students to work alone or with their peers and/or teachers. The environments require respectful interaction and responsibility from all community members, and this expectation is established with all students as they join into a FHM classroom community.

A majority of the instruction at Free Horizon Montessori is done in small group format. While teachers use formative assessment data to initially group students, groups are flexible and change often according to a student's demonstrated ability level. This affords differentiated instruction and efficient use of instructional time. Intensive instruction occurs primarily in an individualized format and with the support of the school's Learning Resource Team. Contextual-based lessons are introduced in a large group format each day in accordance with the school's Integrated Curriculum Calendar.

Collaborative Education is used to practice and improve learning. Once the foundations of core content are taught, students have the opportunity to conduct in-depth study and research with their peers, which manifests in project-based work. Students are grouped together (in various ways) with a task of taking specific content to a deeper level. Students propose, design, and create a final project that is shared with their class. The project outcomes may be expressed as a play, song, poem, diorama, experiment, PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, or a host of other mediums. Each outcome has a rubric that classmates and teachers use to give feedback to the student group. This collaborative model is key to integrating learning into daily life.

Follow-through on an expectation is necessary for success in any learning. This requires that all efforts follow the work cycle of having a beginning, middle, and an ending. Beginning in kindergarten, students learn the language and expectation of the work cycle, which provides the structure of effective study throughout the student's education. Executive functioning skills in working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control are explicitly taught and fostered throughout all levels in order to support expanding proficiency in organization, planning, and execution of learning activities, assignments, and homework.

Technology is a basic skill in FHM's curriculum. In the 21st century, the ability to understand and maneuver through the technological world is critical for success. Students utilize this ability in a multitude of areas throughout the school. Currently, students use classroom Chromebooks for research, writing, assessment, and reporting. Elementary classrooms utilize projectors for whole-group instruction. FHM also has a technology lab where Lower Elementary students learn keyboarding skills, computer and internet etiquette, in-depth research skills, as well as lessons on the history and future of computing technology. Upper Elementary students build upon this foundation and enhance research skills, expand proficiency in utilizing various tools in order to demonstrate learning, and apply new skills in coding and robotics. Technology-based electives provide Middle School students with opportunities to broaden and deepen technological skills in specialized areas.

Specialty classes are utilized as the overarching connections between the core curriculum and the shared human experience. In fact, many lessons within the specialty classes relate to the scientific and cultural studies happening within the classroom, enriching the experiences of students as they immerse in the content and see how the scientific, cultural, and societal happenings influence the arts throughout history. All children in preschool through 5th grade participate in one specialty class per day on a rotating schedule.

- **Art** - The Art Room is a creative environment nurturing every child's artistic expression in a wide variety of media. The curriculum allows students to delight in the aesthetic qualities of art, enjoy

the production, and find inspiration from Art History. Students learn to discuss art and to understand the elements and principles of Art and Design. FHM's art program supports students in developing their individual style and approach. Students gain confidence in their own work by learning techniques and strategies in a variety of media including painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and more. Student art is celebrated and decorates classrooms, the school, and other district and community venues.

- **Music** - Music is an integral part of every student's education and provides students with unique experiences and knowledge to enhance their understanding and appreciation of music and Music History. It enhances skills such as focus, creativity, and mathematics, which are essential for success in all areas of life. Students receive instruction in all aspects of music: singing, playing, moving, reading, listening, analyzing, creating, and performing.
- **Physical Education** - Physical Education is an important component of all grades. Research shows a strong correlation between physical activity and improved academic success. Plus, healthy students have fewer school absences, which also contribute to increased academic success. The FHM Physical Education program also contains Health and Wellness education components to promote self-care and independent healthy decision making. The vision of FHM is that students graduate with the necessary knowledge, skills, concepts, and experiences for lifelong health and fitness.
- **Technology** - FHM benefits from a well-equipped Technology Lab with 30 laptop computers, digital cameras, and a myriad of software applications installed for student use, as well as computer hardware components for hands-on demonstrations. All 1st through 5th grade students attend Technology class as a part of their regular weekly specialty class rotation. The technology curriculum uses a project-based approach. Instead of learning technology skills in isolation, students learn them in the context of completing a project that is personally meaningful while practicing standard technology skills. This approach promotes critical and creative thinking by using the computer as a problem-solving tool. Technology skills are gradually introduced with each new project. Review questions and skill reviews embedded into each project provide students opportunities to practice and hone their skills. The technology curriculum includes projects that teach students skills in keyboarding, word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, internet research techniques, databases, desktop publishing, photo editing, internet safety, good digital citizenship, and video production.
- **Library** - The FHM library is a multimedia space providing both books and several student Chromebooks available for conducting research. The library's book collection includes reference materials, periodicals, and fiction and non-fiction books for students of all ages. The library curriculum includes topics such as the Dewey Decimal System and age-appropriate research methodologies. The fundamentals of research are explored through classroom assignments and activities to develop students' independence in using the library and its resources. The mission of the library is based on the desire to nurture life-long learning and impart skills students need be successful and informed 21st century global citizens.

The building of Emotional and Social Intelligence is central to Free Horizon Montessori's work with students. Dr. Montessori felt that much of the work of learning was in the acquisition of skills that help humans purposefully connect with and work within the world as a whole. This belief has been validated in the work of Daniel Goleman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Martin Seligman, and others. Each year FHM faculty is trained in guiding students to build foundational emotional and social skills. These include impulse control, self-reflection, personal choice and responsibility, active listening, de-centering, conflict resolution, and more. FHM's instructional work takes traditional Montessori practices and melds them with current research in the field of educational effectiveness. To enhance instructional practices and classroom management skills, FHM teachers receive training in Love & Logic®, Positive Discipline, Conscious Classroom Management, Growth Mindset, and Nonviolent Communications.

- **Love and Logic®** is a method of working with students which was developed by educational expert Jim Fay, child psychiatrist Foster W. Cline, M.D. and Charles Fay, Ph.D. Love and Logic® has many tools for educators, principals and districts that promote healthy parent/teacher and teacher/student relationships, and positive school wide discipline. Love and Logic® works along with and enhances other school discipline programs.
- **Positive Discipline in the Classroom**, developed by Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott, is a research-based classroom management program that empowers teachers with skills to build their students' sense of community, prepare them for successful living, and increase academic achievement. Experiential learning methods give teachers skills to help students practice better cooperation, social skills, self-direction, responsibility, and mutual respect in the classroom.
- **Conscious Classroom Management** strives to make the invisible elements of effective classroom management visible and tangible regardless of grade, experience, student population, or educational model. Based on the book of the same name, Conscious Classroom Management outlines specific tools and strategies that lead to stronger classroom communities and explicit teaching of behavioral expectations in the learning environment.
- **Growth Mindset Coach** is a month-by-month handbook for teachers designed to help shift teachers and students from closed mindsets to growth mindsets.
- **Nonviolent Communication® (NVC)** is based on the principles of nonviolence, the natural state of compassion when violence is not present in the heart. NVC begins by assuming that all people are compassionate by nature and that violent strategies—whether verbal or physical—are learned behaviors taught and supported by the prevailing culture. NVC also assumes that people share the same, basic human needs and that each individual action is a strategy to meet one or more of these needs. People who practice NVC have found greater authenticity in their communication, increased understanding, deepening connection, and conflict resolution. The NVC community is active in over 65 countries around the globe.

Student Support Systems Enhance Innovation

Differentiated Instruction

It is understood that students often thrive in one academic area while struggling in another. This is the reality of learning. Generally, the Montessori philosophy is one of integration of individuals within the group. As such, the school does not subscribe to labeling and subsequent separation of a particular student due to learning ability or style. This does not mean that students will not receive extra support as deemed necessary through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Advanced Learning Plan (ALP), but it does mean that extra support is integrated within the regular classroom as much as possible. FHM is a general education school, well-equipped to serve students with diverse learning needs, including students on ALPs as well as those on IEPs whose special service provider plan calls for them to be in the general education classroom at least 80% of the time. To help us meet the diverse needs of our students, FHM utilizes two core concepts: the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model and the Learning Resource Team (LRT). Perhaps the greatest benefit of these two concepts is that they eliminate the “wait to fail” situation; because students are supported in their individual educational needs promptly within the general education setting. FHM’s LRT and MTSS approaches provide more instructionally relevant information than traditional assessments alone.

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Process

Multi-tiered System of Supports, or MTSS, is a process for meeting the educational needs of students in the least restrictive learning environment. It places emphasis on how well students respond to changes in instruction made by the classroom teacher. The philosophy behind this process is that the teacher is the primary instructional decision-maker, and that he/she often requires the support of key professionals in meeting the needs of students. This support may be in areas of Special Education or Gifted Education.

A successful MTSS process provides the correct supports, in both quality and quantity, while also assuring that the student feels valued and is a contributing member of the classroom. The MTSS model provides a structure to evaluate and implement such supports. The essential elements of an MTSS approach are: the provision of scientific, research-based instruction and interventions in general education; monitoring and measurement of student progress in response to the instruction and interventions; and use of these measures of student progress to shape instruction and make educational decisions.

The first step of the MTSS process is an evaluation as to whether a student is making sufficient progress toward academic and behavioral standards. If the answer is “no,” the second step is Student Support Team. Here, the teachers, with collegial support, define the problem and develop a plan of intervention, as well as a plan for monitoring and measurement of student progress in response to that intervention. These strategies are shared with the student’s parents and are implemented for three weeks. If the student still requires support after this time period, a meeting is held with parents where strategies are designed to increase the frequency or duration of interventions. In this scenario, the parents and the

Learning Resource Team (LRT) add further supports at home and in their regular classroom. If the student is continuing to struggle, the teacher and parent set up a private meeting with the LRT to discuss the referral process for Special Education or Gifted and Talented programming. FHM utilizes a variety of research-based interventions. These currently include Lexia Core 5, Read Well Curriculum, RAZ (Reading A to Z), Khan Academy, Do the Math, and others.

Learning Resource Team

The Learning Resource Team (LRT) is made up of key professionals: Special Education Teachers, School Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Interventionists, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, School Counselor, and, as appropriate, a Learning Resource Team Assistant. Due to the credentials of the LRT members, preschoolers with IEPs that can be fulfilled in a general education setting are also supported at FHM. The skills of the LRT are beneficial to all the students attending FHM, and therefore, as part of the core practice, these professionals are a regular part of classroom instruction. To do this, the LRT member works with the teacher to become knowledgeable about current lessons and classroom activities for which students require additional supports. The LRT member is then regularly present and able to provide instruction in reading, math, writing, organization, study skills, focus and attention, and time management skills.

Attention is paid to address the needs of students identified on IEPs and ALPs, but in the context of regular classroom learning. A student may participate in a LRT-facilitated group if he/she feels the lesson holds value. Generally, to expand FHM's abilities to meet individual needs, the LRT supports many of the group activities in the classroom. The LRT members also provide individual services to those students on IEPs. The services specified on the IEP may be provided in small groups outside of the classroom or individual one-on-one sessions in accordance with the plan. Overall, this practice of integrating specialists into the regular classroom supports education in the following ways:

- provides for instruction of students with special educational needs in the least restrictive learning environment;
- limits the negative hazards of labeling;
- meets the educational needs of students on IEPs and ALPs;
- provides support for the classroom teacher – through both modeling and individualized instruction;
- provides a forum for professional conversation about differentiated instruction and instructional interventions;
- allows for early identification of students who are at-risk in the classroom;
- creates a welcoming and supportive environment for all students;
- improves instructional success for all students attending FHM.

FHM also utilized specific researched based curriculums designed to enhance special education interventions and targeted instruction. These include: Zones of Regulation, Social Express, and Social Thinking.

Student Support Team

FHM has a Student Support Team as a resource for teachers seeking input on how to best meet a student's needs. The Student Support Team brings together the administration team, seasoned classroom teachers, parents, and LRT members as appropriate and is designed for training and professional discourse about ways to meet the diverse needs of students. Time is spent in discussing possible strategies and interventions that may be useful in supporting student learning. The team then develops a support plan and next steps as well as a time frame for meeting again to evaluate progress and make adjustments to the support plan as necessary.

Gifted and Talented

FHM believes that the strategies used for teaching gifted and talented students are valuable for all students. These include the planning and setting of learning objectives, progress-monitoring techniques, and in-depth research and study. Students use a variety of perception and processing styles in their learning, and each style needs attention to ensure success. A student may need extra challenge in an area of strength or deeper support in an area of improvement learning in a given area. FHM teachers, instructional coaches, and interventionists take the student's learning style and strategy into account when planning instruction. Still, some students demonstrate ability far above the norm. For those students, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) serves to guide the goal setting and instructional focus.

Determination and placement on an ALP is a multi-faceted approach, which includes both objective and subjective tests, teacher and parent appraisals, and collection of a body of evidence. These are completed by parents, teachers, and trained educational psychologists. At FHM, all students are given the CoGAT assessment during their 2nd grade year. If scores of a student meet the criteria for an ALP, next steps for identification are taken in accordance with Jeffco's procedures. The other avenue for identification is outlined in the MTSS process described above. Generally, though, the Montessori curriculum is designed to support educational risk-taking and assure challenge of study for all students, including those identified as Gifted. Currently 20% of the FHM student body has been identified as Gifted and Talented. This is the fastest growing segment of FHM's student population.

Academic Results

Culture of Performance

Free Horizon Montessori anticipates that academic achievement and growth will continue to grow and be maintained at the levels already anticipated in the school's current UIP. Additional fund savings generated by no longer having a building to maintain will be strategically allocated towards student academic, physical, and emotional needs.

The 2017 Performance Framework calculated a total of 72.4 points out of 100 for Free Horizon Montessori, with the school landing solidly in the Performance Plan category. This was based on 23.6 out of 40 possible points for Academic Achievement (59.1%) and 48.8 out of 60 points for Academic Growth (81.3%). These translate into ratings of "Meets" in the area of Academic Growth and "Approaching" in the area of Academic Achievement.

Areas of pride include earning 100% of points possible in both Academic Growth in English and Math for our Middle School, resulting in a rating of "Exceeds" in both. In looking at the One Year School Performance Frameworks for the past three years, FHM shows an overall positive trajectory. The designation of "Approaching" in the Academic Achievement category for elementary students in 2017 reflected only a 2.2 point decrease in categorical points earned from the previous year.

Elementary

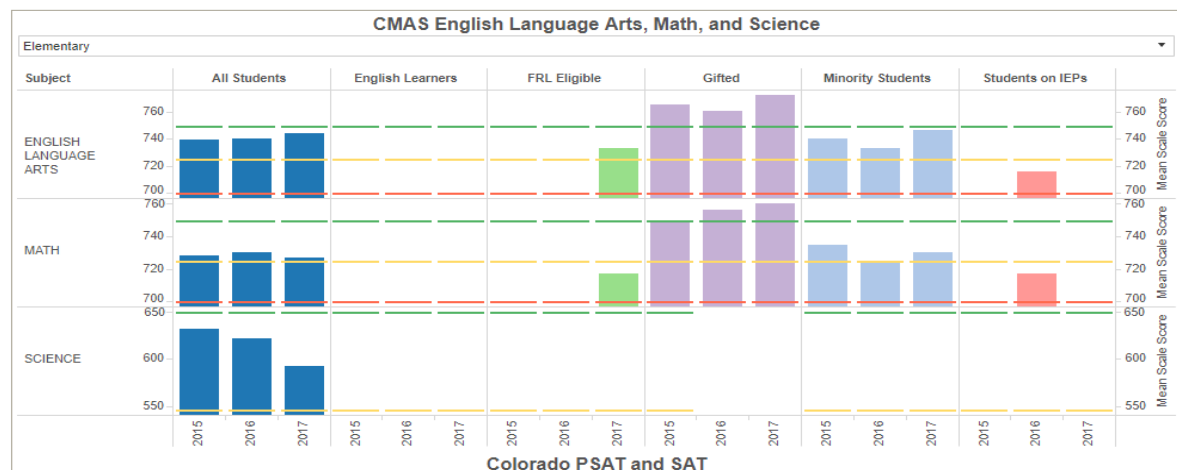
Year	Plan Type	Performance Indicator	Rating
2017	Performance	Academic Achievement	Approaching
		Academic Growth	Meets
2016	Performance	Academic Achievement	Meets
		Academic Growth	Meets
2015	Performance	Academic Achievement	Meets
		Academic Growth	Meets

Middle

Year	Plan Type	Performance Indicator	Rating
2017	Performance	Academic Achievement	Meets
		Academic Growth	Exceeds
2016	Performance	Academic Achievement	Meets
		Academic Growth	Exceeds
2015	Performance	Academic Achievement	Meets
		Academic Growth	Meets

Colorado Standards Assessments

Free Horizon Montessori continues on a path of improved academic proficiency and growth scores as measured on the state assessments. SchoolView data on the Colorado Department of Education website (<http://www2.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/dish/schooldashboard.asp>) show the following:



In addition to achievement data, the Colorado Department of Education looks at longitudinal growth in students over time. The following chart shows both observed growth in Free Horizon Montessori students as compared with the rate determined by CDE to be Adequate Growth, along with the difference in FHM performance relative to Adequate Growth minimums.

Median Growth Percentile: 1.0 (red) to 99.0 (blue)

Legend: CMAS (blue circle), SAT (orange circle)

		ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS						MATH					
		2016			2017			2016			2017		
		School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
ALL STUDENTS	All Students	65.0	49.0	50.0	64.0	52.0	50.0	61.0	52.0	50.0	43.0	53.0	50.0
GRADE LEVEL	04	68.0	51.0	50.0	64.0	56.0	50.0	37.0	50.0	50.0	38.0	52.0	50.0
	05	59.0	49.0	50.0	50.0	51.0	50.0	61.0	55.0	50.0	37.0	54.0	50.0
	06	73.0	59.0	50.0	81.0	61.0	50.0	69.5	57.0	50.0	70.0	57.0	50.0
	07		42.0	50.0		44.0	50.0		48.0	50.0		50.0	50.0
	08		46.0	50.0		47.0	50.0		49.0	50.0		49.0	51.0
ENGLISH LEARNERS	English Learners (NEP, LEP, FEP)		48.0	50.0		53.0	51.0		49.0	47.0		48.5	49.0
	Non-English Learners	64.0	50.0	50.0	64.0	52.0	50.0	60.0	52.0	51.0	43.0	53.0	51.0
FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH (FRL)	FRL-Eligible		44.0	47.0		67.5	47.0	48.0		45.0	46.0	46.0	47.0
	Non-FRL	65.0	52.0	52.0	64.0	54.0	52.0	61.0	55.0	54.0	42.0	56.0	53.0
GENDER	Female	66.0	54.0	55.0	67.0	56.0	55.0	64.5	54.0	51.0	42.0	52.0	50.0
	Male	64.0	44.0	45.0	62.0	48.0	45.0	59.0	50.0	49.0	46.0	53.0	50.0
GIFTED	Gifted and Talented	67.0	56.0	60.0	89.0	57.0	58.0	71.0	58.0	60.0	49.5	60.0	58.0
	Non-Gifted and Talented	63.5	48.0	49.0	61.0	51.0	49.0	58.0	50.0	49.0	42.5	51.0	49.0
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)	On IEP		39.0	38.0		43.0	40.0		42.0	40.0		48.0	43.0
	Non-IEP	65.0	51.0	51.0	67.0	53.0	51.0	61.5	53.0	51.0	47.5	53.0	51.0
MIGRANT	Migrant			45.0			49.0			41.0			47.0
	Non-Migrant	65.0	49.0	50.0	64.0	52.0	50.0	61.0	52.0	50.0	43.0	53.0	50.0
MINORITY	Minority	63.0	47.0	49.0	67.0	50.0	49.0	59.5	49.0	47.0	41.0	48.0	48.0
	Non-Minority	65.0	51.0	51.0	64.0	53.0	51.0	62.0	54.0	53.0	45.0	55.0	53.0
PERFORMANCE LEVEL	At or Above Benchmark	60.0	49.0	50.0	66.0	52.0	50.0	54.5	52.0	50.0	46.0	53.0	50.0
	Below Benchmark	68.0	50.0	50.0	64.0	52.0	50.0	66.0	52.0	50.0	43.0	53.0	50.0
RACE/ETHNICITY	American Indian or Alaska Native		43.0	47.0		53.0	46.0		43.0	46.0		50.0	44.0
	Asian		58.0	59.0		59.0	58.0		62.0	59.5		57.5	59.0
	Black		49.0	48.0		46.0	48.0		47.0	45.0		43.5	45.0
	Hispanic		45.0	48.0		48.0	48.0		46.0	46.0		46.0	47.0
	White	65.0	51.0	51.0	64.0	53.0	51.0	62.0	54.0	53.0	45.0	55.0	53.0
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		49.5	50.0		42.0	54.0		55.0	53.0		45.0	50.0
	Two or More Races		49.5	51.0		53.0	51.0		52.0	51.0		56.0	51.0

Free Horizon Montessori students consistently outpace the Adequate Growth percentile in Language Arts. While the Math Adequate Growth percentile for FHM is lower, the disparity in FHM rates and the CDE Adequate Growth minimum is diminishing year over year, indicating FHM's renewed academic focus in Math instruction and intervention is having a positive effect on assessment outcomes.

Free Horizon Montessori 4th-8th students consistently score well in Reading/Language Arts. However; there is below average progress in the K-3rd students. Additionally, math continues to be an area for improvement with achievement and growth scores being inconsistent when measured by the state and district assessments. School-wide focus on improving math instruction specifically for the 5th grade students and Reading/Language Arts for the K-3rd grade students is identified in FHM's current UIP which is included in the appendices.

Leadership and Governance

As an Innovation School, FHM will continue with its collaborative relationship with its school community through its leadership and governance model, which will be reflected in Governance and Operations Agreement established between FHM and Jeffco Public Schools. There are three leadership teams that together with the administrative team form the core of the leadership and organization of FHM. Each leadership team includes representation from both the community and school administration. The administrative team works in concert with the three leadership teams to further the mission of FHM in delivering a comprehensive program grounded in Montessori educational excellence.

Board of Directors/Steering Committee

FHM is governed by a Board of Directors (BOD) that will continue with a similar role and name under the new Innovation/Option School model. It will continue to include parents or community members and the Principal, who serves as an ex-officio (non-voting) member. The Board requests the attendance of the Director of Finance and Advancement and Staff Liaison(s) to attend each meeting as invited guests. The parent/community Board members are elected from and by the FHM community at large for three-year terms. FHM staff members elect the employee representative(s) to the Staff Liaison positions each year. The Board embraces educational opportunities for diverse learners and believes in the effectiveness of the Montessori philosophy for improving individual student achievement through the integration of school core curricular areas including English/language arts, math, science, and social studies with the life experiences of history, literature, music, art, drama, philosophy, and cultural studies. All Board members are committed to ensuring the success of FHM through alignment of vision and mission with the best practices of professional and quality education.

The primary obligation of the BOD will continue to be to advance the mission and support the long-term success of students and the school through strategic planning and governance. Decisions of the Board benefit the school as a whole, not factions within the school or individuals. The Board

adopts policies that guide the school toward long-term and global success and entrusts the management of day-to-day affairs to the Principal. The BOD and FHM administration are committed to using Policy Governance (see publications by John Carver) as the model guiding roles and responsibilities of board members and administrators. Under Policy Governance, the Board delegates all operational authority for the day-to-day functions of FHM to the Principal. The Principal is delegated the authority to hire, supervise, evaluate, and terminate employees.

The BOD meets monthly and encourages parents and staff to attend these public meetings. All community members are welcome to address the BOD and must follow the Communications policy attached to the Board Policy Handbook, included as an appendix to this plan. All other corporate documents (e.g., by-laws, articles of incorporation, BOD policies) are located on the school website, www.freehorizonmontessori.org, and in the school office. These documents are available for public review upon request. Board members do not have access to confidential files of students, school personnel, or other federally or state mandated confidential information, except as required by law.

Executive Leadership Team

Responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the school will be delegated by the Board of Directors to the Principal. The Principal, along with other members of the Executive Leadership Team, oversee all operational aspects of the school with special attention to each role's respective responsibilities. The Executive Leadership Team is comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal/Dean of Students, Director of Finance and Advancement, and the Director of Operations and Technology. The Executive Leadership Team members serve as advisors to the Principal, who is ultimately responsible for making operations-related decisions and formulating operational policies and protocols.

Instructional Leaders (ILs)

Instructional Leaders (ILs) help guide all instructional practices at FHM. FHM's team of ILs is comprised of instructional staff from all departments, designated as each department's chairperson. They work in conjunction with the Principal, Assistant Principal/Dean of Students, Instructional Coach, and Student Success Coach in deciding upon curricular, instructional, and assessment practices that are used throughout the school. ILs coordinate the efforts of the faculty within their respective departments and facilitate professional learning communities (PLCs) through data-driven dialogue and data analysis. These individuals lead department meetings and foster communication among faculty, build community and consensus, and organize the collaborative efforts of the department as a whole.

School Accountability Committee (SAC)

The School Accountability Committee (SAC) now and into the future is comprised of parent volunteers, staff members, and the Principal or Principal delegate. This group is charged with assuring that the school meets Colorado State and Jefferson County accreditation standards. The SAC reviews assessment data and results from state, district, and school surveys that guide the

committee in completion of a yearly Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) as required by the state. This committee serves FHM in assuring quality control and state accreditation status of FHM, as well as collecting and analyzing data that help inform strategic decisions of the FHM administration and BOD.

Community Support Network (CSN)

The Free Horizon Montessori Foundation, commonly known as the Community Support Network (CSN) is a private, non-profit foundation and parent organization operating under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. The CSN's focus is to build community, organize volunteer opportunities, and raise funds that enhance the educational programming at FHM. The CSN is comprised of a board of directors who are all parents of students enrolled at FHM. These members are either elected or appointed for two-year terms (term limits are subject to change) by the FHM community at large. Employees may attend, but cannot be official members of or vote on CSN matters. Employees may not have fiscal responsibility for CSN funds. The dual obligations of the CSN in building community and fundraising are accomplished through planning, managing, and communicating opportunities for parental involvement and volunteerism and creating relationships within and outside of our school that help us fund quality education. The CSN works directly with staff to plan such opportunities and events.

The following table provides a quick overview of each of the leadership team responsibilities.

Free Horizon Montessori Charter School			Free Horizon Montessori Foundation
FHM Board of Directors	Administration	School Accountability Committee	Community Support Network
VOLUNTEER	STAFF	STAFF & VOLUNTEER	VOLUNTEER
<p>If it's "strategic" it belongs to the BOD</p> <p>Sets School Policy</p> <p>Hiring, Supervision & Evaluation of the Principal</p> <p>Current Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Accountability Committee Governance Committee Finance Committee Facilities Committee Branding & Communications Committee 	<p>If it's "operational" it belongs to the Principal</p> <p>Oversees all aspects of everyday school operations</p> <p>Hiring, Supervision & Evaluation of All Other Staff</p> <p>Implementation of the School's Mission, Vision & Values</p>	<p>Legislated Standing Committee of the Board of Directors</p> <p>Comprised of Parents & Staff</p> <p>Creates, Administers & Analyzes Results from State, District, and School Surveys</p> <p>Assists in Developing the annual Unified Improvement Plan & Monitors Progress Toward Goals</p>	<p>The FHM Foundation/CSN is a registered 501 (c) 3 private foundation that exists to serve as the charitable fundraising arm of the school.</p> <p>All Fundraising Efforts Support FHM's Fundamental Objectives of Providing Every Student:</p> <p>Individualized Instruction Engaging Curriculum Strong Community</p> <p>As a separate entity, the CSN has its own governing Board of Directors, by-laws, and policy and procedure manual.</p>

Accountability

The FHM School Accountability Committee (SAC) will continue as a sub-committee of the FHM Board of Directors (BOD). One of the Board members serves as a Liaison to the SAC in order to assure close alignment between the strategic work of the BOD and with the work of the SAC, especially when developing the annual School Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) which is included in the appendices. The SAC's work revolves around conducting surveys of all stakeholders, analyzing academic data, and making recommendations to the Principal and BOD related to the school's academic performance, academic growth, and culture and climate. These recommendations are based on analysis of data from the following sources:

- **School Performance Framework** – The School Performance Framework (SPF) measures realization of the academic achievement, academic growth, and academic growth gap goals as the three key performance indicators used as measures of educational success for elementary and middle schools. The SAC reviews the one-year and three-year plan provided by the Colorado Department of Education. The SPF is the primary document used in creation of the school's annual UIP.
- **State Assessment Data** – The SAC reviews achievement and growth data from the state assessments (CMAS since 2013-14) in order to identify trends, which are then discussed in order to conduct root cause analysis and formulate recommendations for inclusion in the UIP.
- **Interim Assessment** – FHM uses an assessment developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) called MAP (Measures of Academic Progress). MAP is a computer-based adaptive test given three times per year. The SAC analyzes results, identifies trends, discusses root causes, and formulates recommendations for both the UIP and general practice within the school.
- **Survey Data** – Each year, the SAC administers a number of surveys, each of which is analyzed in order to make recommendations for improvement to the Principal and BOD. These include:
 - **Jeffco Make Your Voice Heard Survey** – Administered biennially, this survey gathers input from students who are in 2nd grade and above. Results from this survey are used to formulate goals related to school culture and climate.
 - **Jeffco Welcoming Environment Parent Survey** – The SAC administers this survey each year. In addition to the questions from the district's Welcoming Environment survey, our SAC develops questions to seek additional feedback from parents relating to all aspects of FHM including academics, behavior, facilities, staff, communication, programs, and any other specific area that might be timely in terms of the school's current areas of focus.
 - **Staff Survey or Teaching & Learning Conditions Colorado (TLCC) Survey** – The SAC administers the Staff Survey during years when the TLCC Colorado Survey (formerly TELL Colorado) is not administered by the Colorado Department of Education. The SAC analyzes results from these surveys for trends and makes recommendations to the Principal and Board of Directors to address any areas of concern as identified through these surveys.

Existing Programs, Policies Affected by Innovation

The goal of Free Horizon Montessori is to provide for a seamless transition from a Charter School to an Innovation/Option School. Our Innovation Plan as well as our Governance and Operations Agreement hold the basic premise that FHM will not be compelled or required to implement any changes that are in conflict with the American Montessori Society Accreditation Standards, which can be found on the AMS website at <https://amshq.org/School-Resources/AMS-School-Accreditation>. Many of the educational and operational philosophies will remain the same; however we will see some programs affected by Innovation. These are in the areas of Talent Management, Finance, and Management Services.

Talent Management

All Free Horizon Montessori employees will become employees of Jefferson County Public Schools with Free Horizon Montessori continuing to hire, review, supervise, and determine salary scale. Under the Affordable Care Act, FHM employees will shift from the Charter Benefit Group Benefit Plan to the District Benefit Group Benefit Plan. This is a net positive for FHM employees, providing a 22% increase in employer contribution toward benefits in the first year of the transition. Some required new hire processes currently managed by the school will shift to the district, and FHM employees will shift from paper timesheets completed only by classified employees as a charter school to all employees completing an online timesheet as an Innovation/Option school.

Support will continue to be utilized from the District as needed to ensure our employees' success. FHM will provide significant updates to its Employee Handbook prior to the 2018-19 new employee orientation in order to capture the changes that will occur with Innovation/Option School designation.

Employment Opportunity

Free Horizon Montessori will provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, political belief or activity, status as a veteran, genetic information, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. Management is primarily responsible for seeing that equal employment opportunity policies are implemented, but all members of the staff share in the responsibility for assuring that by their personal actions the policies are effective and apply uniformly to everyone. Any employees involved in discriminatory practices may be subject to termination. The school adopted the following Equal Opportunity statement:

Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Faculty

Free Horizon Montessori teachers, at time of hire, are required to hold either a Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) Montessori Credential, which can be equated to a Master's degree, or a Colorado Teacher License. Teachers who do not have a Montessori Credential are required to enroll in a MACTE- accredited program and receive credentialing within two years. Lead teachers are encouraged, but not required to hold a Colorado Teacher license. Currently, 86% of our teaching staff have a current Colorado Teacher License. All members of the Learning Resource Team hold a license through Colorado Department of Education appropriate for their position (i.e. Special Service Provider, School Counselor, or Teacher). Fourteen out of sixteen lead teachers hold a Montessori credential or are enrolled in a MACTE-accredited program (the other two hold a Colorado Teacher License). All primary and elementary classrooms at FHM have trained Educational Assistants who share in the responsibilities of instruction.

Job Descriptions

Individual Job Descriptions exist for each staff role within the Free Horizon Montessori professional community and are considered material components of each employee's Employment Agreement. Each employee of FHM is expected to read, understand, and follow the guidelines and requirements provided for the position into which they have been hired.

FHM Salary Schedule

Salaries and stipends for Free Horizon Montessori employees are generally 92% of the Jeffco Public Schools Salary scales. Then, where appropriate, stipend pay is added to annual base salary rates commensurate with licensure, credentialing, on-going Montessori training, and additional position responsibility. Stipends are reconsidered on a yearly basis. All stipends are paid out proportional to FTE position equivalency at FHM. Free Horizon Montessori employee pay will continue to be influenced by seven factors:

1. Employment Classification
 - a. Full time/benefits-eligible – one who works 30 hours or more in a 5-day work week.
 - b. Part time –one who works less than 30 hours in a 5-day work week.
 - c. Temporary—one who is hired for the completion of a specific project or for a limited time.
 - d. Hourly – one who works a potentially variable schedule, based upon the needs of the school, paid out on an hourly rate derived from the associated Salary Schedule.
 - e. Non-exempt or exempt positions under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): The job descriptions and employment letters denote if positions are non-exempt (subject to 40 hours per week on an hourly basis and overtime/comp time if approved work exceeds 40 hours, along with two paid 15-minute breaks and a 30-minute, duty-free/unpaid lunch when shift exceeds 6 hours, daily for non-exempt employees) or exempt positions (paid by the day based on salary rates, but not subject to 40 hours per week maximum and do not qualify for overtime/comp time if/when weekly hours exceed 40 hours).
2. The nature and scope of the position
3. Documented and verified level of education and/or certification(s)

4. Documented and verified experience
5. Other documented and verified attributes/qualifications for which stipends are granted per applicable Salary Schedule
6. Individual performance
7. Performance during and completion of a 90-day Probationary Period of Employment

Salaries may be frozen or reduced in fiscal exigencies or emergencies as declared by the FHM's Board of Directors and Principal.

Payroll

Most employees at FHM are paid and will continue to be paid on an annualized, monthly salaried basis, even if their position is non-exempt. Salaried employees' pay is reflected in the annual Employment Agreement based on employee's placement in the salary schedules in effect on the date of hire for new employees or in effect as of July 1 for returning employees, and percentage Full Time Equivalent (FTE) status and contract days contracted. No changes are made to the agreement during the school year unless there is a change in position or responsibility as authorized by the Principal. Any education or certification advancement acquired after an employee agreement is effective will not result in an immediate increase in pay until the subsequent school year's Employment Agreement.

"At Will" Employment

All employment and compensation with FHM is "at will." This means that their employment can be terminated, with or without cause, with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either FHM or the employee, except as otherwise provided by law.

Re-Hiring

Letters of Intent for "at-will" re-employment are typically issued during March/April of the school year for the upcoming school year. FHM Administration's goal is to support an atmosphere of open and direct communication among all staff.

Professional Development

The professional capacity of FHM has both breadth and depth. By integrating highly qualified professionals throughout the school, FHM expands its shared leadership model and creates a stable and sound organizational structure. To that end, FHM is committed to the ongoing Professional Development of its entire faculty. FHM's Professional Development Plan is reviewed and updated yearly to align with the School Improvement Plan, Strategic Plan, and continuing personnel needs. Over the last five years, using grant funds and appropriated operational funds, FHM expended over \$65,000 towards professional development.

Health, Dental, and/or Vision Insurance Staff Benefits

Under Innovation/Option, FHM employees will be part of the district's group benefits plan. Eligibility, employer contribution, and plans offered will be subject to the district's annual benefits and budgeting planning cycles.

Other Staff Benefits

Staff members who have children enrolled at FHM may use Before Care for their children without charge. Staff members may enroll their child(ren) in After Care at a 20% discount. Staff members who work as an aftercare lead or assistant can have their child(ren) attend aftercare at no cost. Staff members who are employed full time (30 or more hours per week) and have children enrolled in the tuition-based program(s) can receive a 40% discount on Preschool or Full Day Kindergarten school tuition for their own child(ren). Staff members who are employed at least 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week under a current Employment Agreement can receive a 20% discount on tuition-based Preschool or Full Day Kindergarten programs for their own child(ren).

All staff members may also receive a discount toward their child(ren)'s enrollment in FHM's after-school club programs. The discount is 40% of registration fee cost; payment for materials fee cost is still required at 100%. (Enrichment programs, hosted at but external to FHM, are not eligible for staff discounts.) Staff members may receive a discount for their child(ren)'s enrollment in FHM Summer Camp programs being run during their required contact days (i.e., 220 and 215 days staff returning mid-July) or while attending an accredited Montessori training program if approved by the Principal. This discount is 40% of program soft costs; payment for cost of field trip admission and on-site assembly participation and other consumable material costs is still required at 100%. This amount may vary from session to session and can be determined with the Financial Secretary.

Performance & Compensation Reviews

FHM is a school where "Everybody Learns". This requires that performance reviews authentically communicate our expectations and observations so that each staff member can grow within their professional role and feel successful in their position and responsibilities. The written evaluation serves to document such communication, as well as outline goals and growth plans that reinforce and expand each staff member's ability within their role. Performance is evaluated against the defined job description as well as the professional standards as set forth in the school's documents, policies, and practices.

Various personnel in the school have and will continue to have the authority and responsibility to conduct employee evaluations. The Principal is the default evaluator for any employee, regardless of who their direct supervisor is at FHM. Only licensed principals can evaluate licensed teachers. If a non-licensed administrator completes coursework in supervision and evaluation approved by the Colorado Department of Education, the Principal may delegate evaluation responsibilities of licensed teachers to that administrator.

The evaluation process includes formative and summative evaluations. Summative performance reviews of teachers will be conducted annually. The summative process includes a preconference near the beginning of the school year to establish one or more professional goals, one to three formal observations (more for newer teachers or teachers with performance concerns and less for more experienced teachers), and end-of-year evaluation conferences. Other employees will have annual evaluations by their direct supervisor, as well, with a beginning of year goal setting conference and mid-

year check-in conference. All employees will be evaluated based on a combination of criteria as outlined within their position's evaluation rubric, job description, adherence to school, district, and state policies and laws, and fulfillment of their professional responsibilities.

During formal performance reviews, evaluators will consider the following things, among others:

1. Professionalism
 - a. Attendance, initiative, and effort
 - b. Attitude and willingness to serve as an integral member of the school community
 - c. Adherence to policies and procedures of the school with a focus on students and school rather than oneself
 - d. Quality of customer service
2. Ability to achieve standards as set forth in the job description and state licensure requirements, as applicable
3. The quality and quantity of work in regard to the complete learning environment: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive

FHM currently utilizes the Jeffco Performance Evaluation Rubrics, with adjusted "Look-Fors" that are appropriate for our Montessori setting.

Finance

Free Horizon Montessori is a fiscally sound school and it will continue to be strategic with budget development and expenditures to maintain the good fiscal health of the organization. Innovation/Option status will adjust the way FHM currently receives its allocation, yet autonomy of spending will remain. At the close of the 2017 fiscal year, FHM had \$7.6 million in total assets and a liquid fund balance of \$1,605,707, including \$720,008 in restricted funds to meet its debt service, TABOR, and operating reserve requirements. Additionally, FHM offers supplemental programs that are responsive to our community and assist us in diversifying our school's financial portfolio and thus improve our financial sustainability.

FHM's financial decision making is guided by its Strategic Plan, and ultimately overseen by the Principal and the Finance Committee, a sub-committee to the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee is comprised of the Principal, Director of Finance and Advancement, Board of Directors Treasurer and Back up to the Treasurer, as well as an appointed Community Member, who is currently a parent who works in the private financial sector. The Finance Committee convenes regular monthly meetings, which are open to the public, as well as special working sessions as needed. The Finance Committee utilizes standard financial statements and a summary dashboard to present monthly reports and financial metrics to the full Board of Directors. Daily financial operations are supervised by FHM's Director of Finance and Advancement and Financial Secretary, and overseen by the Principal.

FHM's current annual operating budget is approximately \$4.1 million dollars. The school's budget is established each year through collaboration of the Principal, Director of Finance and Advancement, and Finance Committee, and approved by the Board of Directors. Both annual and long-range budgeting is done

conservatively with proactive attempts to minimize and mitigate financial risk to the school. In addition to developing and maintaining a balanced budget, the school has ended each of the past two fiscal years with a surplus and projects to do so again in the current fiscal year. These surplus funds were re-invested into the school toward priorities supported by the Board, including facilities and technology infrastructure, instructional materials, staff compensation, and increasing the school's unrestricted financial reserves.

The school weathered the years of the recession and rescissions through a variety of means, including reduction in staff, salary freezes, re-negotiating vendor contracts where possible, implementing furlough days, and reducing several line items of the annual budgets. FHM has since restored the majority of its recession-era cut-backs, restored Educational Assistants to all preschool and elementary classrooms, increased professional development support, and reinstated salary increases for eligible staff.

The school administers supplemental programs that enhance financial stability. These include before and after school childcare, a tuition-based preschool program serving 3- and 4-year-old students, a tuition-based full-day Kindergarten program (full-day kindergarten tuition is waived for children who qualify for Free Lunch and discounted for those who qualify for Reduced Lunch under the Federal School Lunch Program eligibility formula), and summer camp. FHM also offers fee-based after school clubs and enrichment programs. Though designed primarily as revenue neutral in order to enhance offerings available to our students, the clubs and enrichment programs have grown considerably, with more than 150 students participating during the current school year, resulting in modest revenue gain. FHM has two additional high demand programs, a monthly Kids Night Out program and childcare during school breaks that have grown steadily since their inception.

FHM is audited each year by an independent accounting firm, John Cutler & Associates. The Director of Finance and Advancement writes the audit report's Management Discussion & Analysis section, with input from the rest of the Finance Committee. The audit report as a whole is presented each year to the full Board of Directors. FHM has been issued an unqualified clean opinion on its annual financial statements by Cutler & Associates every year. The 2017 audit is included as Appendix H.

FHM is proud of the manner in which it successfully balances the operational and capital needs of the school with financial management best practices to ensure we are good stewards of our resources to best meet Free Horizon's strategic plans and fulfill the school's educational mission.

Free Horizon Montessori's 2017-18 (current budget) and 2018-19 (out year budget) can be found in Appendix G.

Management Services

Free Horizon Montessori in collaboration with the Jeffco School District reviewed each of the District's management services and identified which party will take the responsibility for accomplishing those services. Notes are included for some services for clarification, as needed. These services will be reviewed throughout the first year to determine if there are any needed adjustments.

Management Service	FHM Managed	JCSD Managed	Jointly Managed
Accident Reporting			X
Assessments (testing K and up)			X
Athletics	X		
Background Screening		X	
Budget and Finance	X day-to-day		X tracking & reports
Building Use. (School continues to coordinate building use. There is potential pro-rata share to the district for utility costs.)	X		
Calendars (FHM will continue to develop its own calendar, however if utilize transportation services, calendars will need to be consistent.)	X		
Child Care Licensing	X		
Communications			X
Community Relations			X
Counseling and social services	X		
Copier Program		X	
Curriculum Management	X		
Early Learning Support (pre-K)	X		
Employee Assistance stays the same except no \$100 fee		X	
Energy Management solar agreement on old building			X
Enrollment and Admissions	Allocate spaces	Online applications	X
Facilities Management	X FM	X Custodial	X
Fees	X		
Food Services	TBD		
Gifted & Talented Program Oversight	X		
Grants	X		X
Health and Wellness/Student Health			X
Homebound Students – SPED covers costs			X
Human Resources	TBD		
Information Technology			X
Insurance Reserve		X	
Legal Services		X	
Library Services	TBD		
Maintenance – Building & Property (District snow removal, walkways around building, asphalt repair, etc)	TBD		

Management Service	FHM Managed	JCSD Managed	Jointly Managed
Student Discipline, Expulsion, or suspension			X
Student Records Management			X
Student Schedule development	X		
Serving Students with Disabilities	X		X
Serving English Language Learners		X	X
Outdoor Lab	TBD		
Payroll (Salary scale to be determined by FHM. The processing of payroll is still being discussed.)	TBD		
Purchasing			X
Professional Development	X		X
Transportation (Field trips remain the same; high number of families in a few areas that may allow for transportation)	TBD		
Telecommunications		X	
Website Management			X

Appendices

A. Evidence of Majority Support from Administrators and Teaching Staff

Innovation Status in Concept

FHM employees were asked to vote on conceptual aspects or Cornerstone Elements of an Innovation Plan. The secret ballot vote occurred April 2-3, 2018. The wording of the ballot and vote outcome is presented below.

Ballot Front:



Free Horizon Montessori's Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team are pursuing Innovation status as an Option School (Innovation/Option) within Jeffco Public Schools. Although the specific plan is not developed to date, the Anticipated Cornerstone Elements (non-negotiable) listed below will be instrumental in its development.

FHM Innovation Plan – Anticipated Cornerstone Elements

1. Montessori – First and Foremost! FHM Board of Directors and/or leadership would not agree to anything that would put FHM in conflict with AMS Accreditation Standards. This includes maintaining existing waivers, multi-aged classrooms, curriculum oversight, etc.
2. Maintain FHM's current programs that include early childhood, before care, after care, middle school, specials, etc.
3. Maintain a governing body for FHM that provides strategic guidance for the school and retains the ability to hire, supervise and evaluate the principal.
4. Principal to retain staffing model management including the ability to hire, supervise and evaluate all FHM staff within the Montessori context.
5. FHM would move from 581 Conference Place to 15920 West 10th Avenue, Golden, for the 2018/19 school year.

Ballot Back



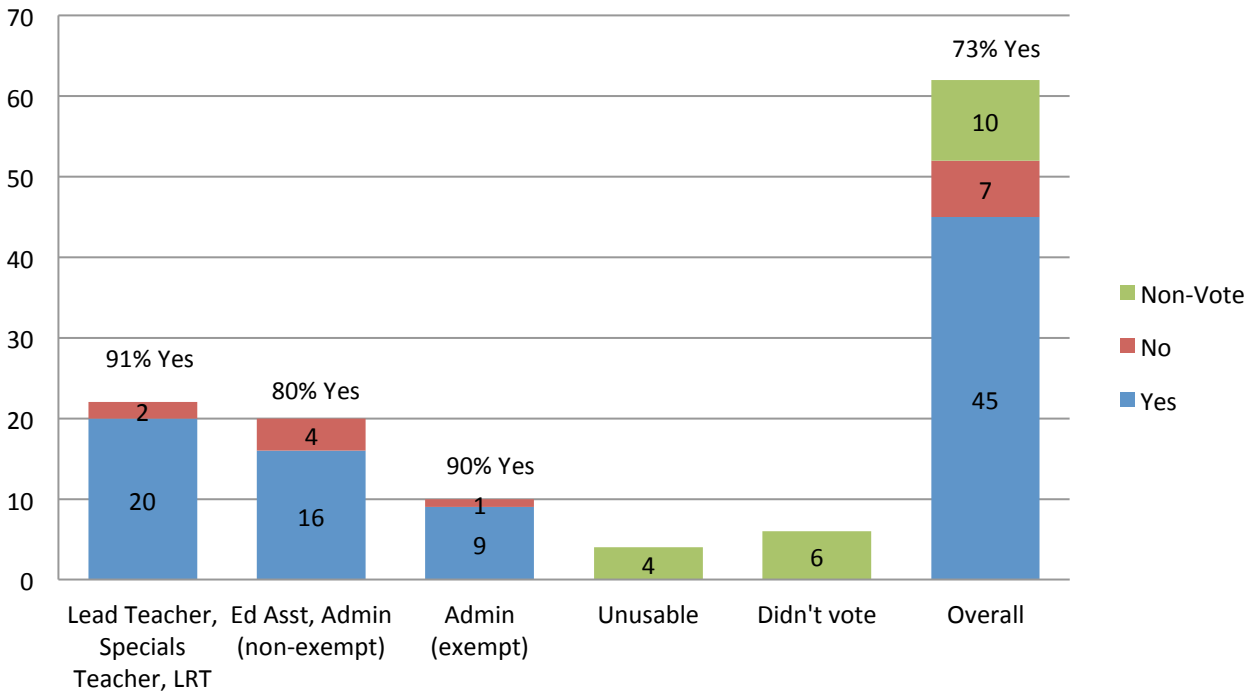
I am a:

- ☐ Lead Teacher, Specials Teacher, LRT, Interventionist
- ☐ Education Assistants, Admin (non-exempt)
- ☐ Admin (exempt)

I support Free Horizon Montessori's Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team's pursuit of Innovation status as an Option School (Innovation/Option) within Jeffco Public Schools using the Anticipated Cornerstone Elements in its development.

[] Yes [] No

Innovation Plan - Anticipated Cornerstone Elements - Initial Staff Vote



Unusable = 2 votes did not select employee category and 2 votes wrote in “unsure” so these votes were not included in the overall count.

Innovation Plan

FHM employees were provided the opportunity to review and vote on the Innovation Plan. The secret ballot vote occurred April 18-19, 2018. The wording of the ballot and vote outcome is presented below.



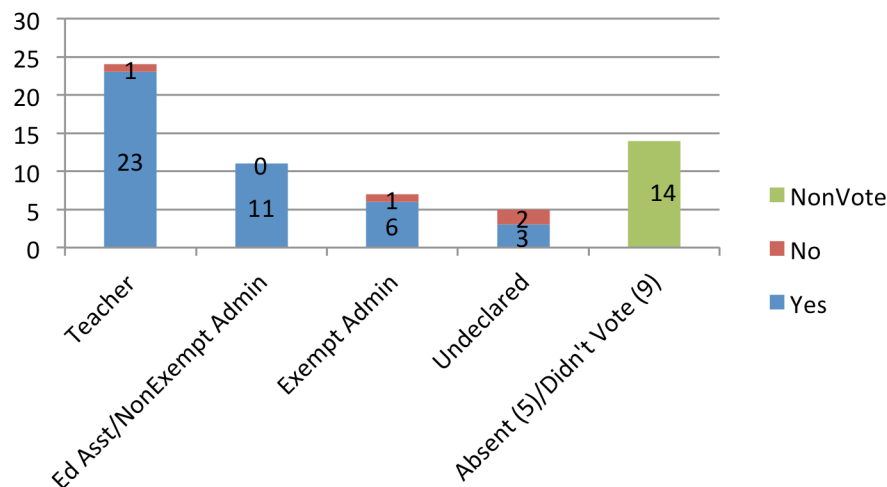
Free Horizon Montessori's Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team are pursuing Innovation status as an Option School (Innovation/Option) within Jeffco Public Schools. Your vote is important in this process. Please select your employee group:

- ☐ Lead Teacher, Specials Teacher, Learning Resource Team Teacher, ESL Tutor, and Intervention Teacher, Counselor
- ☐ Education Assistants, Before Care/After Care Support, Non-Exempt Admin (Receptionist, Health aide, Financial Secretary, Facilities Manager, Café Coordinator)
- ☐ Exempt Admin (Principal, Assistant Principal, Instructional Coach, Enrollment/Communications Coordinator, Executive Assistant, Childcare Director, Director of Finance, Director of Operations, GAL Coordinator)

I agree to the Innovation Plan as presented.

☐ Yes ☐ No

FHM Staff Vote for Innovation Plan



Of the 61 staff members, 56 were present on the days of the vote for the Innovation Plan. Of the 56 staff present, 43 (77%) voted "yes", 4 (7%) voted "no", and 9 (16%) abstained from voting. Of the 56 staff members present, 26 are in the "teacher" employee group. Of this group, 88% voted "yes", 4% voted "no", and 8% abstained from voting.

B. Evidence of Support from additional School Community Stakeholders

FHM Board of Directors



Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors

Date: April 17, 2018

To: Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education


Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) is governed by a Board of Directors (BOD) whose primary obligation is to advance the mission and vision of FHM and support the long-term success of its students and the school through strategic planning and governance. The Board adopts policies that benefit the school as a whole and guide the school toward long-term and global success. As such, the FHM BOD supports FHM's application for Innovation Status. A key component of this support includes reaching agreement on a governance and operating agreement/contract between Jeffco Public Schools and FHM. As members of the BOD, we believe that seeking Innovation School status will provide FHM with the continued flexibility to provide a quality Montessori education that meets the needs of all students in our school community, as well as provide other flexibilities the school wishes to continue to exercise.

Please, do not hesitate to contact any of the FHM BOD members with questions or concerns that may arise.



Jennifer Stickel, BOD President


Lisa Cernick, BOD Vice-President

Jonathan Spitze, BOD Secretary

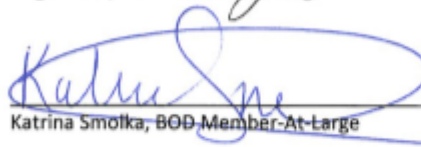
Hilary Hobson, BOD Treasurer



Alexandra Ramsey, BOD Member-At-Large



Roger Pool, BOD Member-At-Large



Katrina Smolka, BOD Member-At-Large

FHM's BOD unanimously supports the Innovation Plan.

FHM School Accountability Committee



Free Horizon Montessori School Accountability Committee

Date: April 18, 2018

To: Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education & Colorado State Board of Education

We, the School Accountability Committee (SAC) for Free Horizon Montessori, are writing to express our support for the Free Horizon Montessori application for Innovation Status. As members of the SAC, we believe that seeking Innovation School status will provide our school with the continued flexibility to implement instructional Montessori models that can meet the needs of all students in our school community, as well as provide other flexibilities the school wishes to continue to exercise. Please, do not hesitate to contact the SAC members with any questions or concerns that may arise.

David Wells, Chair, Parent Member

Jodie Salvati, Parent Member

Rebecca Rivera, Secretary, Parent Member

Joelle Hogue, Community Member

Donnetta MacDonald, Assistant Principal, Principal Designee

Jesse Ornelis, GT, Assessment & Lunch Coordinator, Staff Member

Kathryn Lanzillo, Teacher, Staff Member

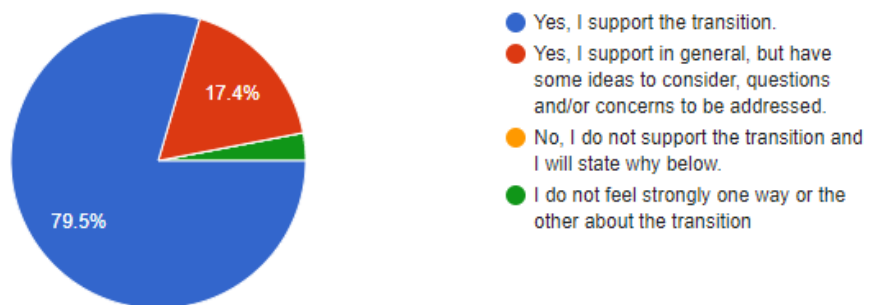
Alexandra Ramsay, Board of Directors Liaison to the SAC, Community Member

FHM Community

On March 20, 2018, FHM opened a survey to parents and staff relating to the conceptual aspect of an Innovation Plan and to allow stakeholders to provide any questions. As of April 20, 2018, there have been 132 responses, with 103 being from FHM parents. Their response to the general support question is identified below.

Do you support the FHM transitions to an Innovation/Option School and the associated move?

132 responses



C. Requested State Policy Waivers

Free Horizon Montessori is requesting CDE Waivers that are currently granted to the school and other Innovation Schools in the state. FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District or the school budget and that the waivers be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Charter School Automatic Waivers Currently Granted to Free Horizon Montessori

Statutory Citation	Description
<i>CRS 22-32-109(1)(f)</i>	Local board duties concerning selection of staff and pay
<i>CRS 22-32-109(1)(t)</i>	Determine educational program and prescribe textbooks
<i>CRS 22-32-110(1)(h)</i>	Local board powers-Terminate employment of personnel
<i>CRS 22-32-110(1)(i)</i>	Local board duties-Reimburse employees for expenses
<i>CRS 22-32-110(1)(k)</i>	Local board powers-Policies relating the in-service training and official conduct
<i>CRS 22-32-110(1)(ee)</i>	Local board powers-Employ teachers' aides and other non-certificated personnel
<i>CRS 22-32-126</i>	Employment and authority of principals
<i>CRS 22-33-104(4)</i>	Compulsory school attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences
<i>CRS 22-63-301</i>	Teacher Employment Act- Grounds for dismissal
<i>CRS 22-63-302</i>	Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers
<i>CRS 22-63-401</i>	Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule
<i>CRS 22-63-402</i>	Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers
<i>CRS 22-63-403</i>	Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries
<i>CRS 22-1-112</i>	School Year-National Holidays

Since, there are no automatic waivers for Innovation Schools, the Replacement Plans for these are provided below:

STATUTE

DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(l)(f)
(delegation)

Boards of Education – Specific Duties
Requires the Board of Education to employ all personnel and fix their compensation.

Rationale: FHM will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and providing its own training. Therefore, the school requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Jefferson County School District Board of Education to the principal and Board of Directors of FHM. As a Montessori school, FHM's success depends in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own staff and to train and direct that staff in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, this Innovation Plan and the goals and objectives of the school. All FHM staff will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: The school will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. All teachers will be offered an Employment Agreement, which must be renewed annually with no promise of future employment as specified in Board policy. In addition, FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, the school will select, employ and provide professional development for its own teachers and staff.

CRS § 22-32-109 (1)(t)
(delegation)

Boards of Education – Specific Duties

Grants board of education authority to determine the educational program to be carried on in schools of the district and to prescribe textbooks.

Rationale: As a Montessori school, FHM will determine the educational program and textbooks to be used in the school. The District R-1 Board retains the right of final approval of the educational program through the Innovation Plan and any associated agreements.

Replacement Plan: Free Horizon Montessori will follow the philosophy and educational pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori. In alignment with Dr. Montessori's beliefs, FHM believes that within each child is the seed of unlimited potential which guides that child into adulthood. FHM emphasizes individualized, mastery-based instruction as opposed to strict curricular-dictated education. In addition to traditional Montessori lessons, FHM uses many types of curricula to meet the needs of each child enrolled at the school. The school educational program and curriculum is further detailed in this Innovation Plan.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, the school expects it will be able to implement the Montessori curriculum and ensure that students meet the educational standards of the school. FHM will inspire every child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful, and safe environment.

CRS § 22-32-110(1)(h)
(delegation)

Local Board Powers

Makes Board of Education responsible for terminating personnel.

Rationale: FHM will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and terminating its own employees. Therefore, the school requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Jefferson County Board of Education to the principal and Board of Directors of FHM. As a Montessori school, FHM's success depends in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own staff and to terminate individual staff members should they not perform in accordance with this Innovation Plan and the goals and objectives of the school. All FHM staff will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: The school will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. An Employment Agreement that complies with the FHM Board Policies will be used for each staff member. In addition, FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of the waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will be able to provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements, the school’s philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan and any associated governing documents.

CRS § 22-32-110(1)(i)	Authorizes Board of Education to reimburse employees for expenses.
CRS § 22-32-110(1)(k)	Grants Board of Education power to adopt written policies, rules and regulations relating to efficiency, in-service training, professional growth, safety, official conduct and welfare of employees.
CRS § 22-32-110(1)(ee) (Delegation waivers)	Authorizes Board of Education to employ teacher aides and non-certificated personnel.

Rationale: FHM will be responsible for its own personnel matters including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and providing its own training. Therefore, FHM requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Board of Education to the FHM Board of Directors and principal. As a Montessori school, FHM’s success depends in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own staff and to train and direct that staff in accordance with the Innovation Plan and the goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: FHM will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. FHM will develop its own Professional Development Training Plan that aligns with American Montessori Society standards and CDHS licensing requirements due to the mixed-age classrooms. The designated principal and teachers will have flexibility in structuring professional development and school policies to meet the needs of the school. In addition, FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, FHM will be able to provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements, the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan and any associated governing documents.

C.R.S. § 22-32-126
(delegation)

Employment & Authority of Principals
Authorizes Board of Education to employ Principals.

Rationale: FHM will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing the principal, its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, policies, rules and regulations, and providing its own training. Principals employed at FHM will be employed on an at-will basis. Therefore, the school requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Jefferson County Board of Education to the Board of Directors of FHM. As a Montessori school, FHM's success depends in large part upon its ability to select and employ its own principal and staff in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, this Innovation Plan and the goals and objectives of the school.

Replacement Plan: FHM will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. The principal will have the flexibility in structuring the staffing organization, professional development and school policies to meet the needs of the school. In addition, FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will be able to manage its staff and provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements, the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan and any associated governing documents.

C.R.S. § 22-33-104(4)
(delegation)

Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance

Local Board of Education duty to commence proceedings to enforce the compulsory school attendance law; review procedure for parents to challenge Board of Education decision concerning compulsory school attendance.

Judicial Proceedings Requires the Board of Education to adopt a written policy setting forth the District's attendance requirements and to appoint an attendance officer.

Rationale: FHM will have a differing school day and year than other schools in the District. Therefore, FHM will also have a different, but district consistent, compulsory school attendance policy, FHM should be allowed to designate a staff member(s) to be responsible for attendance.

Replacement Plan: FHM Board of Directors will establish its own attendance policy, which will meet or exceed all state requirements. FHM shall follow state regulations for minimum instructional hours and contact days, as well as Jeffco truancy policies. FHM will be responsible for enforcing the compulsory attendance law with respect to those students attending FHM.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will be able to provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements and the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan.

CRS § 22-63-301

Transfer Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act

Grounds for dismissal.

CRS § 22-63-302
(substantive)

Procedures for dismissal of teachers.

Rationale: As a Montessori school, FHM's success in accomplishing its mission is dependent primarily upon the talents, skills and personal commitment of its teachers. The school must be able to terminate employees who cannot deliver its educational program successfully. The concept of tenure does not

apply to FHM as the school is only of limited duration. All employees of FHM will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: Continued employment at FHM shall be subject to an annual satisfactory performance evaluation. The staff performance evaluation process used for each staff member will comply with FHM Board Policies. Teachers who are rated unsuccessful may be terminated by FHM. FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, FHM will be able to manage its staff and provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements and the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan.

CRS § 22-63-401
(delegation)

Transfer Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act
Provides for district board of education to adopt a salary schedule and place teachers on the schedule.

Rationale: FHM should be delegated the authority to determine compensation rates, in accordance with the Innovation Plan and associated agreements. As a Montessori school, the work day and work year in the school may be different from that of the District and compensation must be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, FHM needs to be able to compensate for credentials and qualifications unique to Montessori and as required by CDHS licensing in order to attract and retain the best qualified Montessori educators.

Replacement Plan: FHM will adopt its own salary schedule. The school will set competitive rates for each level of teachers it employs. The principal will determine the placement of teachers on the salary schedule. The District salary schedule will be used as a guideline for developing FHM's salary schedule.

FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, FHM will be able to hire the most qualified staff and provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements and the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan.

CRS § 22-63-402
(substantive)

Services – Disbursements

Prohibits disbursement of district monies to teacher without a valid teacher's certificate, letter of authorization or written authorization.

Rationale: As a Montessori school, FHM should be granted the authority to hire teachers and principals that will support the school's goals and objectives. The principal will not function as a traditional district school principal, but rather will be responsible for a wider range of tasks and act as the school's chief executive officer. FHM will seek to attract principals and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, persons with Montessori credentials, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or professional experiences. All employees of FHM will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: FHM will, where possible, hire certified teachers and principals. However, as a Montessori school it may be advantageous for the school to be able to hire teachers and/or principals without a certificate and who possess unique background and/or skills or fill the need of FHM. Teachers holding a current and valid Montessori credential from a program recognized by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) shall be considered fully licensed under this Innovation Plan as long as they also pass all required background checks. MACTE is the only national education accreditor recognized by the US Department of Education to accredit Montessori teacher

education programs within colleges and universities, free standing institutions and distance education with 120 hours of residency. FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will be able to hire the most qualified staff and provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements, the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan and any associated governing documents.

C.R.S. § 22-63-403
(substantive)

Payment of Salaries

Governs payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher.

Rationale: As a Montessori school, FHM should be granted the authority to develop its own employment contracts and terms and conditions of employment. The school will be operating differently from other schools with a unique curriculum for which having the proper teaching staff is essential. Not every teacher who is successful in the regular public school will be successful at Free Horizon Montessori. All employees of FHM will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: A school specific Employment Agreement which requires an annual renewal and addresses payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher will be used. Said Agreement will follow FHM Board Policies.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school operates within its budget and the cost of employing staff is included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will be able to manage staffing and provide instruction in accordance with the American Montessori Society standards, CDHS licensing requirements, the school's philosophy and mission as stated in this Innovation Plan and any associated governing documents.

C.R.S. § 22-1-112

School Year – National Holidays

Rationale: FHM will determine its educational curriculum and adopt an annual school calendar to support its academic programs. FHM will be responsible for developing and adopting an annual school calendar, with the approval of its Board of Directors, for its school that meets or exceeds the instructional time and academic programming requirements of the American Montessori Society, Jefferson County School District and State of Colorado.

Replacement Plan: As a Montessori school, FHM will develop a school day and school calendar that will meet or exceed the minimum required teacher-pupil instruction and contact hours for each of its academic levels, including full day kindergarten, elementary, and middle schools as defined by state law and in keeping with its Board of Directors policies for the same. Reduction to the schedule/calendar will continue to meet or exceed the reduction minimums set by state law.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will adopt a school calendar to facilitate implementation of its Montessori curriculum and allow for professional development time to ensure students achieve educational standards of FHM's programs as well as provide opportunity for staff training, while meeting or exceeding required student contact hours, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by Jeffco School District.

Additional Requested Waivers – Currently Granted to Free Horizon Montessori

STATUTE

DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

C.R.S. § 22-2-112(1)(q)(I)

Commissioner Duties concerning reporting of performance evaluation ratings.

Rationale: The Innovation school or principal must have the ability to perform the evaluation of all personnel. Additionally, the school will not be required to report their teacher evaluation ratings as a part of the commissioner's report as required by C.R.S. 22-2-112(1)(q)(I).

Replacement Plan: The Innovation school uses its own evaluation system as agreed to with the Jeffco School District. The school's evaluation system will continue to meet the intent of the law as outlined in statute. FHM staff is trained in this evaluation system which includes quality standards that are clear and relevant to the administrators' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191. The school will not be required to report their teacher evaluation data; however, teacher performance data will be reviewed by the school and used to inform hiring practices and professional development. Core course level participation will continue to be reported pursuant to 22-11-503.5 as this is a non-waivable statute.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The Innovation school anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon Jefferson County School District R-1 or the school.

How the Impact of the Waiver will be evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance standards that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcomes: The innovation school expects that as a result of this waiver, the school will be able to continue to provide appropriate and timely evaluations of teachers and administrators and continue to have the goal of improving student academic growth and meet the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191.

C.R.S. § 22-9-106 (substantive)

Local Board of Education – Duties
Certificated Personnel Evaluations

Rationale: Free Horizon Montessori will be responsible for its own personnel matters, including employing its own staff and establishing its own terms and conditions of employment, conducting regular observations and written evaluations for all instructional staff, and completing annual summative performance evaluations. Therefore, the school requests that these statutory duties be waived or delegated from the Jefferson County Board of Education to the principal and Board of Directors of FHM. As a Montessori school, the strength of FHM's instructional programming is enhanced by its ability to provide focused, constructive, and individualized feedback for all instructional staff to ensure the quality and fidelity of each teacher's performance in the classroom and broader school

setting. FHM teacher observations and evaluations are conducted by FHM Principal, Assistant Principal, and with input from the Instructional Coach(es). FHM's system of performance evaluation will continue to meet American Montessori Society standards and the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191 while maintaining the goal of improving student academic growth.

Replacement Plan: The school will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. The staff performance evaluation process used for each staff member will comply with FHM Board Policies. Under the school's plan, the FHM will use its own evaluation system. The school is attempting to meet the intent of the waived statute by using an evaluation system which includes quality standards that are clear and relevant to the administrators' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191. The school attached an example teacher evaluation tool in the appendices. Teachers who are rated unsuccessful may be terminated by FHM. FHM will comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and follow our Equal Opportunity Employment policy which states that Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: FHM anticipates that the requested waiver will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District or the school budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated: Since teacher and principal performance has a critical impact on the performance of the entire school, the impact of this waiver will be measured by performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: With this waiver, FHM will be able to implement its program and evaluate its teachers in accordance with its Performance Appraisal System, which is designed to produce greater accountability and be consistent with the school's goals and objectives. This will benefit staff members as well as students and the community.

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(b)
(delegation)

Boards of Education – Specific Duties
Grants board of education the authority to adopt policies and prescribe rules and regulations for efficient administration of the district.

Rationale: The school will be operating independently from other schools in the district and should be delegated the authority to develop, adopt, and implement its own operational policies, rules, and regulations.

Replacement Plan: The Board of Directors of FHM will adopt policies and the principal will prescribe rules and regulations.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Jefferson County School District. FHM will be able to adopt policies and prescribe rules and regulations consistent with its budget.

How the impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, the school will be able to carry out its educational program, administer its affairs in an efficient manner, and accomplish its mission.

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(n)(I)

Adopt a Calendar

Local board duties concerning school calendar

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A)

Local board duties teacher-pupil contact hours

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(B)

Local board duties concerning adoption of a school calendar

Rationale: The Jefferson County School Board granted to Free Horizon Montessori the authority to determine its educational curriculum and adopt an annual school calendar to support its academic programs. Free Horizon Montessori administration will be responsible for developing and adopting an annual school calendar, with the approval of its Board of Directors, for its school that meets or exceeds the instructional time and academic programming requirements of the Jefferson County School District and State of Colorado.

Replacement Plan: Free Horizon Montessori will develop a school day and school calendar that will meet or exceed the minimum required teacher-pupil instruction and contact hours for each of its academic levels, including full day kindergarten, elementary, and middle schools as defined by state law and in keeping with its Board of Directors policies for the same. Reduction to the schedule/calendar will continue to meet or exceed the reduction minimums set by state law.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County R-1 School District. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will adopt a school calendar to facilitate implementation of its Montessori curriculum and allow for professional development time to ensure students achieve educational standards of FHM’s programs as well as provide opportunity for staff training, while meeting or exceeding required student contact hours, in accordance with the terms and conditions set by Jeffco School District.

C.R.S. § 22-32-119
(delegation)

Kindergartens
Authorizes Board of Education to establish and maintain a kindergarten program.

Rationale: FHM will be responsible for establishing and maintaining its own kindergarten for the instruction of children one year prior to the year in which such children will be eligible for the admission to the first grade.

Replacement Plan: FHM will be responsible for these matters rather than the District. The principal will determine the courses of training, study, discipline and rules and regulations governing such kindergarten programs.

Duration: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District or FHM.

How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers the school will determine its own courses of training, study, discipline and rules and regulations governing the kindergarten program.

C.R.S. § 22-63-201

Employment – Certificate required
Prohibits board from entering into an employment contract with a person who does not hold a teacher’s certificate or letter of authorization.

Rationale: Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) should be granted the authority to hire teachers and principals that will support the school’s goals and objectives. The principal and teacher responsibilities and competencies for the position may have limited variations to traditional competencies for administrator and teacher positions (for example, Montessori certification). As such, the school will need to – at times – seek innovative recruitment channels that identify strong candidates for open positions even though the candidates may not have an active Colorado teacher license. The school will seek to attract principals and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado certificate, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or

professional experience. All employees of FHM will be employed on an “at-will” basis. **All FHM teachers will meet the standard of possessing, at least, a Bachelor’s Degree plus 24 hours in their content area or passage of the requisite PRAXIS exam. FHM will report “in field” and “out of field” as per ESSA and will work to meet the new standards of “in field” and “out of field”.**

Replacement Plan: The school will, as is appropriate, hire certified teachers and principals. However, in some instances it may be advantageous for the school to hire teachers and/or administrators without a certificate and who possess unique background and/or skills that fill the need of FHM (for example, Montessori certification). FHM preferentially employs Montessori teachers holding certificates from training centers accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) and recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The school recognizes the value of state teacher certification and will therefore also maintain a tiered compensation model that incentivizes and rewards teachers for earning and maintaining an active Colorado teaching license. In addition, on a finds-available basis, the school will make financial support available to teachers and staff who wish to enroll in an educator or administrator licensing program. All school staff will receive a written, signed agreement specifying compensation for the year, provision of benefits, work responsibilities, and employer responsibilities.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Jefferson County School District or FHM.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or backgrounds, filling all staff needs.

C.R.S. § 22-63-202

Teacher employment – Contract in writing, duration, damage
Governs employment contracts with acceptance timeframes, school placement and damages.

C.R.S. § 22-63-203

Probationary Teachers – renewal and non-renewal of employment contract – Specific Duties
Provides for contract with probationary teachers and allows for non-renewal and renewal of employment contract.

Rationale: FHM should be granted the authority to develop its own employment contracts and terms and conditions of employment. The school will be operating differently from other schools with a unique curriculum for which having the proper teaching staff is essential. Not every teacher who is successful in the regular public school will be successful at Free Horizon Montessori. All employees of FHM will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: FHM will maintain and provide an annual teacher agreement with the terms of non-renewal and renewal of employment contracts, and payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher.

Duration of the Waivers: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Jefferson County School District or FHM.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the performance appraisal criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or backgrounds, filling all staff needs.

C.R.S. § 22-63-206
(substantive)

Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act
Permits transfer of teachers between schools upon recommendation of district's chief administrative officer.

Rationale: FHM is granted the authority to select its own teachers. The District should not have the authority to transfer its teachers into the school or transfer teachers from the school to District schools.

Replacement Plan: FHM will hire teachers on a "best qualified" basis. Teachers who wish to transfer from the school may follow District procedures.

Duration of the Waiver FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on Jefferson County School District or FHM.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: The school expects that as a result of this waiver it will be able to manage its own personnel affairs. This school will provide the opportunity for teachers to transfer back into the District if they so choose.

C.R.S. § 22-32.5-109

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Rationale: FHM would need a complete waiver from all provisions of the District's collective bargaining agreements to implement its identified innovations. FHM has researched and found no current staff or any staff who will teach at FHM next year who are members of the collective bargaining agreements. As

a result, FHM is in compliance with C.R.S. 22-30.5-109(b). If the State Board designates Jeffco Public Schools as a District of innovation based on FHM's innovation plan, then FHM staff will become employees of the district instead of the charter school and will receive additional benefits allocated to district staff. Without this waiver from the collective bargaining agreement, FHM will be unable to deliver an authentic Montessori program and would decline innovation status and remain an authorized charter school of the District with all employees will remain employees of the charter school and not the district.

Replacement Plan: FHM has already developed Board policy, procedures, and operational policies that address the items in District's Collective Bargaining Agreements. These are outlined in the FHM employee handbook, FHM Board Policy Manual, position descriptions and annual employee agreements, as applicable. In addition, all employees of FHM are and will continue to be employed on an "at-will" basis.

Duration of the Waiver: FHM requests that the waiver be for the duration of the school as an Innovation School.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact upon the Jefferson County School District. The school must operate within its budget and the cost of employing staff has been included in that budget.

How the Impact of the Waivers Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to FHM.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, FHM will continue to manage its own personnel affairs. In addition, it will ensure the ability of FHM to provide authentic Montessori education as outlined within the American Montessori Society accreditation standards.

D. Requested Jeffco Public School District Policy Waivers

Free Horizon Montessori intends to request Jeffco Public School District Policy Waivers that are currently in existence. These waivers will be reviewed throughout the first year to determine if there are any needed adjustments.

Jeffco Policy Number	Jeffco Policy Title	Associated Jeffco District Policy Waiver and Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) Policy Reference
CCC	Staffing Formulas	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f). Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM Board of Directors (BOD) Policy Manual, Chapter 5: Personnel
DJ/DJA	Purchasing	DJB: Purchasing Procedures FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 10.5, Purchasing Authority
EDB	Maintenance, Control and Use of Materials and Equipment	FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 13: Facilities FHM Employee Handbook, Section 7: Managing Materials
FED	Construction Plan and Specifications	FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 13: Facilities FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 3.15.3.3 Facilities Committee
FEG	Construction Contracts Bidding and Awards	Jeffco Policy DJ/DJA: Purchasing FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 10.5, Purchasing Authority
FEA	Educational Specifications for Construction	Jeffco Policy DJ/DJA: Purchasing FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 13: Facilities
GBC	Total Compensation Policy	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 5: Personnel
GCA	Professional Staff Positions	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 5: Personnel
GCCBB	Administrator and Professional/Technical Staff Political or Legislative Leave	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM Employee Handbook, Chapter 3.5: Personal/Sick Leave
GCQB	Workforce Reduction and Restructuring	CRS §22-32-110(1)(h), Local board powers concerning employment termination of school personnel FHM Employee Handbook, Chapter 2: Employment
GCQF	Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of Professional Staff	CRS §22-32-110(1)(h), Local board powers concerning employment termination of school personnel. FHM Employee Handbook, Chapter 2: Employment
GCQEA	Supplemental Retirement Pension Plan	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM Employee Handbook, Chapter 2.9: Wages, Salaries and Benefits

Jeffco Policy Number	Jeffco Policy Title	Associated Jeffco District Policy Waiver and Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) Policy Reference
GDBA	Overtime Policy	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of personnel and pay FHM Employee Handbook, Chapter 2.9: Wages, Salaries & Benefits
IHAM	Health Education	CRS §22-32-109(1)(f) Local board duties concerning selection of educational programs and to select textbooks for any course of instruction FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 8.3: Curriculum Development
IHCAA	Outdoor Education	CRS §22-32-109(1)(t) Local board duties concerning selection of educational programs and to select textbooks for any course of instruction FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 8.3: Curriculum Development
IJM	Alternative Textbooks and Materials Selection & Approval	CRS §22-32-109(1)(t) Local board duties concerning selection of educational programs and to select textbooks for any course of instruction FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 8.3: Curriculum Development
IMB	Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive issues	CRS §22-32-109(1)(t) Local board duties concerning selection of educational programs and to select textbooks for any course of instruction FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 8.3: Curriculum Development
JBEA	Staff Conflicts of Interest	FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 5.4: School Personnel Conflict of Interest
JJB	Student Social Events	CRS §22-32-109(1)(t) Local board duties concerning selection of educational programs and to select textbooks for any course of instruction FHM Student & Parent Handbook, Section IV.L: Parties and Section IV.R. After Hours & Off Site School Events
JII	Student Concerns, Complaints & Grievances	Jeffco Policy GBK: Staff Concerns/Complaints and Grievances FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 15, Conflict Resolution Policy
KE	Public/Parent Concerns and Complaints	Jeffco Policy GBK: Staff Concerns/Complaints and Grievances FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 15, Conflict Resolution Policy
KEC	Public Concerns/Complaints about Instructional Resources	Jeffco Policy GBK: Staff Concerns/Complaints and Grievances FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 15, Conflict Resolution Policy
KHB	Advertising in Schools/Revenue Enhancement	Jeffco Policy DJ/DJA: Purchasing FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 10.5, Purchasing Authority
KHBA	Sponsorship Program	Jeffco Policy DJ/DJA: Purchasing FHM BOD Policy Manual, Chapter 10.5, Purchasing Authority

E. Montessori Curriculum & Instructional Practices

Montessori Scope and Sequence

Free Horizon Montessori employs an academically-focused scope and sequence that spirals up in complexity in accordance with depths of knowledge – moving from basic recall upwards to complex reasoning and analysis. Students move through the curricula in accordance with their demonstrated level of mastery with core content increasing in breadth and depth, and becoming more detailed and integrated with each level. Skills are practiced in class, independent studies, and through homework in a connected manner that inspires and empowers students to improve for the sake of better connection with the world.

Literacy: Reading, Writing, and Communicating

An effective language arts program is the cornerstone of every student's education. Without the basic skills of reading, writing, and communicating, students cannot fully participate in the educational process or in the greater needs of life. To that end, Free Horizon Montessori utilizes several literacy building curricula to provide a comprehensive, reading, writing, and learning program.

Mathematics

Free Horizon Montessori uses the Montessori mathematics curriculum and materials as its core instruction. The materials increase in complexity and allow students to explore advanced concepts in a concrete manner before translating them to the abstract. Students advance through a sequenced curriculum which progressively introduces mathematical symbols, language, and concepts with a required outcome of an ability to communicate and interact in the mathematical world. In addition, FHM utilizes other math literacy programs such as Saxon Math with which students practice the conceptual and abstract use of math concepts. The program supports the connections with prior knowledge, skill, proficiency, and problem-solving experiences. Key components of Free Horizon Montessori's math curriculum are as follows:

- Hands-on manipulative practice of core mathematical concepts
- Utilization of problem solving strategies to give breadth and depth to mathematical reasoning and understanding
- Purposeful, real-life connections to how math is used in the world
- Practice and repetition to assure solidifying recall and procedural aspects of math and computations
- Cooperative learning, where students experiment and collaboratively problem-solve in an effort to expand their perspectives about how mathematical problems are approached
- Technology-enhanced lessons to provide practice, interest, focus, and expand the tools used by students when working with numbers
- Various assessment tools that give immediate feedback to students about current skill level and progress towards goals

Elementary Science and Culture (Social Studies)

The Montessori curriculum is rich in its study of both Science and Culture, which are presented in an integrated manner. Dr. Montessori used a concept called “The Great Lessons” through which she wove presentations of key concepts of how science and culture developed on the planet. Each “Great Lesson” uses different narratives to explore a viewpoint of the world as seen both historically and today. In addition, each of the concepts is explored through the native stories from cultures around the world, wherein students discover common threads, ideas, and themes throughout history and among cultures.

- **Great Lesson 1:** The first story is one of creation, which covers the current day scientific ideas about how Earth came to existence from an astronomical point of view, as well as creation stories from numerous cultures and world religions. This then leads to the study of Astronomy, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science, and all the sub-sciences within each of these domains.
- **Great Lesson 2:** As life expands on the planet, a new “Great Lesson” begins that discusses the ascent of life on planet Earth, shared within the context of the current pre-historical scientific viewpoint. This begins the exploration of the biological sciences of botany and zoology and all the sub-sciences held within. It also begins to explore how the previous genres of science (physics, etc.) affect the life sciences.
- **Great Lesson 3:** The third “Great Lesson” begins the story of humans. In this story, the science of human evolution and history begins. Studies in this area include the timeline of humans on Earth and beginning structures of tribes and foundations of society. The foundations built here give form and structure to the fundamental needs of humankind, survival, and an understanding of the motivations of humans.
- **Great Lesson 4:** The fourth “Great Lesson” is the story of language. Through language students delve into how humans organize and understand the world. This allows the sharing of ideas and launches various cultural studies and understanding of ongoing societal changes. This is a very important lesson, as it leads to the study of ancient civilizations, geography, political geography, and it serves as the foundation for an expanding social studies curriculum.
- **Great Lesson 5:** The fifth “Great Lesson” is the story of mathematics. This is an extension of the fourth Great Lesson in that mathematics is also a language. This story gives form and structure to the microcosmic world of the hard sciences, as mathematics is a tool frequently used to explore things that often cannot be seen. It is also the sole communication tool used by humans to evaluate, measure, and understand the quantity and quality of life experience.

Throughout the elementary years, these lessons serve to engage students in the meaning behind the specifics of the subject matter being taught. Science is seen as the structure through which humans organize and understand the world. It gives form for communication and further exploration as a culture. History becomes part of the journey that students experience and not a list of dates or obscure facts. In essence, the story provides a meaningful and authentic way to introduce students to the complexities of science and history through providing a sense of the whole and integration of all of life. This has been shown to engage students in the learning process, and results in long-term understanding and application of the content knowledge. This approach is supported in current research by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe who say that “A curriculum is not a list of places to visit, but an engaging and

effective itinerary.” In addition, Boyes and Watts describe, in *Developing Habits of Mind*, how this type of organization of curriculum promotes successful learning throughout a student’s life.

Middle School Themes

Free Horizon Montessori’s Middle School program aligns the two-year curriculum cycle with that of other schools affiliated with the American Montessori Society. FHM is in the process of adapting the two-year curriculum to three-year with the transition of 6th grade to our Middle School program. Each year, AMS middle schools connect their curricular studies across content areas to themes – Connections, Exploration, Identity, Systems and Interdependence. They expand this to a 3 “World” view that includes the Natural World, Social World and Personal World. This structure provides students with an interdisciplinary approach to learning that affords greater connections, deeper understanding, and an integration of content areas.

Middle School Electives

During the annual registration process, Middle School students indicate their top three elective choices for each quarter. Each student has one elective period each quarter, with offerings based in art, music, physical education, and technology.

Field Studies and Extended Curricular Excursions

In the Montessori environment, the concept of experiential excursions beyond school is related to the acquisition of culture. Dr. Montessori was a firm believer in the need for students to benefit from the firsthand experience of outside activities involving society, culture, and the natural world. Dr. Montessori stated that “The senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge by providing opportunities that engage the student in a holistic manner, enabling an immersion of lasting sensory experiences.”

FHM facilitates numerous opportunities for field trips, external internships, and curricular-related overnight trips for each year of Middle School. Community excursions are one of the most important components of the Montessori philosophy for adolescents. In addition to developing practical life skills, gaining independence, and increasing self-confidence, they also give children the opportunity to safely take risks in a controlled environment, an especially important factor for early adolescence.

As Michelle Irinyi of the North American Montessori Center for Teacher Training states, “Dr. Montessori understood that learning is always more meaningful when a personal connection is made between a new concept and life experience. When a student is able to make real life connections, his interest and willingness to learn more and accept new challenges increases. His learning opportunity is further aided when he sees materials and concepts in new and diverse situations.”

F. 2017-18 Unified Improvement Plan

The Unified Improvement Plan Data Narrative is provided to be transparent and for the convenience of the reader.

Description of School

Free Horizon Montessori (FHM) is a charter public school in Jefferson County School District R-1, located in the City of Golden, serving students in Grades PK-8. The school opened in 2002-03 and moved to its present site in 2006. FHM expanded to include 7th and 8th grade for the first time in 2011-12. The school enrolled 304.5 FTE students in 2012-13, 289.42 FTE students in both 2013-14 and 2014-15, 302.6 FTE in 2015-16, and 303.5 FTE in 2016-2017. In looking at enrollment trends for the past five years, student enrollment remained steady, inclusive of our preschool students. In 2016-17, the student body was comprised of 18.2% Free and Reduced Price Lunch students in elementary, which increased by 3.2% from the 2015-16 school year, and 28% in middle school, which doubled from the 2015-16 school year. We maintain an English Language Learner (ELL) population of below 5% for both our elementary and our middle school programs, with six different languages other than English represented. We had 17% ethnic minority students and approximately 25% of our students represent exceptional learners with either an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP).

UIP Process & Participants

The UIP process at Free Horizon Montessori provides opportunities for faculty and parent involvement, primarily housed under the School Accountability Committee (SAC), where the majority of data analysis is completed. The SAC is currently comprised of three (3) parents from our school, two (2) external community members, and two (2) faculty members, who represent a variety of curricular departments within the building (Primary, Assessment Committee, and Administration). All members serving on the SAC for the 2017-18 year are returning from last year. One of our external community members also serves on the Board of Directors.

There is time provided during staff development days and full staff meetings in order to share the data analysis completed by the SAC, engage in collegial dialogue about possible root causes, and identify areas of strength to replicate and areas of growth in need of remediation. Staff members also have the opportunity to weigh in on the year's top priority improvement challenges and action steps in order to encourage operationalization of the UIP.

Comparison of Targets & Current Performance

The comparison of targets and current performance is discussed in detail in the tables within the UIP template and therefore not explicitly addressed here.

Notable Performances Trends, Identified Priority Improvement Challenges, and Root Causes

In looking at notable trends at Free Horizon Montessori, we look at a variety of data including academic (NWEA MAP, DIBELS Next, In-house Writing Assessments & other assessment data) and school (survey and enrollment data), and try to identify those trends that could be having an impact (positive or

negative) on student achievement and growth. Those trends that we believe have the greatest impact are described below. It is important to note that the priority improvement challenges included in the UIP were decided upon by the full instructional faculty at Free Horizon Montessori as informed by data analysis with recommendations from the School Accountability Committee. This process was designed to lay the foundation for buy-in from the faculty who will be tasked with most aspects of implementing the action steps in order to address these issues.

Sustaining and nurturing a school culture conducive to student and staff growth

This goal addresses several aspects of our school culture. Our Board of Directors has set a number of strategic initiatives that will guide some these goals. We will focus on branding and communication, facility optimization, student and family retention, and retaining highly effective teachers. It is important for students, families, and staff to feel valued and important at our school. We have collected data regarding overall satisfaction via the JeffCo Make Your Voice Heard Student Survey, the JeffCo Welcoming Environment & FHM Parent surveys, and the TELL Colorado & FHM Staff surveys. Free Horizon holds a deep understanding that it is important to recognize our place as an integral part of our larger community.

Branding and Communication:

This is identified as one of our Board of Directors' strategic initiatives. Based on data collected from our parent surveys, the staff underwent a processing and root cause analysis seminar around this data. The staff developed several ideas that they hope will address these parent concerns.

The Board of Directors identified branding as a main concern due to continued feedback from parents that identify communication as an area of focus for us. Considering the level of activities and events that FHM hosts, the Board has determined that effort towards branding who we are will serve us well.

Retention of Highly Effective Teachers:

The Board of Directors and Administration have also identified increasing teacher retention year over year as a priority, as this contributes not only to overall staffing stability, but also and more importantly to stability for students and families. Through the staff survey and exit interviews with departing staff members, we identified two major themes that contribute toward teachers leaving: lack of satisfaction with their overall compensation package and frustration with the schedule that did not provide on-the-clock time for teachers to meet with and train their educational assistants.

In terms of dissatisfaction with the overall compensation package, the administration confirmed that the salary scale and compensation package had not been evaluated in several years. To that end, several action steps to evaluate the salary scales and benefits options were taken, and a fully updated compensation package was offered during the re-contracting process for the 2015-16 school year. Both the administration and Board of Directors believe that providing a compensation package that is more aligned with other schools and the district, we will be able to not only retain more of the highly effective staff to remain at our school but also attract top-notch candidates when openings arise.

Steps were taken to adjust the schedules of educational assistants during the 2014-15 & 2015-16 school years to provide daily planning/prep/training time with their classroom teacher and we arranged for part-time educational assistants flex their daily schedule during the week of our monthly full staff meeting so as to be present. In addition, during the 2016-17 school year, we restructured our primary specials schedule to allow lead teachers a planning block. The school has reinstated all positions that were eliminated during the years of declining state funding and rescissions, however, the FTE was adjusted to meet current needs within budgetary constraints. To that end, the school continues to evaluate needs and adjust the staffing model to optimize completion of the work that needs to be done while protecting instructional time in the classrooms.

In addition, the staff survey, taken 2016-17, showed two main areas for focus pertaining to staff satisfaction. The first area concerns our school upholding high behavioral expectations for students. The average weight of this response was 75% of our staff who completed the survey agreeing or strongly agreeing. This means that 25% of our staff are not satisfied the consistency of upholding behavioral expectations for our students. The second area the staff showed concern about, overall, refers to compensation and benefits. The questions in the area are related to satisfaction in benefits packages, salary, and earned leave time (ELT). Each of these areas had a weighted average below 3.0 (with 4.0 being the highest). As a result, our Board of Directors continues to maintain the five year goal to increase professional development opportunities (benefits package) and reviews the salary comparisons every three years (salary). As far as the ELT, that is an operational aspect and something that the administration is looking into.

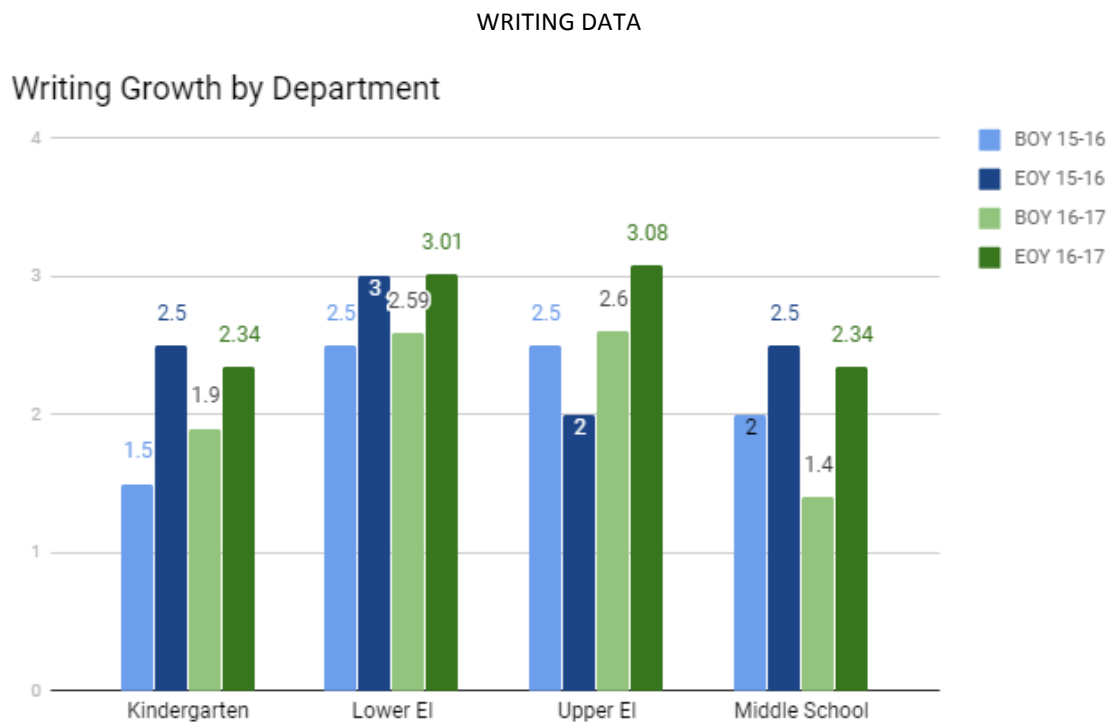
Some of the strength areas that the staff report are 95% of the staff like working at FHM; 98% of our staff feel that opportunities at FHM are equitable regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation; and all of our staff feel that evaluations and their supervisor is an equitable process that is communicated clearly, with the weighted average for all areas addressed in the survey being over 3.0.

Inconsistent Writing Scores

In terms of academic performance, writing continues to be one of our focus areas. Because writing is vital in excelling within the Reading, Writing, and Communicating Colorado Common Core Standards, we found broad support for focusing on writing as a school-wide initiative.

During the 2016-17 school year, in alignment with our UIP priority improvement challenges, we implemented a standard writing rubric with two school-wide assessments given throughout the year. Classroom teachers spent time during department meetings, professional development days, and staff meetings scoring these assessments. This process is one that had been standard practice in our school several years ago, but one that has been inconsistent for the past five years. The process of trading and scoring papers proved valuable as teachers saw the level of writing expected from students at various grade levels and worked toward inter-rater reliability in scoring. The most valuable component of this process, however, is providing feedback to the students regarding their writing, as this is truly the only way to realize an improvement in individual student writing skills. We have noticed that the process has taken longer than we would like, causing feedback to students to be inconsistent.

We collected baseline data to better help us understand where our focus areas should be. The rubrics we are using are 5- point rubrics broken into K-2 and 3-12. We are using a standardized 6+1 trait rubric for both. The following chart graphs out writing growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, by department, over the last two years.



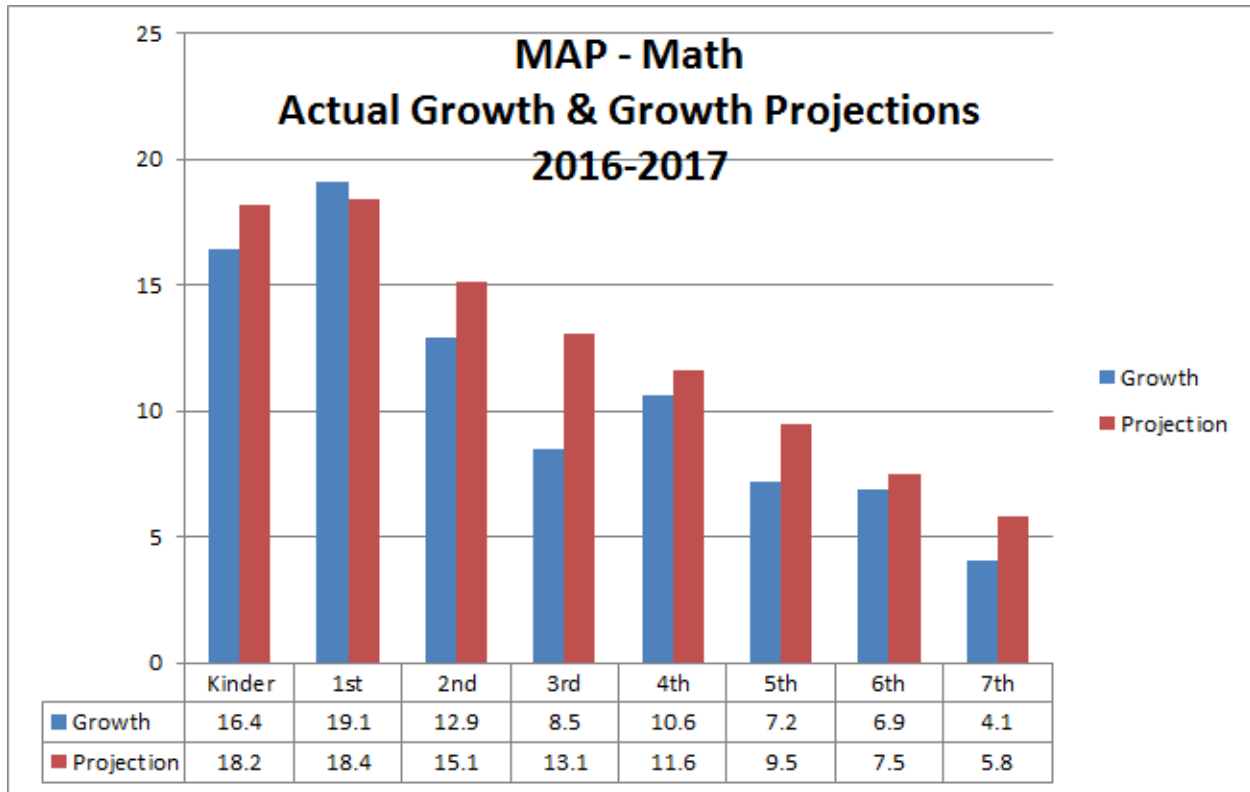
Additionally, the school’s Instructional Leadership Team researched and agreed to utilize the Scholastic Trait Crate curricular resources as a mechanism for implementing consistent writing lessons and practice across classrooms. The school invested in Scholastic Trait Crates from kindergarten through 8th grade, in 2015.

As a school, we have agreed to provide daily opportunities for students to engage in writing across content areas. Further, we have agreed that providing opportunities to write for a variety of purposes using a variety of sources for guidance and inspiration will serve students well in any context in which they are expected to write.

We will continue to work collaboratively to establish school-wide norms for writing lessons, scoring, and feedback mechanisms for students in an effort to provide consistent writing instruction and opportunities for skill development throughout the school and across all grade levels..

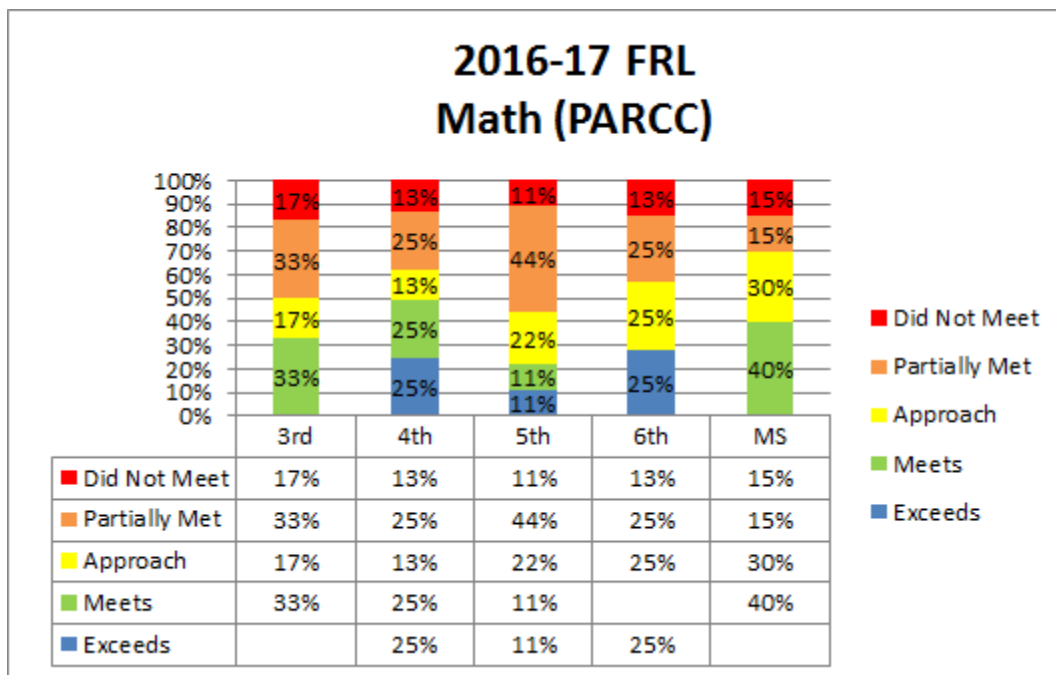
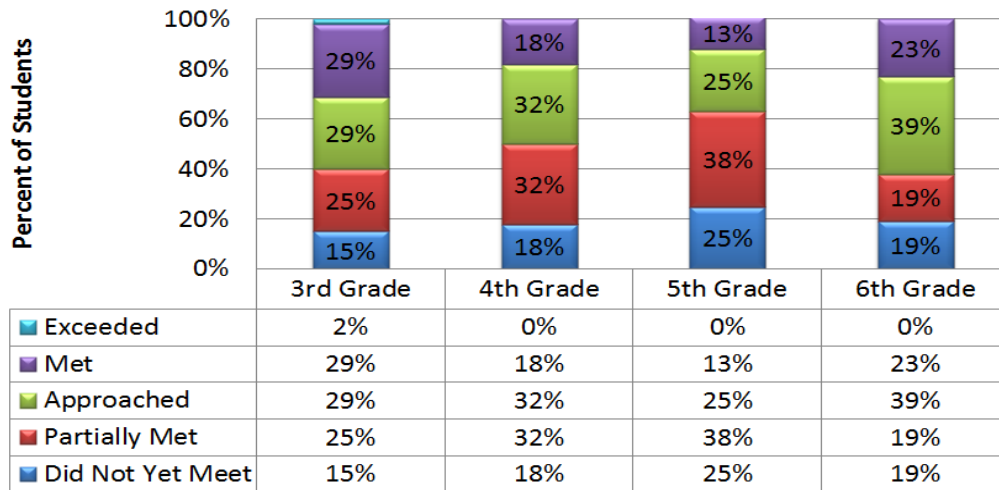
Continue Enhancing Math Instruction

Over the past several years, our math achievement and growth scores have been erratic and inconsistent when measured by the state and district assessments. When we looked at our Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), we see that we have fallen short of meeting the growth projections for each grade level, save 1st grade. Using this data, we see that our 5th grade students grew 75% of their growth projection and our 3rd grade students grew 65% of their growth projection.



The grade that met and surpassed their growth projections is 1st grade. The grades that stood out the most are 3rd grade, falling 4.6 points short of their projection; 5th grade falling 2.3 points short; and 2nd being 2.2 points short; and 7th grade 1.7 points short.

**Free Horizon Montessori
CMAS Math Grades 3-6
Overall Results
2016-17**

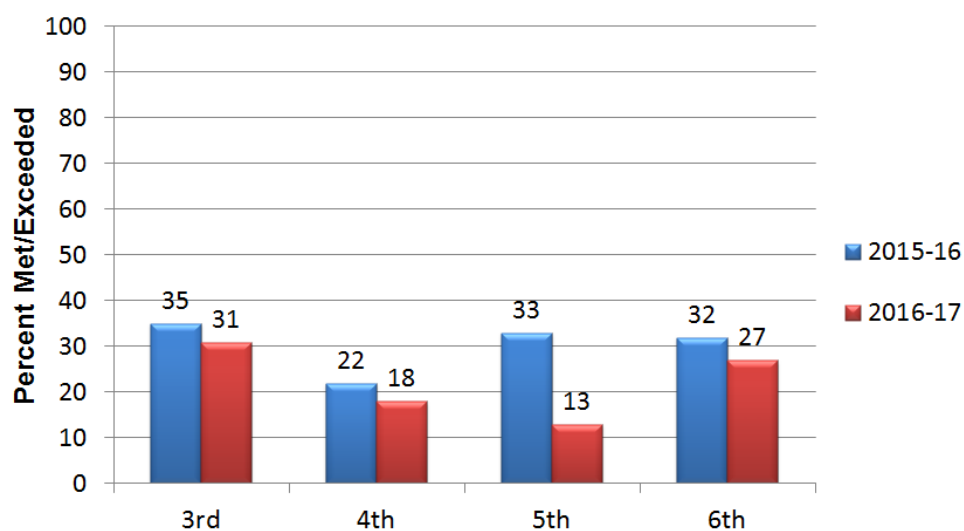
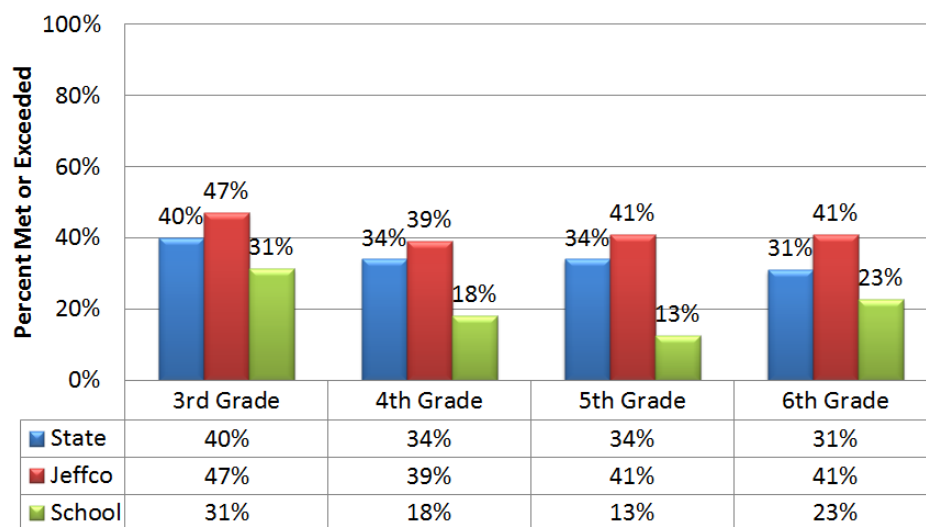


One thing that we have noticed is that our 5th grade class is behind in both the MAP and the PARCC assessments in the area of math. This is concerning to us, and has caused us to look at our 5th grade curriculum. Given that 18% of the 2016-17 4th graders scored at or above grade level on PARCC and 5th grade only grew 75% of their expected MAP growth, we believe that the 5th grade curriculum is

something that we should look at to determine if our scope and sequence is in alignment with state standards. We would hope to see that the scores either remain the same or increase.

We also noticed that our 3rd grade cohort grew 65% of their growth projections on MAP. We focused on this cohort during the 2015-16 school year setting a goal that they would make the Norm Growth Rate according to NWEA. Although we will continue to focus on the 3rd grade cohort, we have decided to set our goal around the 5th grade class, as they showed significant decrease in both math and language in both PARCC and MAP.

CMAS Math Grades 3-6 Met or Exceeded Expectations 2016-17



Possible root causes discussion was around how we grouped students for math instruction and how over the 2016-17 school year, math results were significantly decreased. We also talked about 5th

grade cohort and a desire to look at that curriculum to ensure it meets state standards. Something that FHM has been working on for some time is to identify vertical alignment and expectations in math instruction and our thinking is that we may need to get clearer on exit level criteria for each grade level. The teachers also brought up the possible cause of lack of confidence in teaching some of the new math concepts.

READ Plan Goals

In looking at our students who scored well-below benchmark on the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment for the 2016-17 school year, we see that overall our school is making below average progress according to the CDE growth tool:

2016-17 BOY to EOY Progress - All Grades			
Select Grade Range	BOY % Well Below Benchmark	EOY % Well Below Benchmark	Level of Progress
K-3	12%	11%	Below Average Progress
2016-17 BOY to EOY Progress - Individual Grades			
Grade	BOY % Well Below Benchmark	EOY % Well Below Benchmark	Level of Progress
K	2%	12%	Well Below Average Progress
1st	23%	11%	Well Above Average Progress
2nd	14%	10%	Average Progress
3rd	13%	10%	Average Progress

Select Grade Range	Desired Level of Progress	BOY % of students reading Well Below Benchmark	MOY % Well Below Benchmark Goal Range	EOY % Well Below Benchmark Goal Range	
Grades K-3	Average Progress	13%	9 - 11%	8 - 9%	
2016-17 Goal Setting - Individual Grades					
Grade	Desired Level of Progress	BOY % of students reading Well Below Benchmark	MOY % Well Below Benchmark Goal Range	EOY % Well Below Benchmark Goal Range	Actual EOY
K	Average Progress	10%	5 - 8%	3 - 5%	8%
1st	Average Progress	24%	18 - 22%	17 - 21%	18%
2nd	Average Progress	8%	7 - 9%	6 - 8%	6%
3rd	Average Progress	11%	10 - 12%	9 - 11%	4%

Possible root causes explored for lack of average progress were inconsistent daily reading instruction including phonics (nonsense words & letter naming in Kindergarten) and need for more analysis and critical thinking reading comprehension. That being said, we also notice that all grades are making

average progress or above average progress in 1st grade and above and we will see how daily delivery of Read Well program influences student performance on DIBELS.

Priority Challenges & Action Steps

Through a series of discussions during staff meetings and professional development days, we identified the following Priority Improvement Challenges for this year's UIP.

1. Enhance **writing** instruction throughout the school by completing a comprehensive evaluation of our writing curriculum, continuum of writing rubrics, instructional practices, homework expectations, assessments, and outcomes.
 - a. Continue to use and track writing outcomes through our school-wide writing rubric that was initiated in 2015-16. This will allow us to identify trends and isolate skill areas where more focus is needed. (15-16)
 - b. Incorporate writing activities throughout the school and across all curricular areas in order to provide students with opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. This includes providing students with practice writing mathematically in order to solve problems and explain steps taken to do such. (15-16)
 - c. Implement our consistent writing curriculum throughout the school in order to explicitly and directly teach the 6 + 1 Writing components across all grades from kindergarten through 8th grade. During the 2015-16 school year, the Instructional Leadership Team identified the Scholastic Trait Crate as the curricular resource for this area. During 2016-17, we will assure implementation in all classrooms with fidelity.
 - d. Provide professional development on inter-rater reliability; getting clear on expectations for grading and the process used for grading.
2. Enhance **math** instruction throughout the school by continuing a comprehensive evaluation and enhancement of consistent implementation of our math curriculum, pacing guides, grouping conventions, instructional practices, homework expectations, assessments, and outcomes.
 - a. Continue our work in departmental teams to identify exit criteria by grade level that correspond to both Colorado Common Core Standards and the Montessori scope and sequence. (15-16)
 - b. Work in vertical teams to learn what each next level is expecting from students entering from the previous level (Primary to Lower Elementary, Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary, and Upper Elementary to Middle School) to identify specific skills, both standards-related and otherwise, as they relate to math that will be used throughout our school to guide work with students and communication with parents regarding expectations for each level. (16-17)
 - c. Complete and document grouping conventions and guidelines for pacing and frequency of lessons via direct instruction for each level that can be included in a Curriculum Guide and provided to all staff members and included in the onboarding process with new teachers. (16-17)
 - d. Include in lessons, with the help of MAP, identified math vocabulary that is consistent with the Common Core Standards.
 - e. PD around math, increasing understanding and confidence in teaching math that is expected through current standards, applied through multi-step real-life application, and then assessed through PARCC.

3. **READ Plan goals**
 - a. Continue to monitor, with fidelity, our progress monitoring to include students scoring “Below Benchmark” (yellow students) and bolster the interventions provided. (16-17)
 - b. Create 4x week reading instruction times for K-2 through a literacy block using Read Well, as core reading program.

4. Address several aspects of our school culture by focusing on our Board of Director’s Strategic Vision, including Facility Optimization & Branding and Communication, as well as continued support for Staff training and retention.
 - a. Branding & Communication
 - i. Parent Communication via newsletters, positive communication (monthly), consistent assessment data, (response to Parent Surveys)
 - ii. Marketing FHM as charter school available to community
 - 1) Focus on middle school and 6th grade transition
 - 2) Consistent information and moving up/choice enrollment nights
 - iii. Continue Branding development (strategic BOD goal)
 - iv. Involve all stakeholders in the Board of Directors’ strategic goals involving Identity and Branding, with a goal of articulating what Free Horizon Montessori has to offer within our unique, quality Montessori charter public school

 - b. Facility Optimization
 - i. Continue the facilities committee and middle school committee to determine best next steps for FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI.

 - c. Continue to increase student retention by supporting families and students through:
 - i. Continued support through transition of levels, building upon the work started during the 2015-16 school year. - consistent visit days
 - ii. Work to collaboratively build up our after school sports options and club/enrichments for students in grades 6th-8th. (Revisit this in 18-19 SY)
 - iii. Update website

 - d. Retaining highly effective teachers:
 - i. Continuing to use the TELL survey and other sources, to track our growth areas and areas of strengths as a school.
 - ii. Continue our robust professional development program in conjunction with our BOD
 - 1) The BOD has identified a goal to increase professional development budget by approximately 30% each year for 5 years (maxing out at approximately \$37K by year 5) and then maintained in future years. This is dependent upon the school funding landscape. 16-17 we increased by 25% to a total of \$12,500.
 - 2) Determine a mechanism for sharing professional development opportunities to the staff. (i.e. emails, staff resource page, etc...)
 - iii. Continue to support Discipline Policies/Practices that have successfully been implemented over the last two years.
 - 1) Increase communication with teachers in regards to actions taken, follow-up, family conversations, etc., using email, phone, and in-person techniques.

G. Free Horizon Montessori 2017-18 & 2018-19 Budgets

Affected by Move

FHM Initial Budget - Approved by FHM BOD 4/17/2018

BUNIT	ACCT	FUND	FY17-18 DOLLAR AMOUNT	FY18-19 FHM		NOTES
				Stay @581	Move to Innovation	
Revenues		Revenues				
GF020	401000	GF020	500	500	373	Lifetouch school pics commission
GF020	401400	GF020	300	3,000	3,000	Ticket sales: 2 Student Council Socials, School Play, School Talent show
GF020	408000	GF020	4,500	5,300	5,300	Yearbook Sales
GF020	409000	CA020	7,500	7,500	9,600	Sales-Fund Raising Revenue - MS, Student Council, DWOH, Book Fair
GF020	411000	GF020	440,907	428,944	-	Mill Levy Override
GF020	415000	DS020	80	1,000	253	Earnings on investments
GF020	419000	GF020	2,000	1,500	8,478	Other Revenue (Background Checks, etc)
GF020	413000			350	360	finances
GF020	433000	CR020	78,269	86,901	-	State Revenue - Other (capital construction)
GF020	434000	GF020	34,042	45,000		Exceptional Children Revenue/ECEA funds (Tier A = \$1,250 (x36); Tier B = \$1997 (x0) per Ellen 3/8/2018)
GF020	438000	GF020	1,500	1,800	-	ELPA (was 760 in FY15 & 1420 in FY16, 1800 FY18)
GF020	440600	FS020	24,749	23,968	-	Fed & State Reimb Food Svc
GF020	450000	GF020	2,374,092	2,525,708	2,273,137	Transfer (Innovation = 90% PPR)
GF020	450000	DS020	468,060	467,872	-	Debt Service revenue
GF020	451000	GF020	72,700	72,500	72,500	Fees/Dues - Revenue
GF020	451500	GF020	24,749	32,600	32,600	Student Fees for Clubs and MS Electives
GF020	455000	CC020	60,000	50,000	45,000	Summer camp
GF020	455000	CC020	180,000	251,000	251,000	Before / After Care
GF020	456000	GF020	560,000	586,500	586,500	PKTuition-Extended Day Kindergarten
GF020	461000	GF020	3,500	3,500	1,500	Building rental income
GF020	474000	CA020	20,500	70,300	70,300	Field Trips-Revenue (6th grade Outdoor Ed Trip (5K); Challenger Learning Ctr(8000), Crow Canyon(25000))
GF020	481000	FS020	32,000	30,000	-	Food Service revenue
GF020	482000	CA020	28,400	28,128	28,128	Parents' Night Out, Break Camps, Activity Revenue
GF020	498000	GF020	40,849	91,000	77,204	Donations-Revenue (75K CSN+ Field Trip donations 2K)
GF020	950500	GF020	(468,060)	(467,873)		Mandatory Transfers
GF020	950500	CR020		-		Mandatory Transfers
		Revenues	3,991,137	4,346,999	3,465,233	

Salaries & Wages

Fund	Account	Fund	17-18 Salary Total	18-19 Salary Total	Innovation Salary Total	Notes
			2,192,998	2,390,114	2,378,427	see Staffing Model detail (includes EA increase; includes MS 1.0, P-teacher/Assistant; 0.5 Health Aide. Minus food server)
Benefits						
Fund	Account	Fund	Annual Total	Annual Total		Notes
GF020	669900	GF020	436,407	523,435	520,875	PERA (21.9)
						PTO Payout, inc. PERA
GF020	669900	GF020	157,000	172,700	207,240	New Health Employer Contribution (FHM \$435 (est. 8.1% increase) /JCSD \$529 (est. 32% increase)
GF020	669900	GF020	2,000	2,000	2,000	Life Insc & Accidental Death/Dismem Premium
Total Benefits			595,407	698,135	713,528	
Total Salaries & Benefits			2,788,405	3,088,249	3,091,955	

Fund	Account	Fund	17-18 Annual Total	Stay @581	Move to Innovation	Notes
GF020	701000	GF020	-	-		Mileage And Travel
GF020	702000	GF020	13,000	17,000	17,000	Employee Development
GF020	702000	GF020	2,500	5,000	5,000	Employee Development: Montessori Credentialling
GF020	703000	GF020	300	300	300	Awards & Banquets (spelling bee, KG & 8th grade continuation, field day)
GF020	705000	GF020	500	1,000	-	Recruiting Costs
GF020	708000	GF020	2,500	2,500	-	Employee Background Verification (incl volunteers-revs received in 419000)
GF020	710000	CC020	6,750	6,750	6,100	Meals and refreshments -(CA/CC) BAC. PNO, Talent Show, Student Council, etc
GF020	713000	CA020	8,900	9,150	7,200	Student transportation (CA/CC)
GF020	715000	CA020	29,958	47,850	30,000	Student Admission/Entry Fees
GF020	721000	GF020	3,000	715	-	Legal Fees
GF020	723000	GF020	500	500	500	Printing
GF020	726000	GF020	-	-	-	Consultants
GF020	731000	GF020	41,975	41,975	2,000	Contracted Services CC
GF020	731000	GF020	3,000	3,000	1,100	Contracted Services - contingency (janitor, food service(17), etc)
GF020	735000	GF020	100	100	-	Bank Fees & Other Expense
GF020	741000	GF020	1,550	1,550	-	Refuse & Dump Fees
GF020	742000	GF020	8,400	5,161	-	Building Rental (temp building rental - cost to remove temp from 581-need to verify)
GF020	743000	GF020	500	75	75	Equipment rental
GF020	745000	GF020	500	500	-	Equipment repair
GF020	745500	GF020	500	500	-	Technology services
GF020	746000	GF020	-	-	-	Building Maint/Improvements services
GF020	746000	DS020	2,000	2,000	-	Building Maint/Improvements services
GF020	747000	GF020	17,835	15,418	15,418	Software (Applitrack \$665; Library Atrium \$1400; MS Office \$2000; DriveLine \$800; Envoy \$700; Box \$900; Sharepoint \$240; MRX \$3900; Mealtime \$420; LanSchool \$1440; TypingClub \$630; Server \$190; Edu general \$500; Lexia \$3050 (will be underwritten by READ Act grant funds); \$1000 contingency)
GF020	752000	GF020	6,750	6,750	5,000	Marketing
GF020	760000	GF020	5,000	4,200	600	Telephone/Pagers/Modems (PV pay Long Dist)
GF020	761000	GF020	4,500	3,423		Natural gas
GF020	763000	GF020	2,000	2,000		Internet/Data service
GF020	764000	GF020	35,000	39,000		Electricity
GF020	766000	GF020	15,000	12,700		Water & Sanitation
GF020	768000	GF020	300	300	300	Postage
GF020	769000	GF020	22,974	21,894	6,000	Permits/Licenses/Fees (Field Day50; AMS Dues \$5050)
GF020	770000	GF020	26,803	24,357	-	Risk Management Charges
GF020	770800	GF020	7,250	7,250	-	Unemployment Comp Insur
GF020	775000	GF020	-	-	-	Community surveys
GF020	781000	DS020	125,000	130,000		Lease Purch-Other-Principal
GF020	781500	DS020	332,306	327,306		Lease Purch-Other-Interest Bond Pmt
GF020	950000	GF020	354,843	373,688	-	District Purchase Services Transfer
Purchased Services			1,081,994	1,113,912	96,593	
<u>Supplies and materials</u>						
Fund	Account	Fund	17-18 Annual Total	18-19 Annual Total	Innovation Total	Notes
GF020	803000	GF020	-			Subscriptions/Books
GF020	804000	CA020	4,000	4,000	4,000	Fundraising
GF020	805000	GF020	600	5,000	5,000	Materials / Supplies Other (Yearbook, DWOH)
GF020	806000	CA020	4,500	4,500	4,000	yearbook - resale, DWOH shirts
GF020	810000	GF020	1,500	1,500	1,245	Office Supplies
GF020	810001	GF020	2,000	2,000	1,300	technology equipment, inc. computers for staff
GF020	812000	GF020	500	500	500	Clinic supplies
GF020	814000	GF020	7,050	6,700	-	Custodial Supplies
GF020	820000	GF020	31,300	51,000	35,850	Furniture - general office/cisrm budgets & replacment needs
GF020	820001	GF020	6,300	6,650	4,500	Student Chromebooks/devices
GF020	822000	GF020	3,340	3,340	3,340	Curriculum - school wide (incl MS Curriculum)
GF020	823000	GF020	15,000	15,000	15,000	Copies
GF020	824000	GF020	5,000	5,000	5,000	Formative Assmt tests
GF020	840000	DS020	5,000	5,000	-	all facility supplies
GF020	852000	GF020	-	-	-	Vehicle Expense
GF020	870000	GF020	2,500	2,500	2,500	S - Library
GF020	880000	FS020	47,000	47,000	-	Purchased Food
GF020	889000	GF020	2,800	2,800	-	General for school - consumables, Camps, PNO
Materials & Supplies			138,390	162,490	82,235	

Grant Funds		Grant Funds			
SR010	450000	SR010	14,652	14,652	14,652
SR010	450000	SR010	3,000	3,000	3,000
		Grant Outlay	17,652	17,652	17,652
		Total Expenditures	4,008,789	4,364,651	3,270,783
		Total Revenue	4,008,789	4,364,651	3,482,885
		Surplus/Deficit	0	0	212,102
		NOTE: One time expenditure			
		2 New Classroom	60000		
		18 Audit	5000		
		Remove temporary	5000		
		Actual Move	?		
		Legal Fees Related to Transition	?		

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

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JOHN CUTLER & ASSOCIATES

Board of Directors
Free Horizon Montessori Charter School
Golden, Colorado

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements governmental activities and each major fund of Free Horizon Montessori Charter School, component unit of Jefferson County School District No. R-1, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2017, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Opinions

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of Free Horizon Montessori Charter School, as of June 30, 2017, and the respective changes in financial position, thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matters

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis, the budgetary comparison information, schedule of the school's proportionate share, and schedule of the school's contributions on pages 28-30 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

John Luttler & Associates, LLC

November 13, 2017

Management's Discussion and Analysis

As management of Free Horizon Montessori, we offer readers of these financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of Free Horizon Montessori charter school ("the School") for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017.

Financial Highlights

At the close of its 15th year of operation, the revenues of Free Horizon Montessori exceeded its expenses, resulting in a net gain of \$113,120. The School's assets of \$7,629,239 also exceeded its short-term and debt service liabilities totaling \$6,227,093. However, due to the implementation of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 68¹, effective in 2015, governmental entities participating in cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plans, including schools like Free Horizon Montessori, which is part of the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA), must report a proportionate share of the total net pension liability (unfunded liability) of the pension trust fund at PERA. This resulted in Free Horizon Montessori's 2017 ending net position of \$(5,407,536) due to long-term net pension liability of \$12,242,207 reflected in its statements. Overall, the 2017 fiscal activities continue the trend of positive financial position, which has allowed the school to continue to increase its unrestricted operational reserves and address strategic priorities.

In 2016, Free Horizon implemented updated salary schedules to provide a more competitive comprehensive compensation package for its employees. This decision continued into fiscal year 2017 in addition to a strategic decision to increase investment in staff training. Each of these areas thus showed increased expenses compared to 2016.

At the close of fiscal year 2017, Free Horizon Montessori's ending funds balance was \$1,605,707, an increase of \$113,120 from close of fiscal year 2016. This year's result continues the overall positive trend also observed at last three prior years' end position.

Overview of Financial Statements

This report follows the guidelines set forth in the GASB Statement No. 34, Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments.

This discussion and analysis are intended to serve as an introduction to Free Horizon Montessori's basic financial statements. The Free Horizon Montessori basic financial statements are comprised of four components: 1) government-wide financial statements, 2) governmental fund financial statements, 3) notes to the financial statements, and 4) supplementary information.

Free Horizon Montessori's fiscal year follows that of its parent school district (Jefferson County School District R-1), and runs July 1 to June 30. The School Board of Directors in collaboration with School administration approves an annual appropriation budget each April for the coming school/fiscal year.

¹ <http://www.gasb.org/resources/ccurl/988/315/GASBS%2068.pdf>

Information within this audit report and associated discussions is presented on the School's General Fund, which is the major operational account for Free Horizon Montessori. Beginning in fiscal year 2012, Free Horizon Montessori no longer includes its separate Foundation financials in its reporting. All comparisons made here between current and prior years take this difference into account.

Free Horizon Montessori adopts an annual appropriated budget for its General Fund. A budget to actual comparison is included on page 28, showing end of year variances and net impact.

Included within the reporting of School assets are the FHM Building Corporation (FHMBC) accounts. The FHMBC was established in 2010 as a separate, passive corporation for the sole purpose of supporting the School's financing needs for lease/purchase the school building and grounds through commercial bonding. The holdings of the FHMBC (\$631,270) are blended in as restricted assets within the School's Statement of Net Position (page 1), Government Fund Balance Sheet (page 3) and further discussed within the Notes (pages 6 and 13).

Government-wide Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of Free Horizon Montessori's finances, in a manner similar to a private-sector business.

The Statement of Net Position presents information on all of Free Horizon Montessori's assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two reported as net position (net assets). Over time, increases or decreases in net position may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of Free Horizon Montessori is improving or deteriorating.

The Statement of Activities indicates how the School's fiscal year activities affected its net position during the most recent fiscal year. The Statement of Activities differentiates program revenues arising from services and grants from revenues generated through governmental sources (e.g., per pupil revenue and mill levy taxes passed through from the District, and funds received from the County and State). All changes in net position are recorded as soon as the underlying event is recognized, regardless of the timing of related cash flows (i.e., accrual accounting). Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will not result in actual cash transactions until future fiscal periods (e.g. accounts receivable, uncollected grant awards, and earned but unpaid salary and benefits).

The government-wide financial statements can be found on pages 1 and 2 of this report.

Fund Financial Statements

A fund is a grouping of related accounts that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. Free Horizon Montessori, like other governmental units or charter schools, uses fund accounting to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements.

Governmental Funds. Governmental funds statements account for essentially the same functions (reported therein as governmental activities) as do the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, governmental funds financial statements focus on near-term inflows and outflows of spendable (unassigned) resources. They also indicate balances of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information may be useful in evaluating the School's near-term financing capacity.

The government fund financial statements can be found on pages 3-5 of this report.

Notes to the Financial Statements

The notes provide additional information and context essential to a full understanding of financial statements' data. This information is provided on pages 6-27.

Government-wide Financial Analysis

At the close of fiscal year 2017, Free Horizon Montessori's assets of \$7,629,239 exceeded its short-term and debt service liabilities of \$6,227,093. However, due to the requirements of GASB Statement 68, effective in fiscal year 2015, schools are now required to report their proportion of the overall PERA Net Pension Liability as a long-term liability. Net Pension Liability is a proportionate share of the deferred benefits committed by employers through the PERA pension plan. In 2017, Free Horizon Montessori's Net Pension Liability share is calculated at \$12,242,207. The significant increase in the long-term net pension liability from prior years is due to an actuarial valuation as of December 31, 2014, and is further explained on pages 16-26 of this report. A reduction in this amount will be recognized in the upcoming year. This long-term liability increases FHM's total liabilities to \$18,469,300, thus reducing its total net position to \$(5,407,536) (see Statement of Net Position, page 1).

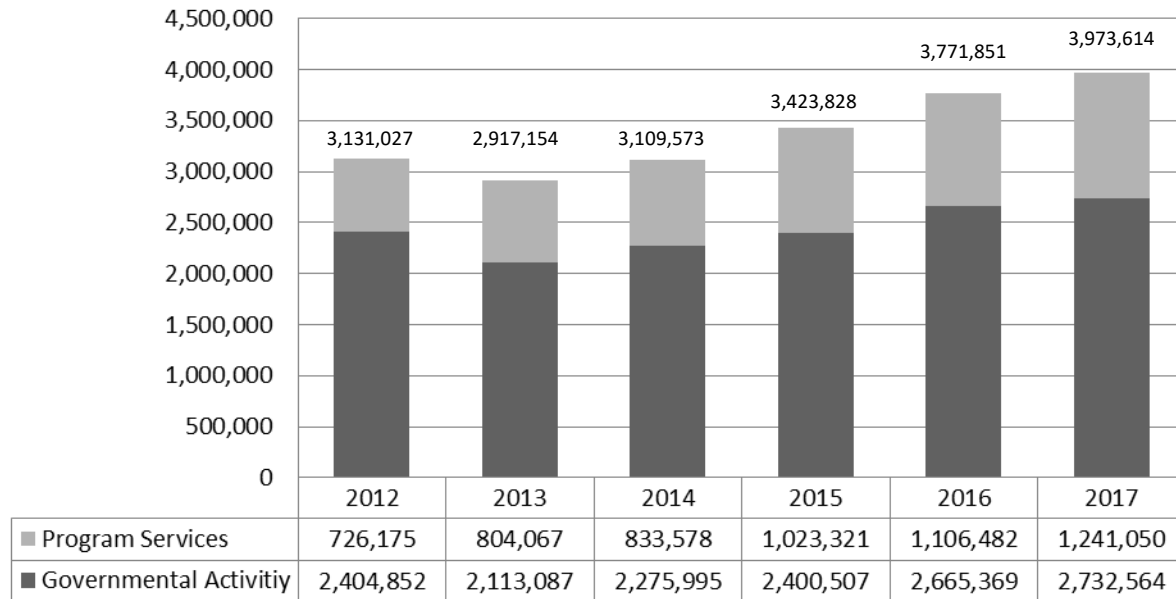
The largest portion of Free Horizon Montessori's assets totaling \$5,660,285 (74.2 percent) is represented by its capital assets (e.g., school building and equipment). The balance of assets is comprised of cash and investments totaling \$1,966,373 (25.8 percent) and accounts receivable totaling \$2,581 (0.03 percent). There were no major construction projects during fiscal year 2017, and therefore, no gain in capital assets, but rather a decrease as accumulated depreciation began on improvements from the prior two years. This resulted in a decrease of \$264,288 from fiscal year 2016.

Approximately 69 percent (\$2,732,564) of the School's cash income was realized through governmental activities, including per pupil revenue, mill levy overrides, State provided capital construction funds, and other governmental sources. The smaller percentage of cash income, 31.2 percent (\$1,241,050), was generated through the School's program service charges/fees and grants/donations.

Continuing the trend seen with the prior years, 2017 total revenue continues to increase and is slightly more distributed across sources; in 2016, governmental activity revenues accounted for 70.1 percent (\$2,400,507) of total and program services accounted for 29.9 percent (\$1,023,321). In 2015, governmental activity revenues accounted for 70.1 percent (\$2,400,507) of total and program services accounted for 29.9 percent (\$1,023,321). In 2014, governmental activity revenues accounted for 73.1 percent (\$2,275,995) of total and program services accounted for 26.8 percent (\$833,578). In 2013, governmental activity revenues accounted for 72.4 percent (\$2,113,087) of total and program services accounted for 27.6 percent (\$804,067) of total. In 2012, governmental activity revenues accounted for

76.8 percent (\$2,404,852) of total and program revenues accounted for 23.2 percent (\$726,175) of total. This information is also portrayed in the chart below:

FHM Revenue Trends



Free Horizon Montessori's Net Position

		Governmental Activities	
		as of 30 June	
		2017	2016
ASSETS			
Cash and Investments	\$	1,232,439	\$ 1,131,451
Restricted Cash and Investments	\$	733,934	\$ 727,628
Accounts Receivable	\$	2,581	\$ 5,134
Capital Assets, Not Depreciated	\$	820,874	\$ 820,874
Capital Assets, Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$	<u>4,839,411</u>	<u>\$ 5,103,699</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>\$ 7,629,239</u>	<u>\$ 7,788,786</u>
TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES			
Related to Pensions	\$	<u>5,564,119</u>	<u>\$ 1,319,885</u>
LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	\$	18,189	\$ 36,477
Accrued Salaries	\$	219,862	\$ 200,582
Accrued Interest	\$	13,846	\$ 13,816
Unearned Revenue	\$	125,196	\$ 134,567
Noncurrent Liabilities			
Due in One Year	\$	125,000	\$ 120,000
Due in More than One Year	\$	5,725,000	\$ 5,850,000
Net Pension Liability	\$	<u>12,242,207</u>	<u>\$ 5,932,519</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>\$ 18,469,300</u>	<u>\$ 12,287,961</u>
DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES			
Original Issue Premium	\$	83,058	\$ 86,669
Related to Pensions	\$	<u>48,536</u>	<u>\$ 84,052</u>
TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES		<u>\$ 131,594</u>	<u>\$ 170,721</u>
NET POSITION			
Net Investment in Capital Assets	\$	461,161	\$ 595,532
Restricted for Emergencies	\$	102,664	\$ 96,612
Restricted for Working Capital	\$	617,424	\$ 631,016
Unrestricted	\$	<u>(6,588,785)</u>	<u>\$ (4,673,171)</u>
TOTAL NET POSITION		<u><u>\$ (5,407,536)</u></u>	<u><u>\$ (3,350,011)</u></u>

Free Horizon Montessori's Change in Net Position

	Change in Net Position as of 30 June	
	2017	2016
Program Revenues		
Charges for Service	\$ 971,652	\$ 840,708
Operating Grants & Contributions	\$ 269,398	\$ 265,774
Total Program Revenue	<u>\$ 1,241,050</u>	<u>\$ 1,106,482</u>
General Revenues		
General Per Pupil Revenue	\$ 2,243,611	\$ 2,155,943
Mill Levy Override	\$ 428,944	\$ 417,162
Capital Construction Funds		\$
Other	\$ 60,009	\$ 92,264
Special Item		
Capital Transfer from District	\$ -	\$ 587,290
Total General Revenue	<u>\$ 2,732,564</u>	<u>\$ 3,252,659</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 3,973,614</u>	<u>\$ 4,359,141</u>
Expenses		
Governmental Activities	\$ 3,435,936	\$ 1,772,502
Instruction	\$ 2,261,678	\$ 2,233,866
Supporting Services	<u>\$ 333,525</u>	<u>\$ 329,780</u>
Interest on Long-Term Debt		
Total Governmental Activities	<u>\$ 6,031,139</u>	<u>\$ 4,336,148</u>
Change in Net Position	<u>\$ (2,057,525)</u>	<u>\$ 22,993</u>
Net Position		
Prior Period Adjustment	\$ -	\$ -
Beginning	\$ (3,350,011)	\$ (3,373,004)
Ending	<u>\$ (5,407,536)</u>	<u>\$ (3,350,011)</u>

Government Fund Financial Analysis

As noted earlier, Free Horizon Montessori uses fund accounting to ensure appropriate segregation of activities and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. This includes maintaining sufficient reserve requirements for Bond financing covenants and TABOR reserves (see Notes, pages 13 and 27).

General Fund Budgetary Highlights

As of the end of fiscal year 2017, the School's governmental funds reported an ending fund balance of \$1,605,707 an increase of \$113,120 over the prior year.

Expected revenues were \$102,564 (2.6%) higher than budgeted, due to higher actual enrollment of 309.74 FTE compared to the budgeted 308 FTE which brought in higher state PPR and local MLO. Tuition revenues were also higher than budgeted by \$166,855 due to using a more conservative revenue planning model; the adjustment of the FRL kindergarten tuition relief model to a sliding scale and increased enrollment. Despite slightly higher salary and benefit expenditures, overall expenses were slightly lower (\$10,557) than budgeted by due primarily to lower use of purchased services and materials and supplies. See page 28 of the report for additional detail.

Capital Asset and Debt Administration

Capital Assets. At close of fiscal year 2017, Free Horizon Montessori reported \$5,660,285 in capital assets. This includes \$264,288 in total accumulated depreciation. See page Note 4 of the report for additional detail.

Long-Term Lease Agreement

Free Horizon Montessori entered into a lease/purchase agreement with the Free Horizon Montessori Building Corporation in 2010 for acquisition of the school facility. The agreement is renewed annually under its original terms, and requires Free Horizon Montessori to make monthly lease payments against the debt service. For fiscal year 2017, these monthly lease payments averaged \$38,092 and in aggregate make up the \$457,106 in total annual Debt Service expenses for the year.

The associated Long Term Debt schedule is included Note 6 of the report.

In accordance with Bond covenants related with the lease/purchase agreement, the School agreed to maintain a repair and replacement reserve account to address facilities and grounds-related expenses above what its annual operating budget covers. Free Horizon Montessori historically paid \$25,000 into this fund each year (approximately \$2,083 each month) to reach a balance of \$125,000. Once this balance is reached, it is maintained at this level. During fiscal year 2017, Free Horizon transferred in \$4,681.16 to replenish the reserve by the amount utilized during fiscal year 2017 for capital needs. At the end of fiscal year 2017, the Repair & Replacement Fund balance was \$125,009.

To comply with additional Bond covenants, the School maintains an operating capital reserves fund balance of not less than 8 percent of prior year's total operating expenses at the end of each fiscal year. For fiscal year 2017, this amount was \$272,271.

Economic Factors and Next Year's Budget

Based on advice from the Colorado Department of Education, the School projects that Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) amounts will increase approximately 1.6 percent from \$7,237 per FTE to \$7,353. This projected increase is less than the inflationary factors applied to the School's expenses, thus the net impact of PPR increase is negligible for the coming fiscal year. However, the Jefferson County Board of Education's (BoE) budgeting decision to continue their commitment to equitable distribution of the voter-approved Mill Levy Override (MLO) revenues to charter schools will also help sustain revenues. Estimated fiscal year 2018 MLO revenues are \$1,395 total per FTE, in line with the amount budgeted in fiscal year 2017.

Enrollment in Free Horizon Montessori's support programs (preschool, before/after care, summer camp, etc.) continued to grow, with modest, but constant revenue increases each year. Program growth is projected to continue into next fiscal year. Modest overall school growth is anticipated in fiscal year 2019 when the shift of Free Horizon Montessori's 6th grade into its middle school program occurs. Preparation for this transition happens in fiscal year 2018 which includes the remodeling of the middle school area/classrooms to accommodate the growth; addition of a lower elementary classroom; and purchasing of furniture and materials. This may result in an increase in expenses in 2018 prior to revenue increases being realized in fiscal year 2019.

Continued implementation of strategic retention and staff development goals into fiscal year 2018 led to an increase in employer paid monthly health care premium above the minimum amount and an increase in budget for professional development days. There will also be an average 75 percent increase in classroom and materials budget as requested by staff during an annual budget survey conducted each fall.

Requests for Information

This report is designed to provide a general overview of Free Horizon Montessori's finances for those with an interest in the School's financial position. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to Free Horizon Montessori, Attn: Miera Nagy, Director of Finance & Advancement, 581 Conference Place, Golden, CO 80401 or via email at mnagy@jeffcoschools.us.

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION

As of June 30, 2017

	Governmental Activities	
	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	\$ 1,232,439	\$ 1,131,451
Restricted Cash and Investments	733,934	727,628
Accounts Receivable	2,581	5,134
Capital Assets, Not Depreciated	820,874	820,874
Capital Assets, Net of Accumulated Depreciation	4,839,411	5,103,699
 TOTAL ASSETS	 7,629,239	 7,788,786
DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES		
Related to Pensions	5,564,119	1,319,885
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	18,189	36,477
Accrued Salaries	219,862	200,582
Accrued Interest	13,846	13,816
Unearned Revenues	125,196	134,567
Noncurrent Liabilities		
Due in One Year	125,000	120,000
Due in More than One Year	5,725,000	5,850,000
Net Pension Liability	12,242,207	5,932,519
 TOTAL LIABILITIES	 18,469,300	 12,287,961
DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES		
Original Issue Premium	83,058	86,669
Related to Pensions	48,536	84,052
 TOTAL DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES	 131,594	 170,721
NET POSITION		
Net Investment in Capital Assets	461,161	595,532
Restricted for Emergencies	102,664	96,612
Restricted for Debt Service	617,424	631,016
Unrestricted	(6,588,785)	(4,673,171)
 TOTAL NET POSITION	 \$ (5,407,536)	 \$ (3,350,011)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended June 30, 2017

FUNCTIONS/PROGRAMS	EXPENSES	PROGRAM REVENUES		NET (EXPENSE) REVENUE CHANGE IN NET POSITION	
		Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES	
				2017	2016
PRIMARY GOVERNMENT					
Governmental Activities					
Instruction	\$ 3,435,936	\$ 971,652	\$ 269,398	\$ (2,194,886)	\$ (666,020)
Supporting Services	2,261,678	-	-	(2,261,678)	(2,233,866)
Interest on Long-Term Debt	333,525	-	-	(333,525)	(329,780)
Total Governmental Activities	<u>\$ 6,031,139</u>	<u>\$ 971,652</u>	<u>\$ 269,398</u>	(4,790,089)	(3,229,666)
GENERAL REVENUES					
				2,243,611	2,155,943
				428,944	417,162
				60,009	92,264
SPECIAL ITEM					
				-	587,290
				<u>2,732,564</u>	<u>3,252,659</u>
CHANGE IN NET POSITION				(2,057,525)	22,993
NET POSITION, Beginning				<u>(3,350,011)</u>	<u>(3,373,004)</u>
NET POSITION, Ending				\$ (5,407,536)	\$ (3,350,011)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

BALANCE SHEET
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
June 30, 2017

	TOTAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS	
	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	\$ 1,232,439	\$ 1,131,451
Restricted Cash and Investments	733,934	727,628
Accounts Receivable	2,581	5,134
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 1,968,954</u>	<u>\$ 1,864,213</u>
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$ 18,189	\$ 36,477
Accrued Salaries and Benefits	219,862	200,582
Unearned Revenues	125,196	134,567
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>363,247</u>	<u>371,626</u>
FUND BALANCES		
Restricted for Emergencies	102,664	96,612
Restricted for Debt Service	617,424	631,016
Unassigned	885,619	764,959
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	<u>1,605,707</u>	<u>1,492,587</u>
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the statement of net position are different because:		
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not financial resources, and therefore, are not reported in the funds.	5,660,285	5,924,573
Long-term liabilities and related assets are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the funds. This amount is the Bonds outstanding of (\$5,850,000), bond premium net of amortization (\$83,058), and accrued interest on bonds of (\$13,846).	(5,946,904)	(6,070,485)
Long-term liabilities and related assets are not due and payable in the current period and, therefore, are not reported in the funds. This liability includes the net pension liability of (\$12,242,207), deferred outflows related to pensions of \$5,564,119, and deferred inflows related to pensions of (\$48,536).	(6,726,624)	(4,696,686)
Net position of governmental activities	<u>\$ (5,407,536)</u>	<u>\$ (3,350,011)</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
Year Ended June 30, 2017

	TOTAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS	
	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Local Sources	\$ 3,828,206	\$ 3,640,380
State and Federal Sources	145,408	131,471
TOTAL REVENUES	3,973,614	3,771,851
EXPENDITURES		
Current		
Instruction	1,954,081	1,417,955
Supporting Services	1,449,307	1,860,703
Debt Service		
Principal	120,000	115,000
Interest	337,106	341,706
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	3,860,494	3,735,364
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCES	113,120	36,487
FUND BALANCES, Beginning	1,492,587	1,456,100
FUND BALANCES, Ending	\$ 1,605,707	\$ 1,492,587

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year Ended June 30, 2017

Amounts Reported for Governmental Activities in the Statement of Activities
are Different Because:

Net Changes in Fund Balances - Total Governmental Funds	\$ 113,120
Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the statement of activities, the cost of those assets is allocated over their estimated useful lives and reported as depreciation expense. This is the amount of depreciation expense for the year	(264,288)
Some expenses reported in the statement of activities do not require current financial resources and are not reported in the funds. These are the principal payments on bonds, \$120,000, amortization of bond premium \$3,611, and the change in accrued interest payable (\$30).	123,581
Deferred charges related to pensions are not recognized in the governmental funds. However, for the government-wide funds, those amounts are capitalized and amortized.	<u>(2,029,938)</u>
Change in Net Position of Governmental Activities	<u>\$ (2,057,525)</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Free Horizon Montessori Charter School (the “School”) was formed in 2002 pursuant to the Colorado Charter Schools Act to form and operate a charter school. The School is utilizing a Montessori curriculum.

The accounting policies of the School conform to generally accepted accounting principles as applicable to governmental units. Following is a summary of the more significant policies.

Reporting Entity

The financial reporting entity consists of the School and organizations for which the School is financially accountable. All funds, organizations, institutions, agencies, departments and offices that are not legally separate are part of the School. In addition, any legally separate organizations for which the School is financially accountable are considered part of the reporting entity. Financial accountability exists if the School appoints a voting majority of the organization’s governing board and is able to impose its will on the organization, or if the organization provides benefits to, or imposes financial burdens on the School.

The School includes the Free Horizon Montessori Building Corporation (the “Building Corporation”) within its reporting entity. The Building Corporation was formed to support and assist the School to perform its function and to carry out its purpose, specifically to assist in the financing of the School’s facilities. The Building Corporation is blended into the School’s financial statements as part of the General Fund. Separate financial statements are not available for this entity.

The School is a component unit of Jefferson County School District No. R-1.

Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements (i.e., the statement of net position and the statement of activities) report information on all of the activities of the School. For the most part, the effect of interfund activity has been removed from these statements. Governmental activities, which normally are supported by intergovernmental revenues, are reported in a single column.

The statement of activities demonstrates the degree to which the direct expenses of the given function or segment are offset by program revenues. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with a specific function or segment. Program revenues include 1) charges to students or others who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services, or privileges provided by a given function or segment and 2) grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting the operational or capital requirements of a particular function or segment. Unrestricted intergovernmental revenues not properly included among program revenues are reported instead as general revenues.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Major individual governmental funds are reported in separate columns in the fund financial statements.

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting, and Financial Statement Presentation

The government-wide financial statements are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when a liability is incurred, regardless of the timing of related cash flows. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider have been met.

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized as soon as they are both measurable and available. Revenues are considered to be available when they are collected within the current period or soon enough thereafter to pay liabilities of the current period, not to exceed 60 days. Expenditures generally are recorded when a liability is incurred, as under accrual accounting. However, debt service expenditures are recorded only when payment is due.

Intergovernmental revenues, grants, and interest associated with the current fiscal period are all considered to be susceptible to accrual and have been recognized as revenues of the current fiscal period. All other revenue items are considered to be measurable and available only when cash is received by the School.

Internally dedicated resources are reported as general revenues rather than as program revenues.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the School's policy to use restricted resources first and the unrestricted resources as they are needed.

The School reports the following major governmental funds:

General Fund—This fund is the general operating fund of the School. It is used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balance/Net Position

Investments – Investments are recorded at fair value.

Capital Assets – Capital assets, which include property and equipment, are reported in the governmental activities column in the government-wide financial statements. Capital assets are defined by the School as assets with an initial, individual cost of more than \$5,000 and an estimated useful life in excess of one year. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at estimated fair market value at the date of donation.

Depreciation of exhaustible capital assets is charged as an expense against operations, and accumulated depreciation is reported on the statement of net position in the government-wide financial statements. Depreciation has been provided over the following estimated useful lives of the capital assets using the straight-line method: leasehold improvements, 15 years.

Unearned Revenues – Unearned revenues consist of tuition and fees that have been received during the year that are prepayments for the following school year.

Long-term Debt – In the government-wide financial statements, long-term debt and other long-term obligations are reported as liabilities. Bond premiums and discounts, as well as issuance costs, are deferred and amortized over the life of the bonds using the straight-line method. In the fund financial statements, governmental fund types recognize bond premiums and discounts, as well as bond issuance costs, during the current period. The face amount of debt issued is reported as other financing sources. Premiums received on debt issuances are reported as other financing sources while discounts on debt issuances are reported as other financing uses. Issuance costs, whether or not withheld from the actual debt proceeds received, are reported as current expenditures.

Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources – In addition to assets, the statement of financial position and balance sheets will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. This separate financial statement element, *deferred outflow of resources*, represents a consumption of net position and fund balance that applies to a future period(s) and so will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/expenditure) until then.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balance/Net Position (Continued)

In addition to liabilities, the statement of financial position and balance sheets will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflows or resources. This separate financial statement element, *deferred inflow of resources*, represents an acquisition of net position and fund balance that applies to a future period(s) and so will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that time.

Net Position – The government-wide financial statements, utilize a net position presentation. Net position is categorized as investment in capital assets, restricted, and unrestricted.

Net Investment in Capital Assets includes the School's capital assets (net of accumulated depreciation) reduced by the outstanding balances of bonds that are attributable to the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.

Restricted Net Position includes assets that have third-party (statutory, bond covenant, or granting agency) limitations on their use. The School typically uses restricted assets first, as appropriate opportunities arise, but reserves the right to selectively defer the use until a future project.

Unrestricted Net Position typically includes unrestricted liquid assets. The Board has the authority to revisit or alter this designation.

Fund Balance Classification – The governmental fund financial statements present fund balances based on classifications that comprise a hierarchy that is based primarily on the extent to which the School is bound to honor constraints on the specific purposes for which amounts in the respective governmental funds can be spent. The classifications used in the governmental fund financial statements are as follows:

- Nonspendable – This classification includes amounts that cannot be spent because they are either not spendable in form or are legally or contractually required to be maintained intact. The School did not report amounts as nonspendable at June 30, 2017.
- Restricted – This classification includes amounts for which constraints have been placed on the use of the resources either (a) externally imposed by creditors (such as through a debt covenant), grantors, contributors, or laws or regulations of other governments, or (b) imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation. The School has classified Emergency Reserves as being restricted because their use is restricted by State Statute for declared emergencies. The School has also classified Working Capital as restricted as their use is restricted by Bond Covenants.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 1: **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES** (Continued)

Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balance/Net Position (Continued)

- Committed – This classification includes amounts that can be used only for specific purposes pursuant to constraints imposed by formal action of the Board of Directors. These amounts cannot be used for any other purpose unless the Board of Directors removes or changes the specified use by taking the same type of action (ordinance or resolution) that was employed when the funds were initially committed. This classification also includes contractual obligations to the extent that existing resources have been specifically committed for use in satisfying those contractual requirements. The School did not have any committed resources as of June 30, 2017.
- Unassigned – This classification includes the residual fund balance for the General Fund. The unassigned classification also includes negative residual fund balance of any other governmental fund that cannot be eliminated by offsetting of Assigned fund balance amounts.

The School would typically use Restricted fund balances first, followed by Committed resources, and then Assigned resources, as appropriate opportunities arise, but reserves the right to selectively spend Unassigned fund balances.

Risk Management

The School is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; injuries to employees; and natural disasters. The District carries commercial insurance for these risks of loss, and bills the School for its portion of coverage. Settlements have not exceeded insurance coverage in the last three years.

Comparative Data

Comparative total data for the prior year has been presented in the accompanying financial statements in order to provide an understanding of changes in the School's financial position and operations. However, complete comparative data in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles has not been presented since its inclusion would make the financial statements unduly complex and difficult to read.

Data in these columns do not present financial position or results of operations in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Neither is such data comparable to a consolidation. Interfund eliminations have not been made in the aggregation of this data.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 2: STEWARDSHIP, COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Budgets and Budgetary Accounting

A budget is adopted for the General Fund on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.

Management submits to the Board of Directors a proposed budget for the fiscal year commencing the following July 1. The budget is adopted by the Board of Directors prior to June 30. Expenditures may not legally exceed appropriations at the fund level. Revisions must be approved by the Board of Directors. The budget includes proposed expenditures and the means of financing them. All appropriations lapse at fiscal yearend.

NOTE 3: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Cash and Investments at June 30, 2017 consisted of the following:

Pooled Cash with the District	\$ 1,335,103
Investments	<u>631,270</u>
Total	<u>\$ 1,966,373</u>

Cash and Investments are reported in the financial statements as follows:

Cash and Investments	\$ 1,335,103
Restricted Cash and Investments	<u>631,270</u>
Total	<u>\$ 1,966,373</u>

Deposits

Custodial Credit Risk – Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the government's deposits may not be returned to it. The Colorado Public Deposit Protection Act (PDPA) requires that all units of local government deposit cash in eligible public depositories. Eligibility is determined by state regulations.

At June 30, 2017, State regulatory commissioners have indicated that all financial institutions holding deposits for the School are eligible public depositories. Amounts on deposit in excess of federal insurance levels must be collateralized by eligible collateral as determined by the PDPA. PDPA allows the financial institution to create a single collateral pool for all public funds held.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 3: CASH AND INVESTMENTS (Continued)

Deposits (Continued)

The pool is to be maintained by another institution, or held in trust for all the uninsured public deposits as a group. The market value of the collateral must be at least equal to 102% of the uninsured deposits. The School has no policy regarding custodial credit risk for deposits as most of the School's funds are held by the District.

The School does not have any deposits as of June 30, 2017.

Pooled Cash with District

Cash deposits are pooled with the District cash and investments which were held by several banking institutions. Pooled investments represent investments in local government investment pools or in money market funds. At June 30, 2017, the School's balance in equity in both restricted and unrestricted pooled cash of the District totaled \$1,335,103.

Investments

Interest Rate Risk

The School does not have a formal investment policy that limits investment maturities as a means of managing its exposure to fair value losses arising from increasing interest rates. However, the School is required to follow the investment policy of the District.

Credit Risk

Colorado statutes specify in which instruments units of local government may invest, which include:

- Obligations of the United States and certain U.S. Government Agency securities
- General obligation and revenue bonds of U.S. local government entities
- Bankers' acceptances of certain banks
- Local government investment pools
- Written repurchase agreements collateralized by certain authorized securities
- Certain money market funds
- Guaranteed investment contracts

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 3: CASH AND INVESTMENTS (Continued)

Investments (Continued)

Fair Value

The District categorizes its fair value measurements within the fair value hierarchy established by generally accepted accounting principles. The hierarchy is based on the valuation inputs used to measure the fair value of the asset. Level 1 inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets; Level 2 inputs are significant other observable inputs; Level 3 inputs are significant observable inputs.

The District invested \$631,270 in a Money Market Mutual Fund. Portfolio investments are assigned a level based upon the observability of the inputs which are significant to the overall valuation. The inputs or methodology used for valuing securities are not necessarily an indication of the risk associated with investing in those securities. The fair value of investments in money market funds is based on the published net asset values per share of those funds. Money market securities are valued using amortized cost, in accordance with Rule 2a-7 under the 1940 Act. Generally, amortized cost approximates the current fair value of a security, but since the value is not obtained from a quoted price in an active market, such securities held by Prime Series and Government Series are categorized as Level 2.

The School has no policy for managing credit risk or interest rate risk; however they are required to follow the policies of the District as all funds are maintained by the District.

Restricted Cash and Investments

Cash and investments of \$631,270 are restricted in the General Fund for debt servicing and bond reserves and \$102,664 for declared emergencies under the TABOR amendment.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 4: CAPITAL ASSETS

Capital Assets activity for the year ended June 30, 2017, is summarized below.

	Balance <u>June 30, 2016</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Deletions</u>	Balance <u>June 30, 2017</u>
Governmental Activities				
Capital Assets, Not Depreciated				
Land	\$ 820,874	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 820,874
Capital Assets, Being Depreciated				
Leasehold Improvements	1,378,470	-	-	1,378,470
Buildings	4,865,731	-	-	4,865,731
Equipment	65,698	-	-	65,698
Total Capital Assets, Being Depreciated	6,309,899	-	-	6,309,899
Accumulated Depreciation				
Leasehold Improvements	408,757	71,283	-	480,040
Buildings	752,527	185,508	-	938,035
Equipment	44,916	7,497	-	52,413
Total Accumulated Depreciation	1,206,200	264,288	-	1,470,488
Net Capital Assets, Depreciated	5,103,699	264,288	-	4,839,411
Net Capital Assets	<u>\$ 5,924,573</u>	<u>\$ 264,288</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 5,660,285</u>

Depreciation has been charged to the Supporting Services program of the School.

NOTE 5: ACCRUED SALARIES AND BENEFITS

Salaries and retirement benefits of certain contractually employed personnel are paid over a twelve month period from August to July, but are earned during a school year of approximately nine to ten months. The salaries and benefits earned, but unpaid, as of June 30, 2017, were \$219,862. Accordingly, the accrued compensation is reflected as a liability in the accompanying financial statements of the General Fund.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 6: LONG-TERM DEBT

Following is a summary of the School's long-term debt transactions for the year ended June 30, 2017:

	Balance			Balance	Due In
	<u>June 30, 2016</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>June 30, 2017</u>	<u>One Year</u>
Building Lease	<u>\$ 5,970,000</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 120,000</u>	<u>\$ 5,850,000</u>	<u>\$ 125,000</u>

Building Lease

July 6, 2010, the Colorado Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority issued \$6,550,000 in Charter School Revenue Bonds, Series 2010 for the Free Horizon Montessori School Project. Proceeds of the bond were loaned to the School under a lease agreement to exercise the purchase option for the School's building. The School has created the Free Horizon Montessori Charter School Building Corporation to purchase the building and to service the debt. The School is required to make equal lease payments to the Building Corporation for use of the building. The Building Corporation is required to make equal lease payments to the Trustee, for payment of the bonds. Interest accrues at rates ranging from 2% to 6%. The bonds mature in December 2040.

Future debt service requirements are as follows:

<u>Year Ended June 30,</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Total</u>
2018	\$ 125,000	\$ 332,306	\$ 457,306
2019	130,000	327,306	457,306
2020	135,000	322,106	457,106
2021	140,000	316,706	456,706
2022	150,000	309,706	459,706
2023 – 2027	870,000	1,428,530	2,298,530
2028 – 2032	1,135,000	1,179,020	2,314,020
2033 – 2037	1,530,000	793,494	2,323,494
2038 – 2040	<u>1,635,000</u>	<u>231,832</u>	<u>1,866,832</u>
Total	<u>\$ 5,850,000</u>	<u>\$ 5,241,006</u>	<u>\$ 11,091,006</u>

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Pensions. The School participates in the School Division Trust Fund (SCHDTF), a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension fund administered by the Public Employees' Retirement Association of Colorado ("PERA"). The net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position and additions to/deductions from the fiduciary net position of the SCHDTF have been determined using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

General Information about the Pension Plan

Plan description. Eligible employees of the School are provided with pensions through the School Division Trust Fund (SCHDTF)—a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by PERA. Plan benefits are specified in Title 24, Article 51 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), administrative rules set forth at 8 C.C.R. 1502-1, and applicable provisions of the federal Internal Revenue Code. Colorado State law provisions may be amended from time to time by the Colorado General Assembly. PERA issues a publicly available comprehensive annual financial report that can be obtained at www.copera.org/investments/pera-financial-reports.

Benefits provided. PERA provides retirement, disability, and survivor benefits. Retirement benefits are determined by the amount of service credit earned and/or purchased, highest average salary, the benefit structure(s) under which the member retires, the benefit option selected at retirement, and age at retirement. Retirement eligibility is specified in tables set forth at C.R.S. § 24-51-602, 604, 1713, and 1714.

The lifetime retirement benefit for all eligible retiring employees under the PERA Benefit Structure is the greater of the:

- Highest average salary multiplied by 2.5 percent and then multiplied by years of service credit
- The value of the retiring employee's member contribution account plus a 100 percent match on eligible amounts as of the retirement date. This amount is then annuitized into a monthly benefit based on life expectancy and other actuarial factors.

In all cases the service retirement benefit is limited to 100 percent of highest average salary and also cannot exceed the maximum benefit allowed by federal Internal Revenue Code.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

General Information about the Pension Plan (Continued)

Members may elect to withdraw their member contribution accounts upon termination of employment with all PERA employers; waiving rights to any lifetime retirement benefits earned.

If eligible, the member may receive a match of either 50 percent or 100 percent on eligible amounts depending on when contributions were remitted to PERA, the date employment was terminated, whether 5 years of service credit has been obtained and the benefit structure under which contributions were made.

Benefit recipients who elect to receive a lifetime retirement benefit are generally eligible to receive post-retirement cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), referred to as annual increases in the C.R.S. Benefit recipients under the PERA benefit structure who began eligible employment before January 1, 2007, and all benefit recipients of the DPS benefit structure receive an annual increase of 2 percent, unless PERA has a negative investment year, in which case the annual increase for the next three years is the lesser of 2 percent or the average of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the prior calendar year. Benefit recipients under the PERA benefit structure who began eligible employment after January 1, 2007 receive an annual increase of the lesser of 2 percent or the average CPI-W for the prior calendar year, not to exceed 10 percent of PERA's Annual Increase Reserve for the SCHDTF.

Disability benefits are available for eligible employees once they reach five years of earned service credit and are determined to meet the definition of disability. The disability benefit amount is based on the retirement benefit formula shown above considering a minimum 20 years of service credit, if deemed disabled. Survivor benefits are determined by several factors, which include the amount of earned service credit, highest average salary of the deceased, the benefit structure(s) under which service credit was obtained, and the qualified survivor(s) who will receive the benefits.

Contributions. Eligible employees and the School are required to contribute to the SCHDTF at a rate set by Colorado statute. The contribution requirements are established under C.R.S. § 24-51-401, *et seq.* Eligible employees are required to contribute 8 percent of their PERA-includable salary.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

General Information about the Pension Plan (Continued)

The employer contribution requirements are summarized in the table below:

	For the Year Ended December 31, 2016	For the Year Ended December 31, 2017
Employer Contribution Rate ¹	10.15%	10.15%
Amount of Employer Contribution apportioned to the Health Care Trust Fund as specified in C.R.S. § 24-51-208(1)(f) ¹	(1.02)%	(1.02)%
Amount Apportioned to the SCHDTF ¹	9.13%	9.13%
Amortization Equalization Disbursement (AED) as specified in C.R.S. § 24-51-411 ¹	4.50%	4.50%
Supplemental Amortization Equalization Disbursement (SAED) as specified in C.R.S. § 24-51-411 ¹	4.50%	5.00%
Total Employer Contribution Rate to the SCHDTF ¹	18.13%	18.63%

¹Rates are expressed as a percentage of salary as defined in C.R.S. § 24-51-101(42).

Employer contributions are recognized by the SCHDTF in the period in which the compensation becomes payable to the member and the School is statutorily committed to pay the contributions to the SCHDTF. Employer contributions recognized by the SCHDTF School were \$396,868 for the year ended June 30, 2017.

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions

At June 30, 2017, the School reported a liability of \$12,242,207 for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of December 31, 2015, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of December 31, 2014. Standard update procedures were used to roll forward the total pension liability to December 31, 2015. The School's proportion of the net pension liability was based on the School's contributions to the SCHDTF for the calendar year 2015 relative to the total contributions of participating employers to the SCHDTF.

At December 31, 2016, the School's proportion was 0.04111%, which was an increase of 0.00233% from its proportion measured as of December 31, 2015.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

For the year ended June 30, 2017, the School recognized pension expense of \$2,426,806. At June 30, 2017, the School reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	<u>Deferred Outflows of Resources</u>	<u>Deferred Inflows of Resources</u>
Difference between expected and actual experience	\$152,555	\$48
Net difference between projected and actual earnings on pension plan investments	\$ 359,378	N/A
Changes in proportion and differences between contributions recognized and proportionate share of contributions	\$691,732	N/A
Changes in assumptions and other inputs	\$4,198,900	\$48,488
Contributions subsequent to the measurement date	\$161,554	N/A
Total	\$5,564,119	\$48,536

\$161,554 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions, resulting from contributions subsequent to the measurement date, will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the year ended June 30, 2018. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Year ended June 30,	
2018	\$1,229,599
2019	\$2,073,722
2020	\$1,904,936
2021	\$145,772

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

Actuarial assumptions. The total pension liability in the December 31, 2015, actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions and other inputs:

Actuarial cost method	Entry Age
Price inflation	2.80%
Real wage growth	1.10%
Wage inflation	3.90%
Salary increases, including wage inflation	3.90%-10.10%
Long-term investment Rate of Return, net of pension plan investment expenses, including price inflation	7.50%
Discount Rate	7.50%
Future post-retirement benefit increases:	
	PERA Benefit Structure hired prior to
1/1/07;	
and DPS Benefit Structure (automatic)	2.00%
PERA Benefit Structure hired after 12/31/06	
(ad hoc, substantively automatic)	Financed by the
	Annual Increase Reserve

Based on the 2016 experience analysis and the October 28, 2016, actuarial assumptions workshop, revised economic and demographic assumptions were adopted by PERA's Board on November 18, 2016, and effective as of December 31, 2016. These revised assumptions shown below were reflected in the roll-forward calculation of the total pension liability from December 31, 2015 to December 31, 2016:

Actuarial cost method	Entry age
Price inflation	2.40%
Real wage growth	1.10 %
Wage inflation	3.50 %
Salary increases, including wage inflation	3.50 – 9.70 %
Long-term investment rate of return, net of pension plan investment expenses, including price inflation	7.25 %
Discount rate	5.26 %
Post-retirement benefit increases:	
PERA benefit structure hired prior to 1/1/07	
and DPS benefit structure (automatic)	2.00 %
PERA benefit structure hired after 12/31/06	
(ad hoc, substantively automatic)	Financed by the
	Annual Increase Reserve

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

Mortality rates used in the December 31, 2015, valuation were based on the RP-2000 Combined Mortality Table for Males or Females, as appropriate, with adjustments for mortality improvements based on a projection of Scale AA to 2020 with Males set back 1 year, and Females set back 2 years. Active member mortality was based upon the same mortality rates but adjusted to 55 percent of the base rate for males and 40 percent of the base rate for females. For disabled retirees, the RP-2000 Disabled Mortality Table (set back 2 years for males and set back 2 years for females) was assumed.

The actuarial assumptions used in the December 31, 2015, valuation were based on the results of an actuarial experience study for the period January 1, 2008, through December 31, 2011, adopted by PERA's Board on November 13, 2012, and an economic assumption study, adopted by PERA's Board on November 15, 2013, and January 17, 2014.

As a result of the 2016 experience analysis and the October 28, 2016, actuarial assumptions workshop, revised economic and demographic actuarial assumptions including withdrawal rates, retirement rates for early reduced and unreduced retirement, disability rates, administrative expense load, and pre- and post-retirement and disability mortality rates were adopted by PERA's Board on November 18, 2016, to more closely reflect PERA's actual experience. As the revised economic and demographic assumptions are effective as of the measurement date, December 31, 2016, these revised assumptions were reflected in the total pension liability roll-forward procedures.

Healthy mortality assumptions for active members reflect the RP-2014 White Collar Employee Mortality Table, a table specifically developed for actively working people. To allow for an appropriate margin of improved mortality prospectively, the mortality rates incorporate a 70 percent factor applied to male rates and a 55 percent factor applied to female rates.

Healthy, post-retirement mortality assumptions reflect the RP-2014 White Collar Healthy Annuitant Mortality Table, adjusted as follows:

- **Males:** Mortality improvement projected to 2018 using the MP-2015 projection scale, a 93 percent factor applied to rates for ages less than 80, a 113 percent factor applied to rates for ages 80 and above, and further adjustments for credibility.
- **Females:** Mortality improvement projected to 2020 using the MP-2015 projection scale, a 68 percent factor applied to rates for ages less than 80, a 106 percent factor applied to rates for ages 80 and above, and further adjustments for credibility.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

For disabled retirees, the mortality assumption was changed to reflect 90 percent of the RP-2014 Disabled Retiree Mortality Table.

The long-term expected return on plan assets is reviewed as part of regular experience studies prepared every four or five years for PERA. Recently, this assumption has been reviewed more frequently. The most recent analyses were outlined in presentations to PERA's Board on October 28, 2016. As a result of the October 28, 2016, actuarial assumptions workshop and the November 18, 2016 PERA Board meeting, the economic assumptions changed, effective December 31, 2016, as follows:

- Investment rate of return assumption decreased from 7.50 percent per year, compounded annually, net of investment expenses to 7.25 percent per year, compounded annually, net of investment expenses.
- Price inflation assumption decreased from 2.80 percent per year to 2.40 percent per year.
- Real rate of investment return assumption increased from 4.70 percent per year, net of investment expenses, to 4.85 percent per year, net of investment expenses.
- Wage inflation assumption decreased from 3.90 percent per year to 3.50 percent per year.

Several factors were considered in evaluating the long-term rate of return assumption for the SCHDTF, including long-term historical data, estimates inherent in current market data, and a log-normal distribution analysis in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected return, net of investment expense and inflation) were developed by the investment consultant for each major asset class.

These ranges were combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and then adding expected inflation.

As of the November 18, 2016, adoption of the current long-term expected rate of return by the PERA Board, the target allocation and best estimates of geometric real rates of return for each major asset class are summarized in the following table.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

Asset Class	Target Allocation	30 Year Expected Geometric Real Rate of Return
U.S. Equity – Large Cap	21.20%	4.30%
U.S. Equity – Small Cap	7.42%	4.80%
Non U.S. Equity – Developed	18.55%	5.20%
Non U.S. Equity – Emerging	5.83%	5.40%
Core Fixed Income	19.32%	1.20%
High Yield	1.38%	4.30%
Non U.S. Fixed Income – Developed	1.84%	.60%
Emerging Market Debt	0.46%	3.90%
Core Real Estate	8.50%	4.90%
Opportunity Fund	6.00%	3.80%
Private Equity	8.50%	6.60%
Cash	1.00%	.20%
Total	100.00%	

In setting the long-term expected rate of return, projections employed to model future returns provide a range of expected long-term returns that, including expected inflation, ultimately support a long-term expected rate of return assumption of 7.25%.

Discount rate. The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 5.26 percent. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate applied the actuarial cost method and assumptions shown above. In addition, the following methods and assumptions were used in the projection of cash flows:

- Updated economic and demographic actuarial assumptions adopted by PERA's Board on November 18, 2016.
- Total covered payroll for the initial projection year consists of the covered payroll of the active membership present on the valuation date and the covered payroll of future plan members assumed to be hired during the year. In subsequent projection years, total covered payroll was assumed to increase annually at a rate of 3.50%.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

- Employee contributions were assumed to be made at the current member contribution rate. Employee contributions for future plan members were used to reduce the estimated amount of total service costs for future plan members.
- Employer contributions were assumed to be made at rates equal to the fixed statutory rates specified in law and effective as of the measurement date, including current and estimated future AED and SAED, until the Actuarial Value Funding Ratio reaches 103%, at which point, the AED and SAED will each drop 0.50% every year until they are zero. Additionally, estimated employer contributions included reductions for the funding of the AIR and retiree health care benefits. For future plan members, employer contributions were further reduced by the estimated amount of total service costs for future plan members not financed by their member contributions.
- Employer contributions and the amount of total service costs for future plan members were based upon a process used by the plan to estimate future actuarially determined contributions assuming an analogous future plan member growth rate.
- The AIR balance was excluded from the initial fiduciary net position, as, per statute, AIR amounts cannot be used to pay benefits until transferred to either the retirement benefits reserve or the survivor benefits reserve, as appropriate. As the ad hoc post-retirement benefit increases financed by the AIR are defined to have a present value at the long-term expected rate of return on plan investments equal to the amount transferred for their future payment, AIR transfers to the fiduciary net position and the subsequent AIR benefit payments have no impact on the Single Equivalent Interest Rate (SEIR) determination process when the timing of AIR cash flows is not a factor (i.e., the plan's fiduciary net position is not projected to be depleted). When AIR cash flow timing is a factor in the SEIR determination process (i.e., the plan's fiduciary net position is projected to be depleted), AIR transfers to the fiduciary net position and the subsequent AIR benefit payments were estimated and included in the projections.
- Benefit payments and contributions were assumed to be made at the end of the month.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions (Continued)

Based on the above assumptions and methods, the projection test indicates the SCHDTF's fiduciary net position was projected to be depleted in 2041 and, as a result, the municipal bond index rate was used in the determination of the discount rate. The long-term expected rate of return of 7.25 percent on pension plan investments was applied to periods through 2041 and the municipal bond index rate, the December average of the Bond Buyer General Obligation 20-year Municipal Bond Index published weekly by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, was applied to periods on and after 2041 to develop the discount rate. For the measurement date, the municipal bond index rate was 3.86 percent, resulting in a discount rate of 5.26 percent.

As of the prior measurement date, the projection test indicated the SCHDTF's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on plan investments of 7.50 percent was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability. The discount rate determination did not use a municipal bond index rate and the discount rate was 7.50 percent, 2.24 percent higher compared to the current measurement date.

Sensitivity of the School's proportionate share of the net pension liability to changes in the discount rate. The following presents the proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rate of 5.26 percent, as well as what the proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (4.26 percent) or 1-percentage-point higher (6.26 percent) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (4.26%)	Current Discount Rate (5.26%)	1% Increase (6.26%)
Proportionate share of the net pension liability	\$15,394,182	\$12,242,207	\$9,675,038

Pension plan fiduciary net position. Detailed information about the SCHDTF's fiduciary net position is available in PERA's comprehensive annual financial report which can be obtained at www.copera.org/investments/pera-financial-reports.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 7: DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLAN (Continued)

Other Post-Employment Benefits

Health Care Trust Fund

Plan Description – The School contributes to the Health Care Trust Fund ("HCTF"), a cost-sharing multiple-employer healthcare trust administered by PERA. The HCTF benefit provides a health care premium subsidy and health care programs (known as PERACare) to PERA participating benefit recipients and their eligible beneficiaries. Title 24, Article 51, Part 12 of the C.R.S., as amended, establishes the HCTF and sets forth a framework that grants authority to the PERA Board to contract, self-insure and authorize disbursements necessary in order to carry out the purposes of the PERACare program, including the administration of health care subsidies. PERA issues a publicly available comprehensive annual financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for the HCTF. That report can be obtained at www.copera.org/investments/pera-financial-reports.

Funding Policy – The School is required to contribute at a rate of 1.02 percent of PERA-includable salary for all PERA members as set by statute. No member contributions are required. The contribution requirements for the School are established under Title 24, Article 51, Part 4 of the C.R.S., as amended. The apportionment of the contributions to the HCTF is established under Title 24, Article 51, Section 208(1)(f) of the C.R.S., as amended. For the years ending June 30, 2017, 2016, and 2015, the School's employer contributions to the HCTF were \$19,381, \$18,490, and \$14,384, respectively, equal to their required contributions for each year.

NOTE 8: COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

Claims and Judgments

The School participates in a number of federal and state programs that are fully or partially funded by grants received from other governmental units. Expenditures financed by grants are subject to audit by the appropriate grantor government. If expenditures are disallowed due to noncompliance with grant program regulations, the School may be required to reimburse the grantor government. As of June 30, 2017, significant amounts of grant expenditures have not been audited, but the School believes that disallowed expenditures, if any, based on subsequent audits will not have a material effect on the overall financial position of the School.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2017

NOTE 8: *COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES* (Continued)

Tabor Amendment

In November 1992, Colorado voters passed the Tabor Amendment to the State Constitution, which limits state and local government tax powers and imposes spending limitations. Fiscal year 1993 provides the basis for limits in future years to which may be applied allowable increases for inflation and student enrollment. Revenue received in excess of the limitations may be required to be refunded. The School believes it has complied with the Amendment. As required by the Amendment, the School has established a reserve for emergencies. At June 30, 2017, the reserve of \$102,664 was recorded as a reservation of cash and investments in the General Fund.

NOTE 9: *DEFICIT NET POSITION*

The Net Position of the government type activities is in a deficit position of \$5,407,536 due to the School including the Net Pension Liability per GASB No. 68.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

GENERAL FUND
BUDGETARY COMPARISON SCHEDULE
Year Ended June 30, 2017

	2017		VARIANCE Positive (Negative)	2016 ACTUAL
	ORIGINAL AND FINAL BUDGET	ACTUAL		
REVENUES				
Local Sources				
Per Pupil Revenue	\$ 1,763,249	\$ 2,243,611	\$ 480,362	\$ 2,155,943
Mill Levy Override	414,929	428,944	14,015	417,162
Tuition	766,500	933,355	166,855	750,288
Charges for Services	172,040	38,297	(133,743)	90,420
Donations	120,200	123,990	3,790	134,303
Other	473,123	59,756	(413,367)	92,181
Interest	80	253	173	83
State Sources				
Grants and Donations	160,929	145,408	(15,521)	131,471
TOTAL REVENUES	3,871,050	3,973,614	102,564	3,771,851
EXPENDITURES				
Salaries	2,122,538	2,155,382	(32,844)	2,038,077
Employee Benefits	543,463	549,491	(6,028)	517,326
Purchased Services	602,347	579,683	22,664	554,381
Supplies and Materials	145,580	118,733	26,847	168,874
Other	-	99	(99)	-
Debt Service				
Principal	120,417	120,000	417	115,000
Interest	336,706	337,106	(400)	341,706
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	3,871,051	3,860,494	10,557	3,735,364
NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	(1)	113,120	113,121	36,487
FUND BALANCE, Beginning	1,485,623	1,492,587	6,964	1,456,100
FUND BALANCE, Ending	\$ 1,485,622	\$ 1,605,707	\$ 120,085	\$ 1,492,587

See the accompanying independent auditors' report.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL
SCHEDULE OF THE SCHOOL'S PROPORTIONATE SHARE
SCHOOL DIVISION TRUST FUND

Years Ended December 31,

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
School's proportionate share of the Net Pension Liability	0.032%	0.034%	0.039%	0.041%
School's proportionate share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 4,096,322	\$ 4,562,049	\$ 5,932,519	\$ 12,242,207
School's covered-employee payroll	\$ 1,197,555	\$ 1,308,249	\$ 1,602,610	\$ 1,891,070
School's proportionate share of the Net Pension Liability as a percentage of its covered-employee payroll	342.1%	348.7%	370.2%	647.4%
Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability	64.1%	62.8%	59.2%	43.1%

See the accompanying independent auditors' report.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

SCHEDULE OF THE SCHOOL'S CONTRIBUTIONS
SCHOOL DIVISION TRUST FUND

Years Ended June 30,

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Statutorily required contributions	\$ 224,444	\$ 269,301	\$ 323,812	\$ 396,868
Contributions in relation to the Statutorily required contributions	<u>224,444</u>	<u>269,301</u>	<u>323,812</u>	<u>396,868</u>
Contribution deficiency (excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
School's covered-employee payroll	\$ 1,194,257	\$ 1,410,193	\$ 1,812,732	\$ 1,900,125
Contributions as a percentage of covered-employee payroll	18.79%	19.10%	17.86%	20.89%

See the accompanying independent auditors' report.

H. Free Horizon Montessori 2017 Audit

The 2017 Audit is provided to demonstrate fiscal health of Free Horizon Montessori.

I. Free Horizon Montessori Current Board Policy Manual

The Board Policy Manual was approved in May 2016. Upon approval as an Innovation School and finalization of the Governance and Operations Agreement, the Board Policy Manual will be updated to reflect the changes needed based on these developments.

FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI



Board of Directors Policy Manual

Official School Policies as adopted by the Board of Directors of Free Horizon Montessori

Free Horizon Montessori
581 Conference Place
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 231-9801 Telephone
(303) 231-9983 Facsimile

Last Revised: 03 May 2016

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1 Definitions

As used in this Policy Manual, the terms set forth below shall have the following meanings:

- “Administration” shall mean school personnel who participate in the day-to-day leadership and management of school operations, instruction, and decorum, including the Principal or designee, Assistant Principal, and Director of Finance, Facilities and Advancement).
- “Board” shall mean the Board of Directors of Free Horizon Montessori (FHM).
- “Contract” shall mean the Charter School Contract for Free Horizon Montessori in effect with the District for operation of FHM under the School’s current charter
- “Director” shall mean an individual member of the FHM Board of Directors.
- “District” shall mean the Jefferson County School District R-1, commonly referred to as “Jeffco Public Schools”, “Jefferson County School District R-1, Jefferson County Public Schools, or “Jeffco”.
- “Faculty” shall mean Colorado certified teachers.
- “FHM” or “school” shall mean Free Horizon Montessori.
- “Guiding Regulation” shall mean any legal or regulatory mandate issued.
- “Member” shall mean each parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled at the school in accordance with the FHM Bylaws.
- “Policy” shall mean the written principles directing and limiting actions in pursuit of long-term goals. Policies contained herein shall address what must be done in keeping with FHM’s contract with the Jefferson County School District.
- “Procedure” shall mean the course of action, instructions, or rules to be followed in accomplishing a task. Procedures contained herein describe how the policies must be expedited.
- “School” shall mean Free Horizon Montessori, a public charter school organized as a Colorado non-profit corporation in Jefferson County School District R-1.
- “Staff” shall mean school personnel who are not members of the Board, Administration, or Faculty.
- C.R.S. refers to Colorado law as referenced in the Colorado Revised Statutes.
- U.S.C. refers to United States law as referenced in the United States Code.

2 The School

This section provides a brief overview of Free Horizon Montessori.

2.1 Mission, Vision, and Motto

Mission Statement: Through the Montessori philosophy, we inspire every child to learn and grow as a responsible global citizen in a collaborative, peaceful, and safe environment.

Vision Statement: We seek to transform our community by developing students who pursue their full potential, understand their global responsibilities, and respect others, self, and the environment.

Motto: Inspiring lifelong learning!

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	March 12, 2007, October 2009, September 2011, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

2.2 Legal Status

Free Horizon Montessori is a Colorado charter school organized pursuant to the Colorado Charter Schools Act, Colo. Rev. Stat. §§ 22-30.5-101 et seq. Free Horizon Montessori operates pursuant to a charter granted by the Jeffco Board of Education on December 13, 2001. On December 24, 2001, Free Horizon Montessori incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act, and on October 30, 2002, the Internal Revenue Service issued a determination letter recognizing Free Horizon Montessori's tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Under the Charter Schools Act, Free Horizon Montessori is a public school within the District, and its status as a nonprofit corporation does not affect its status as a public school. However, for governance and administrative purposes, Free Horizon Montessori operates as a Colorado nonprofit corporation.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. §§22-30.5-101 Colorado Charter Schools Act Jefferson County School District Charter Contract Paragraph 8.1 C.R.S. 7-121-101 Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act

2.3 Nondiscrimination

Free Horizon Montessori affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or veteran status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity, including, but not limited to, employment or enrollment. Sexual orientation is a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgender status or perception of the individual's sexual orientation.

Free Horizon Montessori shall strive to maintain this policy and remain in compliance with Federal and State law and Jefferson County School District policies with regard to educational equity.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	March 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Policy AC Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 168 Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 621 et seq. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701 et seq. Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 1201 et. seq. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e C.R.S. 24-34-301 et seq. C.R.S. 24-34-402

2.4 Articles of Incorporation

The Free Horizon Montessori Articles of Incorporation shall guide the structure and governance of FHM and are incorporated herein by reference.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 7-122-101:107 Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. §§22-30.5-101 Colorado Charter Schools Act

2.5 Bylaws

The Free Horizon Montessori Bylaws shall guide the structure and governance of FHM and are incorporated herein by reference. Definitions and terminology used herein are to be interpreted as consistent with the Bylaws. If any conflicts in terminology between the Bylaws and the policies are identified, the Board of Directors shall be responsible for resolving them.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 7-122-101:107 Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. §§22-30.5-101 Colorado Charter Schools Act

2.6 Precedence

While the Board of Directors and the Governance Committee work diligently to ensure this Policy Manual is in line with the identified guiding authorities and other Free Horizon Montessori documents, if a conflict should arise, the following order of precedence shall be followed:

1. Federal and State law and constitution
2. Articles of Incorporation
3. FHM Bylaws
4. Charter School Contract with the District
5. Board of Directors Policy Manual
6. FHM Employee Manual
7. FHM Student and Parent Handbook

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3 The Board of Directors

The following sections describe the policies associated with the Board of Directors and its operations.

3.1 Purpose and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the academic program of Free Horizon Montessori is successful, that FHM is faithful to the terms of its charter contract, and that FHM is a viable organization.

The responsibilities of the Board are to:

- Determine and promote the mission of FHM.
 - Create and periodically review the mission statement:
 - Serves as a guide to organizational planning, Board and staff decision-making, volunteer initiatives, and setting priorities among competing demands for scarce resources.
 - Shall be used to assess all activities, programs, and services to ensure that FHM endeavors do not drift away from its original purpose.
 - Understand and support the mission of FHM.
 - Board members are encouraged to give an annual financial contribution and support capital campaigns at the level that is personally meaningful.
- Select, support, and review the performance of the Principal.
 - When needed, undertake a search process and hire a Principal
 - Provide frequent and constructive feedback to the Principal, keeping lines of communication open.
 - Maintain clear roles and responsibilities between the Board and the Administration.
 - Publicly acknowledge accomplishments.
 - Provide an annual written performance review.
- Ensure effective organizational planning through the development and annual review of a Strategic plan.
 - Approve the strategic plan annually that includes concrete, measurable goals consistent with the charter contract.
 - Periodically review progress in achieving the outcomes and goals
- Manage resources effectively.
 - Approve the annual budget.

- Monitor budget implementation through periodic financial reports.
- Approve personnel compensation philosophy, strategies and goals.
- Provide for an annual independent audit of FHM and the FHM Foundation.
- Ensure adequate insurance is in force to cover students, employees, visitors, the Board, and the assets of the school.
- Enhance FHM’s public standing.
 - Promote and support the Montessori philosophy of the school.
 - Serve as ambassadors and advocates of FHM.
 - As appropriate, participate in or attend meetings with the Jefferson County School District, Colorado League of Charter Schools, and Colorado Department of Education.
 - Investigate promotional and partnership opportunities.
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.
 - Establish policies to guide FHM Directors.
 - Adhere to the provisions of the FHM Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.
 - Adhere to local, state and federal laws and regulations that apply to the school.
 - Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local government regulations.
 - Ensure FHM is compliant with all terms and conditions of its charter contract.
 - Execute all legal documents obligating FHM resources.
- Recruit and orient new Directors and assess Board performance.
 - Define Director needs in terms of skill, experience and diversity.
 - Review credentials of and recruit prospective nominees.
 - Provide for new Director orientation.
 - Conduct an annual evaluation of the full Board of Directors and individual Directors.
- Ensure Free Horizon is operating in a manner that is responsive to both District requirements and Members of Free Horizon
 - Operate with transparency, according to Colorado and Sunshine and Open Records laws
 - Respond to complaints regarding curriculum in a manner established in Free Horizon Policy Manual

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	November 2012

Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract 3.3 and 3.4 FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation
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3.2 Code of Conduct

All members of the Board of Directors must be determined not to pose any known risk to the safety of children or risk to the financial standing of the school. Background checks of all people applying to serve on the Board of Directors are executed through standard school practices by the school's Human Resources representative and reviewed by the President of the Board of Directors. Candidate's qualification based on this background check is then communicated by Human Resources to the Governance Committee prior to being recommended for the Board of Directors. The expense of the background check will be paid by the potential Board member, unless they cannot afford it.

Each Director shall, prior to commencing their duties, agree that as a condition of their service, they will:

- Behave in an ethical, professional, and lawful manner, and therefore:
 - Make proper use of authority and observe appropriate decorum.
 - Be guided by the FHM mission.
- Observe the role of the Board in governance and policy development and respect the role of administration in day-to-day management of the school and, therefore not purport personally to direct any staff member or student at the school, or to communicate, outside of official Board processes, judgments on the administration's or any teacher's performance.
- Respect the integrity of the Board process, and therefore:
 - Listen, speak honestly, and share all relevant information with other Directors in a courteous manner.
 - Respect the opinions of others.
 - Address issues, not personalities, and thus not make disparaging remarks, in or out of meetings, about other Directors, administrators, teachers, or FHM.
 - Once a vote has been taken, accept and respect the decision of the group and support its implementation (presumption of assent).
 - Except when carrying out delegated duties, not purport to conduct FHM business outside of Board meetings.
 - Except as otherwise explicitly authorized, not attempt to speak for FHM, or represent FHM, provided that the Board President may represent the Board in appropriate

meetings and functions and communicate the results of such meetings to the Board as a whole.

- Act for the benefit of the school, and therefore:
 - Not use a Board position for the economic advantage of self, relatives, friends, or for any business in which he or she has an interest.
 - Not use a Board position to benefit any organization other than FHM.
 - Not anticipate any quid pro quo between staff and administration associated with membership on the Board of Directors.
 - Disclose any conflict of interest in accordance with Board policy; in-keeping with the Contract's requirements for annual conflict of interest disclosure, each Board member shall complete the Conflict of Interest form no later than the Board's September regular meeting¹.
- Respect confidentiality and protect and maintain the proper confidences of FHM, and therefore:
 - Under no circumstances reveal any family or student confidential information including family addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or other contact information.
 - Under no circumstances disclose to others properly confidential deliberations of the Board.
- Promptly notify the Board of any change that may affect eligibility to serve or willingness or ability to abide by the Board Code of Conduct.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	May 2015; October 2015; April 2016; May 2016
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Contract with District, Section 2.2.D.vii

3.3 Composition

The Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors is optimally comprised of eight members. The Principal shall serve as an Ex-Officio member. The other seven members shall be voting members.

The Director of Finance, Facility and Advancement will join Board of Directors meetings to provide monthly updates.

¹ Attachment 5 of the Contract: Free Horizon Montessori Board Member Certification Form.

Two staff liaisons will join Board of Directors meetings to provide monthly updates, as in keeping with Communications and Conflict Resolution policies. The liaisons are to be selected by the staff in accordance with the Employee Manual. It is highly desired that Montessori certification and lead teacher be representative of the liaisons.

Directors serve a 3 - year term unless they are filling a vacancy and serving out the predecessor's remaining term or as otherwise determined by the Board. In accordance with the Bylaws, the Board shall elect four (4) officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) annually. The Board shall then appoint the remaining Directors at Large to serve on Board committees or fill other roles as determined by the Board.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009; September 2010; April 2015; April 2016
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation

3.4 Board Positions

This section outlines qualifications and responsibilities of specific Board of Director positions described in this Policy Manual.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.1 Officers

To be eligible to serve as an officer of the Board (President, Vice President, Treasurer or Secretary), an individual must have served on the Board for one year or have at least one year of Board governance experience. They must have attended a minimum of 8 hours of Charter School Board Governance Training within the past two years. They must have a track record of collaborative leadership at the school, working with fellow Directors and leadership teams to fulfill the obligations of the Board. They must be familiar with the Charter Contract and the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Administration. Officers must agree that they may not serve in additional roles within the school that will, by the nature of that alternate role, require time that will detract from completion of their primary responsibilities to the Board. Such a detracting role includes but is not limited to being a Team Leader for any fundraising or classroom special event or serving as a Board liaison to a committee.

Adopted:	Inception
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Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.1.1 President

The President is the chief executive officer of Free Horizon Montessori. The President represents FHM subject to the instructions of the Board of Directors. The President's responsibilities are to:

- Ensure the Board reviews and updates the Strategic Plan annually.
- Coordinate and deliver Principal Evaluation
- Act as primary Principal contact for the Board of Directors.
- Ensure a financial vision is maintained with a 3 to 5 year plan.
- Ensure the Board reviews annual and long-term financial status periodically.
- Act as point of contact for conflicts that have exhausted the chain-of-command of the school and have adhered to the Conflict Resolution Policy in Section 15 of this manual.
- Ensure all Directors fulfill their obligations.
- Preside over and run all meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Execute all legally binding documents on behalf of FHM.
- Provide support at key committee meetings.
- Present to the internal and external community.
- Attend community events.
- Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers.
- Perform all other duties incident to the office of President of the Board of Directors and may perform other duties as requested by the Board and agreed to by the President.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2011, November 2012, December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.1.2 Vice President

The Vice President shall assist the President and perform such duties that may be assigned by the Board of Directors. Specific responsibilities are to:

- Serve in the absence or disability of and at the direction of the President. Note that this includes the period of time between annual elections and officer elections at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board if the President is an outgoing Director.
- Serve as the Board liaison to the external community, establishing relations by marketing of the school to outside organizations including representing the school to businesses and community organizations.
- Actively seek out and foster strategic alliances with other schools and the Colorado League of Charter Schools.
- Represent Free Horizon Montessori and attend Board meetings for other charter schools, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, and the Jefferson County School District.
- Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers.
- Monitor other district, education, and charter school websites and provide regular reports to the Board regarding activities and events that affect FHM.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2010, December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.1.3 Secretary

The Secretary's responsibilities are to:

- Serve in the absence or disability of, and at the direction of the President and the Vice President. Note that this includes the period of time between annual elections and officer elections at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board if the President and Vice President are both outgoing Directors.
- Serve as point of contact for agenda development and Board of Director packet assembly and distribution.
- Provide appropriate notice for all meetings of the Board in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings law.
- Produce minutes of all meetings of the Board.

- Provide minutes of the Board to the Jeffco School District quarterly.
- Maintain Board of Directors annual calendar.
- Serve as custodian of the corporate records, including but not limited to the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Policy Manual, meeting minutes, contracts and charter renewal applications.
- Maintain at the school a current listing of all Directors' names, addresses, contact information, terms and manners of election, and their annual letters of commitment.
- Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers.
- Perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be requested by the Board.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2010, December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.1.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer is the principal financial officer of Free Horizon Montessori. The Treasurer represents FHM subject to the instructions of the Board of Directors. Specific responsibilities are to:

- Provide oversight of all FHM's funds, securities, evidences of indebtedness and other personal property.
- Review financial status indicators with the Finance Committee periodically, including but not limited to, account balance(s), year-to-date budget to actual comparisons and end-of-year projections.
- Present the financial position of FHM and financial reports to the Board no less than quarterly or as requested by the Board.
- Ensure the development and presentation of the annual budget to the Board for approval prior to submission to the Jefferson County School District.
- Ensure the development and presentation of the long-term budget projections (3 to 10 year budgets) periodically and as requested by the Board.
- Ensure an external audit is conducted annually and presented to the Board.
- Provide oversight for any audit of FHM.

- Oversee FHM’s compliance with reporting requirements of Colorado’s Public School Financial Transparency Act.
- Serve on the Finance Committee.
- Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers.
- Perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time that may be requested by the Board.
- Serve in the absence or disability of, and at the direction of the President, the Vice President and the Secretary. Note that this includes the period of time between annual elections and officer elections at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board if the President, Vice President, and Secretary are all outgoing Directors.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2010, December 2013, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors C.R.S. 22-44 et seq.

3.4.2 Directors

Each Director that is not an Officer shall be a Director at Large and aligned with one of the following based on their skills and interests expressed.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.2.1 Backup to the Secretary

The Backup to the Secretary shall assist in compiling and disseminating the Board packet, noticing the meetings, preparing meeting minutes, and posting to the website and shall assist with organization and maintenance of Board documents. Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers. This position may serve in the absence or disability of, and at the direction of the Secretary. Desired experience/skills include proficiency with MS Office and Adobe software, strong organizational skills, detail orientation, and excellent written communication skills.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	December 2013

Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors
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3.4.2.2 Backup to the Treasurer and Board Liaison to the Finance Committee

The Backup to the Treasurer serves as Chair of the Finance Committee, ensuring the Board expectations of the committee are met. The Backup to the Treasurer also shall assist in preparing, reviewing and presenting financial status reports to the Board. Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers. This position may serve in the absence or disability of, and at the direction of the Treasurer. Desired experience/skills include creation and management of budgets, accounting, asset management; proficiency in Excel, detail orientation, and strong organizational and interpersonal communication skills.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.2.3 Board Liaison to the Facility Committee (maximum two Directors)

The Board Liaison to the Facility Committee shall represent that the Board's expectations of the Committee are met and the activities of the Committee are in the purview of the strategic plan. The Board Liaison(s) to the Facility Committee shall maintain a high level of knowledge of the Facilities Master Plan and Board Policy Manual and stay current with best practices for Charter School facilities management. Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers. Desired experience/skills include asset management, construction management, government or nonprofit management, capital campaign work. Facilities Committee members will ideally have general understanding and basic knowledge of school operations and the interplay school leadership stakeholders, as well as knowledge of Free Horizon Montessori's strategic planning goals and objectives.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Repealed:	December 2010
Reinstated	October 2015
Guiding Authority	Board of Directors

3.4.2.4 Board Liaison to the Governance Committee (maximum two Directors)

The Board Liaison(s) to the Governance Committee shall represent that the Board's expectations of the Committee are met and the activities of the Committee are in the purview of the strategic plan. The

Board Liaison(s) to the Governance Committee shall maintain a high level of knowledge of the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and Board Policy Manual and stay current with best practices for Charter School governance. Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers. Desired experience/skills include policy writing, organizational structure, and/or governance; excellent organizational; and interpersonal and written communication skills.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	November 2012, December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors

3.4.2.5 Board Liaison to the School Accountability Committee

The Board Liaison to the School Accountability Committee shall represent that the Board's expectations of the Committee are met and the activities of the Committee are in the purview of the strategic plan. The Board Liaison to the School Accountability Committee shall maintain a high level of knowledge of Colorado School Accountability statutes (C.R.S. 22-11-401 et seq.) and school accountability plans (i.e., performance plans, improvement plans, priority improvement plans, and turnaround plans). Document procedures, tool and methods of the position and orient successor volunteers. Desired experience/skills include survey preparation, data interpretation and presentation, and interpersonal and written communication skills.

Adopted:	November 2012
Revised:	December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Articles of Incorporation Board of Directors C.R.S. 22-11-401 et seq.

3.5 Elections

This section outlines the election requirements for different Board positions.

3.5.1 Staff Liaison

Two staff liaisons will join Board of Directors meetings to provide monthly updates, as in keeping with school Communications and Conflict Resolution policies. The liaisons are to be selected by the staff and serve terms in accordance with the current FHM Employee Manual. It is highly desired that Montessori certification and lead teacher be representative of the liaisons.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Repealed:	December 2010
Reinstated:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3.5.2 Directors

The Governance Committee shall organize and administer the election of Directors to the Free Horizon Montessori Board. The Governance Committee may recruit and recommend candidates to the Board and the FHM community members. In accordance with the Bylaws, the Governance Committee does not have the authority to fill Board vacancies. No Board candidate, spouse of a Board candidate, or Director running for re-election, shall concurrently be a member of the Governance Committee.

Candidacy shall be by self-nomination through submission of a letter of interest and an abbreviated resume to the Governance Committee by the posted deadline. Candidates may not be employed by FHM. The Governance Committee may extend this deadline if an insufficient number of candidates are nominated by this date.

The Governance Committee shall maintain and update as necessary the process for collecting the information from potential candidates to support the election process and distributing information to the FHM community members to facilitate the election itself. Candidates should attend the Annual Meeting and make themselves available to respond to inquiries of FHM community members, either in person, electronically or both.

Each FHM community member, faculty and staff will be accorded a maximum of one vote per available Board member position. If a person falls into more than one category of voter eligibility, he/she will be allowed a maximum of one vote. Should the eligibility of any voter wishing to vote be questioned, the Governance Committee shall determine the voter's eligibility in accordance with these rules and make the appropriate recommendation to the Board. The Board shall make the final decision on voter eligibility.

All election ballots shall be secret unless all candidates agree to forego the privilege. Each ballot or other approved voting mechanism, including electronic ballot, shall designate all candidates in alphabetical order and shall clearly state the number of Directors to be elected. The voting process shall assure that each FHM community member, faculty and staff may cast one ballot. No votes shall be counted from any ballot containing more votes than available seats. FHM community members, faculty and staff may cast their vote at designated times prior to or at the Annual Meeting or at the election meeting. Electronic voting may be incorporated as long as it is not the only method of voting, ensures adherence to voting policies via the FHM Policy Manual and By Laws and does not limit community member participation. Proxy voting is prohibited.

Upon closing of the election, the Governance Committee shall tally the votes from the ballots cast at the Annual Meeting, from the absentee ballots, and electronic ballots, with results provided before conclusion of the Annual Meeting. The candidates receiving the most votes shall be elected as Directors. In the event of a tie vote for a position, a second ballot will be cast for that position at the Annual Meeting. Results must be verifiable. Ballots and vote results shall be held in accordance with the Document Retention policy and available for inspection.

The chairperson of the Governance Committee shall announce the election results during the Annual Meeting and publish the election results in the next issued school newsletter or by other medium as is the custom for communications to members. Newly elected Directors shall sign the “Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors Commitment Letter” after election results are announced. Newly elected Directors shall be expected to attend the next scheduled Board meeting, at which time the three (3) year term shall begin. Each Director shall sign the “Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors Commitment Letter” and Conflict of Interest Statement annually. The terms of outgoing Directors expire at the end of the Annual meeting. Board members shall also follow all training requirements as outlined by the District and school as outlined in Free Horizon Policy Manual 3.15.3.2.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, September 2010, September 2011, April 2016
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 7-127-101:301 Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, Member meetings and voting C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law FHM Bylaws Jefferson County School District Charter Contract 3.2

3.6 Officer Selection

The officers of the Board of Directors shall be elected or appointed by the Directors at each regularly scheduled May Board of Directors meeting or at any other regular or special meeting should the need arise. Board officers serve a one (1) year term and may be re-elected.

All Directors interested in holding office may put in writing their intent to be considered for such office, with that written intent to be included in the Board packet distributed prior to the meeting held for such purpose. However, failure to submit a statement of interest will not prohibit any person from being nominated. Nominations for officers will be taken in the following order: (1) President, (2) Vice President, (3) Secretary, and (4) Treasurer. All nominations for a particular office shall be taken at one time and, upon motion and with majority approval, the nominations for such office will be closed. Following the close of nominations for a particular office, a discussion period will be allowed and then an open vote taken on each candidate in the order in which the candidates were nominated. The first candidate to win a majority of votes is awarded the office. In the event of a tie, voting shall repeat until a majority vote is achieved.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, September 2010
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws Article IV

3.7 Vacancies

In the event a Director resigns, is removed, or for any other reason is unable to complete the term of service, the President of the Board shall declare a vacancy.

The Governance Committee shall recruit and accept letters of interest and resumes from all eligible candidates interested in being appointed to the Board to fill the remaining term of the Director. The Governance Committee will submit a copy of the letter of interest from each Board candidate and a letter from the Governance Committee with an assessment on the candidates' skills and potential contributions to the Board for inclusion in the Board packets for the Board meeting where potential appointment of a Director will occur. A special meeting shall be called or a special notice of the vote shall be posted for the next regular Board meeting. The Board shall determine whether to select from the candidate(s) presented and vote to fill the vacancy for the remaining term of the former Director. The appointed Director shall take the former Director's seat on the Board to serve the balance of the former Director's term. Newly appointed Directors shall sign the "Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors Commitment Letter" upon appointment and on each anniversary date of the term.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws Section 4.4

3.8 Decision Making

Two principles underlie all decisions made by the Board, Administration, faculty, and staff:

- FHM's charter belongs to its members; and
- All actions shall fall within the parameters and uphold the principles of the mission statement.

Accordingly, in making any decision, the Board, Administration, faculty, and staff shall consider the decision in the context of FHM's mission statement and from the members' perspective, always keeping in mind that parents should have a meaningful voice in their child's education. This must be done while operating under policies that provide for governance of the operation of the School in a manner consistent with FHM's contract with the District.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract 3.1 FHM Bylaws

3.9 Policy Making

The Board shall be solely responsible for adopting, revising, and repealing policies for Free Horizon Montessori. Policy action by the Board of Directors shall be accomplished as set forth in the Bylaws and as described below.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws

3.9.1 Making Policy Changes

Only a Director may motion the Board to adopt, revise, or repeal a FHM policy (“policy change”). Recommendations for a policy change may be made to the Board by any Director; member of the Administration, faculty, or staff; or member by submitting the recommendation to any Director. Policy suggestions not in compliance with the nondiscrimination policies outlined within this Policy Manual will not be considered. Information required for the Board to consider the policy change includes:

- The proposed policy to be changed, the changed text somehow easily identifiable to the reader, and any necessary summary or narrative provided in writing to any Director.
- The title, sequence number, text, and, if a new section, the proposed placement of the policy within the Policy Manual.
- Policies to be repealed need only reference the policy to be repealed by title and sequence number along with a revised table of contents.

If the change is being recommended by a Director, that Director shall motion for the review and debate at the regular or special meeting of the Board. The proponent Director shall have the first opportunity for discussion and may have other persons comment on the policy change prior to debate.

Following debate and any amendments to the policy change, the Board shall vote on its approval on first reading. If the policy change is approved on first reading, it shall be placed in the minutes of the meeting, as amended, and referred for second reading at the next meeting of the Board. If the policy change is not approved on first reading, the matter shall not be considered again unless a new proposed policy change is submitted in accordance with this Policy for first reading at a future Board meeting.

No amendment to the policy change, as it was approved on first reading, shall be adopted on second reading unless the amendment receives a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Directors present at the meeting. If the policy change is approved on second reading, it shall become the policy of FHM effective immediately or as specified upon approval.

Upon approval of new and revised policies, updates shall be made to this Policy Manual in the appropriate section with a notation of the date of adoption and/or revision. Upon approval of a repealed policy, the appropriate text shall be stricken from this Policy Manual leaving only the word “Repealed” followed by the original section title and the dates of adoption, revision, and repeal. As necessary, the table of contents shall also be updated any time changes are made to this Policy Manual.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws

3.9.2 Emergency Policy Changes

Upon a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Directors present at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose, an emergency may be declared for purposes of establishing a policy or approving a policy change. If an emergency is declared, a policy change may be approved on first reading regardless of whether the policy change was submitted in writing to the Directors prior to the meeting.

Adopted:	November 9, 2000
Revised:	August 11, 2004, October 2009
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws Jefferson County School District Charter Contract 5.2.2

3.9.3 Board Procedures

This Policy Manual outlines the policies, or the principles, to be used in FHM operations and governance. As needed for clarity, consistency or ease of execution, the detailed process or procedure to ensure proper execution of the policy will be documented and included in or referenced from the appropriate section or sections of this Policy Manual. The Board of Directors may delegate the procedure to a committee of the Board. All proposed procedures shall be presented to the Board of Directors to determine whether the proposed Procedure is properly delegated to the respective committee, or whether it is more appropriate for inclusion in the Policy Manual in accordance with Section 3.9.1. Referenced procedures will be maintained by the respective committees of the Board.

Adopted:	September 2010
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3.10 Review of Administrative Policies

Policies determined to be administrative in nature need not be reviewed or approved by the Board in advance of issuance except as required by law. When, in the opinion of the Principal, there is a potential for strong member, student, faculty, or staff reaction, the policy or regulation should be brought to the attention of the Board in advance.

As appropriate, administrative policies should reference existing Board of Director policies.

The Board reserves the right to review administrative policies at its discretion. However, the Board shall not substitute its judgment for that of the Principal and shall require the Principal to revise or withdraw any administrative policies proposed or issued only when, in the Board's judgment, such policies are inconsistent with the Board's policies, District's policies, or applicable law.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws

3.11 Self-Evaluation

The Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors believes that the efficiency and performance of the Board itself directly affects the efficiency and performance of the school as a whole. Therefore, the Board will conduct an annual evaluation of its performance and progress on the strategic plan.

The following guidelines will apply to the Board self-evaluation:

- The evaluation shall be a positive, constructive process, aimed at improvement rather than criticism.
- The evaluation shall be conducted using a formal written evaluation tool which shall include progress measures on the strategic plan.
- Board members shall evaluate the Board as a whole and not individuals on the Board.

Board self-evaluation forms shall be distributed in May of each year. The Board may discuss the self-evaluation at regular summer meeting. It is required for all current Directors to participate. The Board may seek direct input from former Directors who have resigned during the year being evaluated.

The Board self-evaluation discussion shall not be limited to those items that appear on the form. Free discussion and informal comments among Directors are valuable. Specific suggestions for improvement are encouraged.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3.12 Conflict of Interest

It is the intent of this policy to protect public trust placed in the Board of Directors of Free Horizon Montessori. For the purpose of this policy, a “conflict of interest” is any matter in which a Board member has any direct or indirect personal or monetary interest that is definite and demonstrable. (Also see Section 3.2, Code of Conduct.)

In accordance with the Bylaws, Board members serve without salary or other compensation, but may be reimbursed for any necessary expenses incurred by them in performing their duties as Directors.

Directors shall avoid any conflict of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest in the performance of their duties as a Director. The Board must not engage in the conduct of private business or personal services between any Director and Free Horizon Montessori, except as specifically approved in accordance with the procedures set forth herein, to assure openness, competitive opportunity, and equal access to information.

A Director who has a personal or private interest in a matter proposed or pending before the Board shall promptly and fully disclose their conflict of interest to the Board prior to its acting on such contract or

transaction. Such disclosure shall include all relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction, which might reasonably be construed to be adverse to Free Horizon Montessori's interest. For the purpose of this section, a person shall be deemed to have an "interest" in a contract or other transaction if he or she is the party (or one of the parties) contracting or dealing with Free Horizon Montessori, is a relative of such party, or is a director, trustee or officer of, or has a significant personal, financial, or influential interest in the entity contracting or dealing with the school. Following such disclosure, the Board may decide whether the interested Director may vote on, or be present during the discussion or deliberations with respect to, such contract or transaction. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disclosure made, the vote thereon and, the abstention from voting and participation. The Board shall not approve any matter in which a Director has an interest unless it is fair to Free Horizon Montessori and a majority of the disinterested Directors approve the transaction.

Directors shall not use their positions on the Board to influence programmatic priorities, employment or enrollment opportunities with Free Horizon Montessori for themselves, family members, friends, or associates.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, C.R.S. 7-128-501 Conflicting Interest Transactions

3.13 Resignation and Removal of Directors

This section outlines situations where Directors leave their terms before their term expires.

3.13.1 Resignation

In accordance with the Bylaws, any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein; and unless specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

A Director is also deemed to have resigned under the following circumstances:

- Absence from two consecutive Board meetings without prior notification to the Board President.
- If the Director is found to have disclosed confidential information.
- If the Director is found to have violated one of the Jefferson County "Five Zero Tolerance Policies" regarding:
 - Nondiscrimination
 - Failure to Report Child Abuse
 - Harassment

- Drug Free Workplace
- Violence in the Workplace

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. 7-128-108 Removal of Directors Jefferson County School District AC, Unlawful Discrimination Jefferson County School District GBAA, Harassment in the Work Place Jefferson County School District JBB, Harassment of Students Jefferson County School District GBEC, Drug Free Work Place Jefferson County School District AC, Unlawful Discrimination Jefferson County School District GBEC, Violence in the Work Place

3.13.2 Removal

In accordance with the Bylaws, any Director may be removed by the Board of Directors if, in its judgment, the school would be served thereby. Removal of a Director must be reported to the District for a crime punishable as a felony or related to misappropriation of funds or theft.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract 2.2.B.ii.c FHM Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. 7-128-108 Removal of Directors Jefferson County School District AC, Unlawful Discrimination Jefferson County School District GBAA, Harassment in the Work Place Jefferson County School District JBB, Harassment of Students Jefferson County School District GBEC, Drug Free Work Place Jefferson County School District AC, Unlawful Discrimination Jefferson County School District GBEC, Violence in the Work Place

3.14 Meetings

This section outlines the types of meetings conducted by the Board of Directors.

3.14.1 General

The Board serves at the pleasure of, and represents, the members. Therefore, all business conducted in Board meetings is public and subject to the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 25-6-402). Accordingly,

all members of the school community are cordially invited to attend all meetings of the Board. A time for public comment shall be a part of every regular Board meeting.

All meetings of the Board shall be posted in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 25-6-402). Members shall be given no less than 24 hours' notice of any Board meeting.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. 7-127-101 Annual & Regular Meetings C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.14.2 Regular Meetings

A schedule of planned Regular Meetings shall be published annually, at the beginning of the school year.

The President is responsible for establishing Board meeting agendas. Any Director wishing to put an item on the agenda must submit the item, with supporting documentation, to the President in the time frame established by the President.

Board packets shall be distributed no later than three business days before the regularly scheduled Board meeting. Board packet materials that are not confidential or work product (as defined in C.R.S. 24-72-202 (6.5)) may be made available during the Board meeting for audience members.

Board meetings are conducted to carry on the business of the school in general accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. Voting may occur only when a quorum, defined as a majority of voting Board members, is in attendance.

The Principal and Staff Liaison are expected to attend all FHM Board meetings.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. 7-127-101 Annual & Regular Meetings C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.14.3 Special Meetings

Special meetings of Board of Directors may be called at the request of the President or any two Directors. All meetings of the Board shall be posted and conducted in accordance with the Colorado

Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 24-6-402, also reference C.R.S. 22-32-108(4)). Members shall be given no less than 24 hours' notice of any Board meeting.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Bylaws C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.14.4 Annual Meetings

As required by Article 4 of the Bylaws, there shall be at least one Annual Meeting of the members. The Annual Meeting shall be held in the spring of each year. The agenda for the Annual Meeting may include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- Presentation by the Board of Directors of accomplishments in the areas of Board annual goals, Strategic Improvement Plans, Accountability Report, and Fundraising
- Recognition of contributions and/or contributing members.
- General elections to the Board of Directors

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Guiding Authority:	Bylaws Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act C.R.S. 7-127-101 Annual & Regular Meetings C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.14.5 Executive Session

Meetings are closed to the public only when the Board is meeting in executive session. An executive session may be called only to discuss matters not appropriate for public discussion pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(III), et seq. An executive session may be called only upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of a quorum of Directors present. The Board may take no formal action in executive session. Executive sessions are tape recorded, and the tapes are kept in the Board's possession for 90 days and then destroyed in accordance with C.R.S. 24-6-402(III)(d.5)(I)(A) and 24-6-402(III)(E)(ii).

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 24-6-402, 3(a) Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.14.6 Public Participation at Board Meetings

Because Board meetings are conducted in general accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and convene with a planned agenda, they are not held for the purpose of public debate or discussion. Accordingly,

Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors Policy Manual

public participation will be welcome according to Robert's Rules of Order so that the Board may expedite the agenda within a reasonable time.

A public comment period will be provided at each regular meeting of the Board. If public comment is provided in writing to the Board of Directors, it will be distributed to Directors in the Board meeting materials and will not be read in the meeting unless specifically requested. Written comments provided anonymously will not be distributed and will be discarded without review or deliberation.

Persons who wish to make requests, presentations, or proposals to the Board should direct any inquiry to the Principal or the President of the Board, who shall respond according to the following:

- The person shall provide written information to the Principal or the Board President at least two weeks prior to the regular meeting of the Board. If presented to the Principal less than two weeks prior to the upcoming regular meeting of the Board, the Principal shall decide whether to make a special request of the President to include the item in the upcoming regular Board meeting or to wait until the next month's regular Board meeting.
- Written information directly from the person shall be placed in the Board packet distributed to Directors prior to the regular meeting. If the person so requests and the President of the Board agrees, the item shall be placed on the agenda for Board attention. Note that seeking to add issues to the agenda via the Board of Director President cannot circumvent the Conflict Resolution Policy.
- If the person requests the Board take a particular action, the specific action being requested should be in the written document submitted to the Board.
- If so requested by any Director, the person may present additional information or provide clarification when the agenda item is discussed.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2011, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.15 Committees

This section outlines recognized committees that support the Board of Directors.

3.15.1 Advisory Committees

In accordance with the Bylaws, the Board may commission advisory committees at such times and for such purposes as the Board may deem necessary. Advisory committees are intended to fulfill a specific short term objective and will be dissolved upon accomplishing that charge. An advisory committee may be formed at the discretion of the Board with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

At least one Director shall serve on each advisory committee, but need not serve as the chairperson of the committee. The Director representative shall be responsible for ensuring the Advisory Committee Plan is presented to the Board for approval in a Board meeting.

An advisory committee may not proceed in conducting their charge until such time as the Board has approved the Advisory Committee Plan, which shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- The objective of the advisory committee.
- The authority of the advisory committee.
- The composition of the advisory committee.
- The selection and recruitment plan for advisory committee members.
- The advisory committee's reporting requirements to the Board of Directors.
- The anticipated term of the advisory committee.
- The dissolution plan for the advisory committee.

All meetings of advisory committees shall be posted in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 25-6-402). Members shall be given no less than 24 hours' notice of any advisory committee meeting. Minutes of advisory committee meetings must be taken and promptly recorded.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, September 2011
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.15.2 Standing Committees

Through a resolution adopted by the Board, the Board may designate from among its members one or more standing committees of the Board, each of which, to the extent provided in the resolution, shall have all the authority of the Board, except that no such committee shall have the authority to:

- Fill vacancies of the Board;
- Amend the Bylaws; or
- Approve a plan of merger.

Standing committees shall consider, advise upon, and make recommendations to the Board with respect to policies of Free Horizon Montessori or to pursue goals, goods, or services for FHM in accordance with the mission statement.

At least one Director shall serve on each standing committee, but need not serve as the chairperson of the committee. Additional members or members to fill vacancies may be appointed at any regular or special meeting of the Board.

Each standing committee shall appoint its own chairperson and officers, as necessary, unless the Board expressly establishes such positions. The assigned Director shall have the rights and responsibilities to make decisions on behalf of the Board in meeting the goals of the committee. However, decision-making powers shall not extend to the committee, unless expressly granted by the Board.

All meetings of standing committees shall be posted in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (C.R.S. 25-6-402). Members shall be given no less than 24 hours' notice of any standing committee meeting. Minutes of standing committee meetings must be taken and promptly recorded.

Standing committees may be dissolved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board if the group is not functioning as intended or otherwise requires restructuring to be performing the intended services.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2011
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

3.15.3 Standing Committee Descriptions

The following standing committees have been established for the Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors.

3.15.3.1 School Accountability Committee

The School Accountability Committee (SAC), including elements of the membership and structure, is a statutory requirement and shall be established and function in accordance with Colorado Law C.R.S. 22-11-401, et seq. The general purpose of the Committee is to serve in an advisory role to the Principal. The Principal is responsible for implementing the accountability process in the school.

Pursuant to the referenced law, the purpose and responsibilities of the School Accountability Committee include:

- Identify resources required to implement strategies and provide written recommendations to the Principal and the Board of Directors regarding budgetary needs that are congruent with the annual academic achievement plans and the FHM Strategic Plan. (C.R.S. 22-11-402(1)(a)).
- Advise the Principal and the Board of Directors concerning the preparation of a school performance plan, improvement plan, priority improvement plan or a turnaround plan if any are required pursuant to C.R.S. 22-11-210, and to submit recommendations to the Principal and the Board of Directors, if applicable, concerning the contents of the applicable plan. (C.R.S. 22-11-402(1)(b&c))

- Meet at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the public school's performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is applicable, or other progress pertinent to the FHM's accreditation contract with the Jefferson County School District. (C.R.S. 22-11-402(1)(d))

Additionally, the Board of Directors requires this Committee to:

- Be familiar with the Colorado "Education Accountability Act of 2009" (C.R.S. 22-11-101 et seq.) and advise the Board on opportunities and activities related thereto.
- Advise the Principal in developing a plan to improve educational achievement, maximize graduation rates, and support school safety and a welcoming environment, aligned with the FHM strategic plan and state statute.
- Develop and implement community surveys annually, and to compile and analyze survey results and present to the community at the Annual Meeting.
- Collaborate with school leadership teams.
- Provide a report to the Board of Directors at least every quarter.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-11-401(1), the School Accountability Committee shall be comprised of the following members, with the number of parent members exceeding the number of faculty members:

- Principal or his/her designee (1 person).
- Three (3) faculty members, ideally representing the Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School departments. In accordance with the statute, at least one (1) faculty member must be a teacher.
- Three (3) parents or legal guardians of students at the school. The three parent members shall respectively represent each grade-level program, to the extent possible.
- Board Liaison to the School Accountability Committee (1 person).
- At least one (1) parent member of an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school. This organization is commonly known as the Community Support Network.
- At least one (1) person from the larger community. This person need not be a parent or guardian of an enrolled student.

Pursuant to 22-11-401(1)(b), members of the School Accountability Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors from a list of volunteers. The Board of Directors shall, to the extent practicable, ensure the appointments to the School Accountability Committee reflect the student populations that are significantly represented within Free Horizon Montessori. If, after making good-faith efforts, an

insufficient number of persons are willing to serve on the School Accountability Committee, an alternative membership plan shall be established that reflects the membership requirements herein as much as practicable (C.R.S. 22-11-401(4)(a)).

The Principal and Department Heads may serve consecutive terms. Parents and community members shall serve two-year terms. Each spring, the members of the School Accountability Committee shall select a Committee Chair for the subsequent year from the current parent representatives.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2011, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 22-11-401 et seq.

3.15.3.2 Governance Committee

The purpose of the Governance Committee is to assume primary responsibility for matters pertaining to recommendations regarding Board recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation in accordance with the Bylaws of the school as well as established Board policies. The Committee is also responsible for developing and revisions to the Board handbook as needed.

This Committee shall make recommendations to the Board to take action on the following:

- Revisions to the nomination/Board election procedures.
- Revisions to the procedures for Board recruitment.
- Recommend and keep current an orientation and training plan for new Directors in keeping with the requirements of the Contract.
- Develop and revise a Board handbook outlining the responsibilities of the Board and Directors, Board policies, and other relevant information.
- Assess and recommend Board training needs.
- Annually recommend methods for the Board self-evaluation.

On an annual basis, the Committee shall complete the following tasks:

- Document training completed by Directors in keeping with the requirements of the Contract.
- Analyze the skills and experience needed on the Board.
- Recruit members to serve as Directors of the Board and develop a slate of candidates for consideration by the membership.
- Assist with recruitment of parent members to the Accountability Committee.
- Coordinate training aspects of Board retreats with the Vice President as needed.

- Review the guiding authorities, the Board of Directors Policy Manual and FHM documentation such as the Employee and Student and Parent Handbooks to ensure consistency throughout, and when necessary, make recommendations to the Board for updates.
- Evaluate its work as a Committee and the objectives it has committed to and report on same to the Board.
- Provide periodic updates at regular meetings.

This Committee shall be comprised of a maximum of two Directors appointed by the Board President with the advice and consent of the Board. The Committee may include members of the community with total membership not to exceed five (5) members.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3.15.3.3 Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee has responsibility to perform work and complete tasks related to FHM's strategic site use and development, and facilities' master planning. The scope of and individual tasks comprising this work may vary based on the short- and long-term physical needs of the school.

This Committee shall be comprised of at least, but no more than two, Board of Directors members (one of whom will be designed as the Board Liaison), the Director of Finance, Facilities and Advancement, a representative of the Community Support Network (CSN), a representative of the FHM Building Corp, and up to two general community members. Total membership should be a minimum of five (5) and maximum of seven (7) members.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009
Repealed:	September 2010
Reinstated:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

3.15.3.4 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has the responsibility to create the upcoming fiscal year budget; presenting budget recommendations to the Board; monitoring implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis and recommending proposed budget revisions; and recommending to the Board appropriate policies for the management of the school's assets.

The Committee shall be comprised of the Board Treasurer, the Board back-up to the Treasurer, the Principal, the Director of Finance, Facility and Advancement, and one member of the community.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, September 2010, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Colorado Charter Schools Capital Financing Act C.R.S. 22-30.5-401-9 C.R.S. 22-11-402(1)(a)

3.16 Communication Plan

The Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors will communicate to Directors through the following methods:

- **Board of Directors Webpage:** The Board of Directors section of the FHM website shall be the primary means of distribution of information. The website shall contain announcements of upcoming regular meetings as well as all public documents from the Board in accordance with the existing policies and the Bylaws.
- **Board Meeting Minutes:** Within sixty (60) days subsequent to a regular meeting of the Board, the Secretary, or their designee, shall provide signed, written minutes of the meeting for electronic distribution and shall make the same available publically via posting to the Board of Directors Webpage
- **Email to Board Members:** Members of the corporation, staff, and faculty may contact the individual Board members using the email addresses published on the Board of Directors section of the FHM website. Each Director shall be responsible for maintaining a secure email account with which to conduct Board business. Directors shall acknowledge receipt of such email within seven (7) days, or as soon as practical, if the Director is traveling away from home. Board members' emails used in school business are public records and shall be maintained in accordance with the Colorado State Archives Records Retention Manual. Email to Board members is not a substitute for following the "Conflict Resolution" policy as stated in this document.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 24-72-202 (6.5) Open Records C.R.S. 24-6-101:402 Open Meetings – Colorado Sunshine Law

4 Administrative Structure

The Free Horizon Montessori Board of Directors shall hire a Montessori experienced Principal as its administrator who shall serve as an at-will employee at the pleasure of the Board and may be terminated by the Board, at the Board's sole and absolute discretion, with or without cause.

The Principal shall be responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the school, ensuring compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, district regulations and policies, and other requirements of the charter or contracts with the District. The Board is responsible to establishing the position qualifications and maintaining a detailed job description for the Principal in the Employee Manual.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012, December 2013
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws

4.1 Qualifications

Repealed:	December 2013
Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

4.2 Annual Evaluation and Renewal of Annual Employment Agreement

Performance of the Principal shall be evaluated annually by the Board of Directors. The Board shall notify the Principal of its intent to either renew or terminate the Employment Agreement for the upcoming academic year commencing in August, in accordance with the following procedure.

A bilateral Letter of Intent shall be signed by both parties indicating their commitment to continue the Employment Agreement.

No later than December 31st annually, the Board shall complete a performance evaluation of the Principal and determine compensation for the upcoming contract term.

No later than January 31st annually, the Board shall offer the Principal an Employment Agreement for the upcoming contract term.

No later than August 31st annually, the Board and the Principal shall collaboratively establish goals for the upcoming academic year.

Activity	Who	Timeline
Establish Evaluation Committee	Board President + one other Board member + Principal	August Board Meeting
Principal presents list of desired goals and rationale for comment and discussions	Principal	September Board Meeting
Evaluation Committee meets with Principal, reviews and makes final determination of yearly goals, review and renew evaluation tool and survey(s) to be used	Principal and Evaluation Committee	September/October
Decide whether to engage third party evaluator for 360 feedback for evaluation	Board, based on Evaluation Committee work	October Board meeting
Procure services of third party evaluator (if desired)	Evaluation Committee	By October 30
Gather data, review files, and interview faculty	Evaluation Committee + third party evaluator	Reasonable number of visits and/or meetings
Third party evaluator presents findings to committee and Principal (if engaged)	Third party evaluator	By November 30
Convene for Principal evaluation	Evaluation Committee + Principal + third party evaluator (if retained)	By November 30
Issue letter of intent for continued employment (if appropriate)	Board President	December Board meeting
Develop and negotiate compensation and contract structure	Evaluation Committee + Treasurer + Principal	Before January Board Meeting
Report to Board on Principal evaluation and present proposed contract for approval	Board President	January Board meeting

General guidelines for retaining a third party evaluator:

A third party evaluator should be retained when appropriate but may not be helpful every year. As a general rule, a third party evaluator should be retained after the first full year of a Principal's service and again at the end of each three-year period (e.g., after the third, sixth, and ninth year in office). A third party evaluator should also be used if the school has two straight years of failing to meet adequate growth on state standardized testing (or equivalent standard), or the school finances are called into question by an internal or external audit source. The Board may also hire a third party evaluator based on other relevant factors and circumstances present during the rating year.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2010, November 2012, September 2014, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. §22-9-106

4.3 Compensation

The Board shall determine the amount of the compensation paid to the Principal annually, which should be in keeping with the school's current effective salary schedules. Annual increases may range from zero to 100 percent and shall consider:

- Performance/merit.
- Salary survey/competitive compensation.
- Longevity incentives.
- Cost of living adjustments.

It is the Board's sole discretion on how the distributions, if any, shall be paid in any given year. It may be based on equal distributions, or any other proportionality, or in a lump sum payment when appropriate.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

5 Personnel

The Free Horizon Montessori Principal is responsible for selecting, supervising, disciplining, determining compensation for, and terminating employees of FHM. No person employed by the school shall be considered an employee of the School District by virtue of such employment, and the School District shall have no liability or responsibility for such persons.

The Principal is responsible for developing written policies and procedures in compliance with federal and state law concerning the recruitment, promotion, discipline and termination of personnel; methods for evaluating performance; and a plan for resolving employee-related problems, including complaint and conflict resolution procedures. Such policies and procedures shall be documented in the FHM Employee Handbook. Each FHM Employee shall affirm their receipt and understanding of the handbook annually.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	September 2011, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 24-30.5-104, 7(a) Charter School -Requirements – Authority C.R.S. 24-30.5-110, 111 Charter School - Employee Options, Background Checks Jefferson County School District Charter Contract FHM Employee Handbook

5.1 At Will Employment

In accordance with employment law in the State of Colorado, all employment and compensation with Free Horizon Montessori is “at will.” This means that employment can be terminated, with or without cause, with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either FHM or the employee, except as otherwise provided by law.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 24-30.5-104, 7(a) Charter School -Requirements – Authority

5.2 Nondiscrimination

Consistent with applicable law and School District policies and regulations, it is FHM policy that all decisions about staff assignment, promotion, demotion, transfer, salary determination, benefits, and selection for training shall be made without regard to race, creed, color, age, national origin, religion, gender identity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Policy AC Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 621 et seq. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701 et seq. Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 1201 et seq. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e C.R.S. 24-34-301 through 24-34-308 C.R.S. 24-34-402

5.3 Harassment

Free Horizon Montessori intends to provide a work environment that is free from intimidation, hostility and other offenses, which might interfere with work performance. Harassment of any sort - verbal, physical, sexual, and visual - will not be tolerated. All employees and FHM community members have a responsibility for keeping the work environment free of harassment. Any incidents of harassment must be immediately reported to the Principal or other Administrative personnel. Reports involving the Principal may be reported to the President of the Board of Directors.

Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken for all reports of harassment. All reports will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved. Any employee found to have harassed a fellow employee, subordinate or FHM community member will be subject to severe disciplinary action or possible discharge. No adverse employment action will be taken for any employee making a good faith report of alleged harassment.

Individuals who act outside this policy will not be protected by the school and may lose indemnification rights as described in the FHM Bylaws, specifically Article VIII, Indemnification.

Adopted:	Inception
Revised:	October 2009, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Bylaws FHM Employee Handbook Jefferson County School District Policy GBAA

5.4 School Personnel Conflict of Interest

Any school personnel engaged in additional employment outside of Free Horizon Montessori shall notify the Principal. Such notification shall include the job responsibilities and time requirements of the outside employment. At no time shall any employee of FHM engage in any additional employment that would:

- Adversely affect their usefulness as employees of the school;
- Make time and/or energy demands upon the individual that interfere with their effectiveness in performing their duties;
- Compromise or embarrass the school;
- Adversely affect their employment status or professional standing; or
- In any way conflict with or violate professional ethics or FHM's policies.

Faculty may not engage in any other employment or in any private business during the hours required to fulfill assigned educational duties.

Faculty may not engage in the provision of educational services outside of their school responsibilities or outside of school hours without notifying the Principal. The faculty member shall provide any advertisement for such services at his or her own expense and shall specifically state whether the services offered are endorsed, sanctioned, or sponsored by FHM.

Employees may not sell any books, supplies, musical instruments, or equipment to any student or members unless prior approval has been received from the Principal.

No administrator shall be responsible for the supervision and/or evaluation of a relative.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	FHM Bylaws FHM Employee Handbook Jefferson County School District Policy GBEA

6 Students

6.1 Attendance

The Free Horizon Montessori attendance policy will follow current law.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Student and Parent Handbook Jefferson County School District Code of Conduct Jefferson County School District Policy JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages Jefferson County School District Policy JH, Student Absences & Excuses CDE Policy CCR 301-78

6.2 Rights and Responsibilities

All students are capable of learning and taking responsibility for their own education. The Montessori philosophy holds that students will learn respectful and responsible behavior for oneself, the environment and others. Students are responsible to know and observe school guidelines, rules and policies.

Free Horizon Montessori's students' rights and responsibilities are outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent Handbook and are in accordance with Jeffco policy and state law.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

6.3 Discipline

Free Horizon Montessori adheres to the District's Conduct Code and related policies. Additionally, general discipline falls under the purview of classroom management, and the supervising teacher is responsible to communicate and consistently limit inappropriate and unacceptable behavior. In extreme situations of destructive or dangerous behavior, the student may be brought directly to the Principal (or designee in his/her absence) to implement the formal discipline process. This process shall follow the Jefferson County Public Schools Code of Conduct.

The Montessori philosophy holds that students will learn respectful and responsible behavior for oneself, the environment, and others. A safe environment that is conducive to learning is of utmost priority to FHM. All policies shall be in accordance with state law and applicable District policy.

Faculty and staff shall be supported in their efforts to discipline students. All personnel are expected to use FHM policies in disciplining students.

Detailed discipline policies are provided in the current FHM Guide to Conduct and Discipline, FHM Student and Parent Handbook, and FHM Employee Handbook.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County Conduct Code C.R.S. 22-33-106 Mandatory expulsion C.R.S. 22-33-106 Suspension FHM Student and Parent Handbook FHM Guide to Conduct and Discipline

6.4 Health

Students are required to meet all immunization requirements in accordance with Colorado state law and shall be denied attendance if they fail to do so. Parents and guardians may be exempt from these requirements for personal, medical, or religious reasons but must obtain and complete a waiver at Free Horizon Montessori.

FHM's policy concerning sick children is in accordance with district and state policies and is outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent and Employee Handbooks.

In accordance with Colorado State Law, FHM cannot administer either prescription medicine or "over the counter medicine" to a student without written parental permission. If a student needs to take medicine during the school day, the parent must follow all policies and procedures as outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent Handbook.

FHM's policy concerning distribution of medicine is in accordance with district and state policies and is outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent and Employee Handbooks.

In the event of accidental injury, including minor bumps and bruises, FHM shall follow policies and procedures in accordance with district and state policies. FHM policies are detailed in the current FHM Employee Handbook and FHM Student and Parent Handbook.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	C.R.S. 25-4-902 Immunization prior to attending school FHM Student and Parent Handbook C.R.S. 25-4-901:909 School Entry Immunization Jefferson County School District Policy JLCB Immunization of Students Jefferson County School District Policy JLCC Communicable Diseases Jefferson County School District Policy JLCD Administering Medicines to Students

6.5 General Safety and Security

Health and safety is of the utmost concern for all students, parents, and employees. Upon recognition of a potentially dangerous or hazardous situation, employees must immediately report the situation to Administration.

Free Horizon Montessori's policy and procedures concerning general safety and security, to include procedures for releasing students, are in accordance with district and state policies and are outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent and Employee Handbooks.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

6.6 School Closures

Generally, Free Horizon Montessori follows the Jefferson County School District policies for dealing with all emergencies and school closures. FHM reserves the right to close even when the District chooses to stay open. FHM does not employ a "late start" policy. The Principal determines when FHM will close if the District chooses not to close or remain open.

All other emergency and evacuation plans are to be implemented by the Principal and will be conducted with the utmost safety and concern for the members of the FHM community.

FHM's emergency and school closure policies are in accordance with district and state policies and are outlined in the current FHM Student and Parent and Employee Handbooks.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors Jefferson County School District Charter Contract Jefferson County District Policy EBCE, School Closings & Cancellations Jefferson County District Policy KDE, Emergency Management

7 Support Services

Free Horizon Montessori has the option to receive support services through the Jefferson County School District. Each year as part of the annual contracting process, the Principal and Board of Directors must elect which services and to what level FHM will contract with Jeffco. The policies associated with these support services and the administration and management of those services shall be established by the Principal.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract

8 Educational Program

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to a strong educational program that revolves around Montessori Instructional Strategies.

8.1 Instructional Goal and Objectives

Free Horizon Montessori is soundly committed to a rigorous, whole-child oriented, Montessori-based, quality education for all students attending FHM. More details regarding the instructional goals and objectives are contained in the FHM Student and Parent Handbook.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract FHM Student and Parent Handbook

8.2 Field Trips

During the course of the school year, the students of Free Horizon Montessori will have the opportunity to go on field trips away from the school. These field trips are to be instructional and contribute to the whole-child oriented, Montessori-based educational philosophy

Field trips must comply with state and district standards. Detailed policies and procedures involving field trips are located in the current FHM Student and Parent and Employee Handbooks.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

8.3 Curriculum Development

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to providing students with an education that incorporates Montessori philosophy with the rigor of Colorado state and Jefferson County standards. Curriculum development will adhere to and enhance the above goals. The Principal will review, select and approve all learning resources that cover the scope and sequence of the above stated policies.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

8.4 School Year and School Calendar

Free Horizon Montessori's Principal shall draft and the Board shall approve FHM's school year and school calendar as soon as practical before the end of the prior school year, but in no case later than the Board's regular March meeting. The School's annual calendar shall meet or exceed the minimum

requirements of state law and District policy for student instructional time. Additional modified contact days may be scheduled for staff in-service and/or student assessment.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2010, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors Jeffco District Policy IC/ICA

9 Enrollment

Free Horizon Montessori is a publicly funded, nonsectarian charter school. FHM enrolls students in accordance with Jefferson County School District Choice Enrollment Policy (JFBA), and with the criteria as set forth below.

FHM offers tuition-based full-day Kindergarten. Enrollment in full-day Kindergarten is in accordance with Jeffco School Board Choice Enrollment Policy.

FHM offers a tuition based preschool for 3 and 4 year olds. Enrollment in the preschool is offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy

9.1 Space Availability

The Principal shall determine how many enrollment openings are available for each grade level.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

9.2 Application Criteria

All preschool through eighth grade students may apply for enrollment at Free Horizon Montessori. Half-day enrollment is available only to preschool and kindergarten students on a limited basis as space is available. The minimum age for preschool enrollment is three years of age. FHM fully complies with its nondiscrimination policy for enrollment of prospective students.

Adopted:	October 2009
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Revised:	September 2011, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 621 et seq. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701 et seq. Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 1201 et seq. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e C.R.S. 24-34-301 through 24-34-308 C.R.S. 24-34-402

9.3 Process

The Free Horizon Montessori enrollment process shall be in accordance with the Jeffco Public Schools Choice Enrollment procedure. Forms and process are available on the Jeffco Public Schools Website (<http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/enrollment/index.html>).

Families wishing to re-enroll students at Free Horizon Montessori must actively accept continued enrollment at FHM by completing, signing, and submitting the re-enrollment form(s) as determined by administration by the posted deadline.

Families wishing to enroll students at FHM must complete and sign the Jeffco Choice Enrollment Application forms and provide the application packet to the school by the posted deadline. The application packet must clearly state the potential student's educational needs, including but not limited to: documentation of any Individual Education Plans, Individual Literacy Plans, Advanced Learning Plans, Discipline Plans, or any specialized assessments. Submission of the application packet is a material requirement of the enrollment process. In compliance with the Jeffco Choice Enrollment Policy, FHM shall review the educational needs of the potential student to ensure that it has the ability and resources necessary to meet the student's educational needs.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy

9.4 Priority

For each grade level from preschool through eighth grade, available enrollment openings shall be offered to students in the order of priority listed below. Should there be more potential students in a priority category than enrollment openings in a given grade level, enrollment shall be offered by random selection from that priority group for the affected grade level. Should all lists for the priority pools be

exhausted and openings become available for any given grade level, the remaining openings shall be filled in order of the enrollment application receipt date.

- Re-enrolling students.
- Children of full-time FHM faculty.
- Siblings of returning FHM students.
 - A sibling is a natural brother, natural sister, stepbrother or stepsister of a returning FHM student or a foster child of parents or guardians of a returning FHM student living in the same household as the returning FHM student.
 - If a student in one grade level is accepted by random selection and has a sibling, that sibling shall move from the random selection pool to the sibling priority pool.
 - Multiples are defined as twins, triplets, quads, etc. If one or more of a multiple pair or set is enrolled in FHM, the additional multiples (twin, triplets, etc.) shall automatically be enrolled into the respective grade.
- Children residing within the Jefferson County School District.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2011
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy

9.5 Notification

Once a student is selected for enrollment, the parents or guardians shall be contacted and given 48 hours to accept or reject the enrollment opening. This offer is only for the grade level where the enrollment opening occurred.

If the parents or guardians cannot be contacted for whatever reason, including, but not limited to their failure to notify FHM of changes in address or phone number, or they fail to return messages, their child shall be removed from the enrollment list and the enrollment opening offered to the next child in order of priority. A parent or guardian contacting the school after their child is removed from the list may request the child be reinstated on the enrollment wait list. Their child will be added after the last student on the current list.

If the parent or guardian rejects an enrollment opening offered to their child, that child's name is withdrawn from the enrollment list and the parent or guardian may choose to re-apply at a later date. Any exceptions to this policy must be documented and approved by the Principal.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012

Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy
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9.6 Disciplinary Dis-enrollment

Students dis-enrolled in Free Horizon Montessori for disciplinary reasons shall not be allowed to re-enroll in FHM for at least one calendar year from the date of expulsion. After the one calendar year, the dis-enrolled student's parent or guardian may re-apply their child to the enrollment list. The dis-enrolled student is not considered part of the returning student priority category but may be re-enrolled as part of the next year's random selection as permitted by law, regulation, policy, and District directive.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District JFBA, Choice Enrollment Policy

10 Finance and Accounting

10.1 Administration

The Principal shall be responsible for properly accounting for all funds received and all expenses incurred in the operation of Free Horizon Montessori. The Principal shall exercise his/her responsibility to the highest ethical standards and shall conform to generally accepted principles for government accounting. Such accounting shall be done in a manner that is easily reviewed by the Board of Directors and lends itself to auditing.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

10.2 Reporting

Each month, upon receiving the financials from Jefferson County, the Director of Finance, Facility and Advancement shall compile the trending projection (i.e., actual financials to date and an updated projection of any remaining months for the fiscal year). The trending projection shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee at its regularly scheduled monthly meetings, and a summary prepared for the Board of Directors at their regular meetings held in August, November, February and May, and as necessary when significant financial changes require Board review and/or approval, or as requested by the President or Treasurer. Financial statements shall be made available to Directors in the Board packets prior to the meeting.

Director of Finance Facilities and Advancement shall fulfill financial reporting for the School as required per Colorado's Public School Financial Transparency Act, under the oversight of the Board Treasurer.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2010, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. 22-44-304

10.3 Audits

All funds and accounts of Free Horizon Montessori shall be audited annually after the close of each fiscal year in accordance with state law. The Board of Directors shall appoint an independent auditor licensed to practice in Colorado and knowledgeable in government/non-profit accounting to conduct the audit. The independent auditor shall submit a report to the Finance Committee that includes the audited financial statements and an opinion regarding those financial statements. The auditor shall also include in the report any information and documentation required by the district. If a specific auditor or audit is required or selected by contract or law by the district, the required audit may serve as the independent audit required by this policy.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. 22-44 et seq.

10.4 Preparation and Adoption of Annual Operating Budget

The annual budget is the financial plan for the operation of Free Horizon Montessori. The annual operating budget shall be based on a fiscal year that runs from July 1 to June 30. It provides the framework for both expenditures and revenues for the fiscal year and translates the educational programs and goals of the schools into financial terms. The operating budget should ultimately support the mission of FHM. The Board of Directors assigns joint responsibility to the Principal and Finance Committee for preparation of the budget. The annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year shall be submitted for review and preliminary approval by the Board during the regular March Board meeting. The final Budget shall be presented for final approval by the Board no later than the regular June meeting.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. 22-30.5 et seq. C.R.S. 22-44 et seq.

10.5 Purchasing Authority

Free Horizon Montessori shall be its own purchasing authority. While procuring goods and services with an anticipated value of \$5,000 or greater, the school shall solicit a minimum of three proposals for review. All procurements shall be authorized in accordance with the following thresholds:

Position	Authorized Maximum Approval Level
Director of Finance, Facility and Advancement (and other staff as designated by the Principal)	\$5,000
Principal	\$15,000
Board of Director President and Treasurer (Joint Approval)	\$25,000
Board of Directors	Over \$25,000

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2010, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

10.6 Purchasing Agent

FHM shall be its own purchasing agent.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

10.7 Approval Policy for Accounts Payable Invoice/Vouchers

The authorized maximums for individual invoices are as follows:

Position	Authorized Maximum Approval Level
Director of Finance, Facility and Advancement (and other staff as designated by the Principal)	\$5,000
Principal	\$15,000
Board of Director President and Treasurer (Joint Approval)	\$25,000
Board of Directors	Over \$25,000

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2010, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

10.8 Reserve Policy

Financial reserves shall be maintained at a minimum of seven percent [7%] (comprised of three percent [3%] required by the TABOR law and four percent [4%] of the current year's annual budgeted operational expenses excluding bonded debt service).

Expending from the financial reserves is highly discouraged and should only be considered in an emergency situation. Any expenditure requiring accessing the financial reserve must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board of Directors.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	December 2013, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors Article X, Section 20 of the Colorado Constitution ("TABOR Reserve")

11 Media Relations

It is the intent of Free Horizon Montessori to maintain a positive and honest relationship with the media. Media coverage of Charter Schools, Montessori Education, Public Education, and specifically FHM can be a vehicle that helps promote FHM. Media coverage can also prove a challenge in that articles and coverage can be both misinterpreted and/or confrontational. In an effort to maximize the benefits of media coverage, and minimize any potential negatives, the follow policy shall be utilized.

11.1 General Guidelines

Spokespersons shall be appointed by the Principal or the Board of Directors and must have received training and preparation. Additionally, the Principal and Board of Directors will ensure the staff and leadership teams are trained in managed communications. Whenever the media is present:

- Education shall be the primary focus when talking to the media.
- Student's names, faces, and families remain private under all circumstances. The privacy protection of the students shall be a priority at all times.
- Spokespersons for FHM shall maintain a professional and positive image when speaking about FHM, its educational programs, and the FHM community.
- Media coverage shall be treated as an opportunity, not a confrontation. If a confrontation is imminent, the spokesperson shall terminate the interview immediately.
- The spokesperson shall defer any questions that he or she is uncomfortable or unsure of answering to another designated spokesperson.
- The phrase "No Comment" shall be used when necessary or for the protection of FHM.
- At all times, the protection of the mission of FHM shall prevail in interviews or discussion with any media.
- Media personnel shall be treated with respect and courtesy.
- FHM representatives shall seek to approve any quotes used by media prior to publication.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of District Jefferson County School District Policy KDB - Public's Right to know C.R.S. 1-45-101:118 Fair Campaign Practices Act

11.2 Managed Communications

For media coverage or interviews on an event or topic surrounding FHM or in the interest of FHM, the Principal, as appropriate, shall immediately advise the Board of Director President. The priority of

sharing of media information with the District shall be at the discretion of the Principal (general information vs. emergency). The Principal shall contact the District's Area Administrator for Charter Schools and/or Community Superintendent or equivalent position representative in a timely manner if contact is necessary.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

11.3 Privacy Policy

Every reasonable measure shall be taken to protect student, member, administration, faculty, and staff privacy.

- Personal information provided to the school is not provided to other entities or persons except as required by applicable law.
- Personal information or the likeness of a single individual shall be used in the school newsletters or other publications and on the website only with permission of the person or their parent or guardian.
- If a person objects by phone, letter, or e-mail to having their personal information or likeness or the personal information or likeness of their children published, then it shall be removed as soon as possible.

The school shall make student, member, administration, faculty, and staff privacy and their understanding of this policy a high priority. In this regard, the following language shall be promulgated or posted in the location designated:

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	FHM Employee Handbook 20 U.S.C. § 1232g Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act C.R.S. 22-1-123 Protection of Student Data

12 Document Retention

FHM recognizes that it is essential to retain all documents necessary for the operation of its business, accounting records, tax returns, documents necessary for potential IRS inquiries and audits, evidence of compliance with applicable district, local, state, and federal requirements, and all documents that might be relevant in pending, imminent, or reasonably foreseeable investigations or litigation.

FHM will follow document retention standards in alignment with the State of Colorado State Archivists' guidelines, as adapted for a school and non-profit setting.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	October 2015
Guiding Authority:	20 U.S.C. § 1232g Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act C.R.S. 22-1-123 Protection of Student Data Colorado State Archives Records Management

12.1 Document Retention Manager

The Free Horizon Montessori Principal shall appoint and maintain at all times a Document Retention Manager whose responsibilities are to maintain documentation necessary for effective FHM operations while keeping the costs and burden of document retention to the minimum required.

The Document Retention Manager shall review FHM's files on a minimum of an annual basis. Non-active files should be indexed and archived as appropriate. The date on which the documents no longer need to be retained in accordance with the document retention periods below shall be made clear.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

12.2 Document Retention Periods

Free Horizon Montessori shall retain documents for specified periods of time based on the type of document as described below. If a document is identified to fall into multiple categories, the retention period shall be the longest of the applicable time periods.

Document Type	Retention Period
Routine emails.	Two years
Board of Directors executive session minutes.	Three months
Handwritten notes and memos requiring no further action.	Six months

Document Type	Retention Period
Correspondence requiring no further action. Interoffice memos requiring no further action. Offers to contract that are not accepted.	One year
Employee records, including performance evaluations.	Four years (after the employee is no longer with FHM)
Financial statements. Accounting records supporting tax returns and financial statements (invoices, purchase orders, checks, computer runs, etc.). Executed contracts and drafts thereof should be retained for six years after the date the contract is completed.	Six years
Corporate organization documents (Bylaws, articles, minutes, etc.). Insurance policies. Tax returns and schedules. Tax exemption status letter for all 501(c)(3) entities.	Permanently

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors Colorado State Archives Records Management

12.3 Suspension of Policy

In the event any employee or agent of Free Horizon Montessori becomes aware that litigation in which FHM would be a defendant **or** plaintiff is pending, imminent, or reasonably foreseeable, the employee or agent shall notify the Principal. The Principal shall notify the Board of Directors and the Document Retention Manager.

When the Document Retention Manager receives notice of potential litigation, he or she shall immediately suspend the destruction of documentation. The Board shall provide, in writing, information describing all documents, by category, which must be preserved for such litigation to the Document Retention Manager. The Document Retention Manager shall immediately take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the listed documents are preserved. In coordination with the Board, the Document Retention Manager may continue with document destruction for those documents not on that list.

When the potential or actual litigation has been resolved or there is a change to the list of documents which must be retained for litigation, the Board shall notify the Document Retention Manager in writing that the full Document Retention Policy shall be re-instituted.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

12.4 Records Requests

Free Horizon Montessori may receive requests for records associated with routine business or to satisfy investigative needs. Any time a request for records is received, the FHM Principal and the Document Retention Manager will evaluate the request and the information contained in the record or records requested. The Principal and Document Retention Manager will decide if the release of the records is appropriate. If the Principal and Document Retention Manager do not agree on the appropriateness of record release or if the decision is that it is inappropriate to release the record, they will contact the Board President for further decision and action as appropriate.

Adopted:	September 2010
Revised:	November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors

12.5 Standardized Procedure for File Naming of Share Documents

The following procedure for naming files is required for shared documents by the FHM Board of Directors. It is based on ISO 8601 recommendations.

- Date values are ordered from the most to the least significant: year, month, day. This allows dates to be naturally sorted.
- Each date and time value has a fixed number of digits that must be padded with leading zeros.
- Representations should be done in extended format with separators added to enhance readability. The separator used between date values (year, month, and day) is the hyphen. For example, the 6th day of the 1st month of the year 2009 may be written as "2009-01-06" in the extended format.
- For reduced precision, any number of values may be dropped from any of the date representation, but in the order from the least to the most significant. For example, "2014-05" is a valid ISO 8601 date, which indicates May (the fifth month) 2014. This format will never represent the 5th day of an unspecified month in 2014, nor will it represent a time-span extending from 2014 into 2015.
- The fields of the file name should be separated by an underscore for ease of readability.

Examples of acceptable formats:

- 2014-08-05_[filename].***
- 2012-08_[filename].***

Adopted:	October 2014
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors ISO 8601

13 Facilities

Free Horizon Montessori is committed to providing quality education in an economical and efficient manner, and facilities are an integral part of the educational program as:

- Facilities have direct influence on learning and the performance of school personnel and students and indirect influence on attitudes and behavior; and
- Facilities represent a major community investment.

Therefore, it is the policy of FHM that facilities be maintained in good physical condition, be safe and in compliance with applicable building codes and District policies, and be maintained at an acceptable level of healthy environmental conditions and cleanliness.

The Principal or designee shall be responsible for:

- Facilities planning and design
- Construction management
- Real estate management
- Building maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
- Telecommunications
- Environmental services
- Networking
- Community use of FHM facilities
- Temporary buildings
- Building energy management

In addition, the Principal or designee is responsible for the day-to-day utilization and operation of the FHM facility, including:

- Day-to-day operations, maintenance and monitoring of the facility and grounds
- Custodial services
- Facility security
- Efficient operation of facility and grounds consistent with intended use

- Reporting facility or grounds maintenance and improvement needs to the Board
- Energy-efficient operation of facility
- Notification to the Board of policies for afterhours community use of FHM facilities
- Display of Awards and/or plaques of recognition

All school personnel, in execution of their assigned duties, are responsible for assisting in the operation and management of FHM facilities in a manner that is consistent with this policy, including:

- School facilities are to be managed and operated in accordance with local, state, and federal policies, regulations, and statutes.
- Facility or grounds modifications, additions or improvements are to be coordinated through the Board of Directors.
- Facility improvements shall conform to applicable laws and/or building codes.
- The Board of Directors must approve a change in general uses or character of a FHM facility.
- Timely service shall be provided to ensure, within constraints of available resources, the continued operation of the facility in a safe, secure, and healthy manner.

The Board of Directors shall authorize and approve all significant facilities or grounds modifications, additions and other improvements (non-maintenance) either through general budget or specific project approval under the following:

- The Principal or designee identifies and prepares brief written descriptions of improvement needs that may have facility or grounds impact and submits work request to the Board.
- The Principal or designee shall develop a plan outlining the scope of work, priority, estimated cost, and source of funding.
- The Principal or designee and the Board shall communicate and collaborate on all non-maintenance projects to provide a means of communicating an awareness of what work is being planned, the proposed work schedule, responsible party for carrying out the work, and any impact this work shall have on the normal operation of the facility.
- The Treasurer shall prepare a financial impact statement on evaluation of the proposed improvement. Prior to final approval of plan implementation, the Board of Directors shall review this statement.
- The FHM Building Corp, as owner of the FHM building and grounds, shall have final decision making authority for substantial improvements or modifications to any real property to which it holds title.

Modifications covered under this policy shall include the renaming of any real property and/or the dedication to an individual or organization of any part of the property owned or used by FHM.

Free Horizon Montessori shall be responsible for managing its own materials and equipment. The Principal or designee shall have the primary responsibility to ensure materials and equipment are accounted for and properly maintained.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2010, November 2012, October 2015
Guiding Authority:	Jefferson County School District Charter Contract Board of Directors

14 Non-School Based Public Elections

The Board of Directors, Administration and staff members representing Free Horizon Montessori shall not expend FHM resources in connection with supporting or opposing any candidate for political office or any issue in public election, nor may they take political positions on these issues in their official capacity or on FHM time or property. Directors shall never give the air of impropriety and shall act with caution.

This policy shall not be interpreted to preclude the payment of administrative costs of placing an issue before voters in a public election.

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors C.R.S. 1-45-101:118 Fair Campaign Practices Act

15 Conflict Resolution Policy

Free Horizon Montessori supports voluntary resolution of conflicts, problems, and concerns between two parties regardless of their positions or roles. FHM firmly believes most issues can be handled quickly and appropriately to everyone's satisfaction. The following conflict resolution policies should be followed in situations of concern:

- Any FHM member having concerns with another shall address that concern one-on-one with the person with whom they are having a problem. The member shall communicate the conflict to the involved parties in writing and shall solicit a response from the offending party.
- If a response and resolution are not established within a reasonable amount of time, the parties shall raise the concern with the Principal unless the concern involves the Principal (see below). The two conflicting parties shall define "reasonable amount of time." At no time shall the timeframe be extended without mutual consent of both parties.
 - If the parties cannot agree on a timeframe, they are required to bring the conflict to the Principal for the purpose of establishing the timeframe for resolution.
 - In doing so, the Principal, or his/her designated representative, shall then mediate the conflict, ensure timelines are followed, and ensure the conflict is resolved.
- If the concern is with the Principal and no response or resolution has been established from bringing the concern directly to the Principal, the person in conflict with the Principal may take the concern to the President of the Board of Directors. The President shall follow the same approach as outlined above.
- If conflicting parties and/or the Principal are not able to find resolution that is mutually agreed upon by all parties, then the Principal shall immediately bring the conflict to the attention of the Board. The opposing party may also bring the conflict to the attention of the Board President in writing.
- Conflicts brought to the attention of the Board shall be heard and resolved by the Board in accordance with the conflict resolution process defined in the following table.
- If any conflict involves individual safety, a threat to the preservation or security of FHM's facilities, or a direct or blatant violation of school policies or procedures, the Board of Directors shall be notified immediately by the school Principal, school personnel, or member. Any appeal of student disciplinary action by the Principal shall be heard and decided by the Board of Directors.

Conflict Resolution Process

Step No.	Step Title	Step Description	Responsible Party	Timeline / Due Date
1	Notification of Conflict	The Board of Directors will resolve any conflict not resolved directly by the parties. The Board of Directors will hear discipline appeals not involving expulsion. The aggrieved party will contact the Board President regarding the conflict or appeal.	Board President	Within 30 days of incident
2	Written Statement	The Board President shall require the aggrieved party to communicate the conflict to the involved parties in writing and shall solicit a response from the offending party. The written statement from the aggrieved member will set the parameters for Board Consideration. Information not included in the written statement may not be considered by the Board of Directors during any subsequent hearing.	Board President, aggrieved member and person against who conflict is filed	Within 10 days of initial contact, written response, if any, should be within 10 days
3	Referral for Board Action	If the conflict is not resolved through the written response or involves individual safety, a threat to the preservation or security of FHM's facilities, or a direct or blatant violation of school policies or procedures, the Board of Directors shall arrange to hear the conflict at regular or special meeting.	Board President	No later than 30 days from written response or within 45 days of the written complaint if no written response.
4	Notification to Involved Parties	Both parties shall be notified that the Board of Directors will hear and resolve the conflict. Ideally, the hearing will be scheduled when all parties can personally be in attendance.	Board President	No later than 30 days from written response or within 45 days of the written complaint if no written response.

Step No.	Step Title	Step Description	Responsible Party	Timeline / Due Date
6	Meeting Logistics	<p>The Board President shall make arrangements for the Board of Directors to hear the conflict in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.</p> <p>A) Determine need for Executive Session in the cases where personnel or students will be discussed.</p> <p>B) If Executive Session is called for, make arrangements for private meeting space and recording device and materials.</p> <p>C) Post public notice of meeting and agenda with statutory citation for Executive Session, if appropriate.</p>	Board President & Board Secretary	No less than 3 days prior to meeting
7	Prepare Board Packet	Prior to the meeting, provide Board members with the written conflict description and response, and references to any guiding laws, policies, or other guidelines relevant to the conflict.	Board President	No less than 3 days prior to meeting
8	Board Hearing	Whether a regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors, the meeting shall be called to order in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and Board of Directors protocol. Once the conflict agenda item is reached on the agenda, an Executive Session may need to be announced and privacy ensured.	Board President	
		<p>A) The Board President will begin the hearing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the timeline of the issue and correspondence received; • Summarizing the conflict presented to the Board; • Referencing any guiding laws, policies, or other guidelines relevant to the conflict; • Establishing parameters of consideration; • Articulating the procedure to be followed during the meeting. 	Board President	No more than 10 minutes
		B) The aggrieved party will be asked to make a brief statement to the Board of Directors reiterating their position and their desired outcome	Aggrieved party	No more than 10 minutes

Step No.	Step Title	Step Description	Responsible Party	Timeline / Due Date
		C) The offending party will be invited to make a brief statement to the Board of Directors reiterating their position and their desired outcome	Offending Party	No more than 10 minutes
		D) Board members may ask clarifying questions of both parties	All Board Members	5-20 minutes
e		E) Board members may discuss and formulate a motion that preserves confidential information, if appropriate. (No voting may occur within Executive Session, only in an open meeting following an Executive Session)	All Board Members	5-20 minutes
9	Board Action	For non-discipline related conflicts, the Board of Directors may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remand the conflict back to the Principal, with a directive to find a reasonable and quick resolution. • Remand the conflict back to the two parties, with the Principal mediating the conflict. • Mediate the conflict and render a decision to resolve the conflict. 		By meeting end
10	Board Action	For discipline related conflicts or appeals, the Board of Directors may overturn or amend disciplinary actions of the Principal only when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) The disciplinary action is shown to be a direct or blatant violation of school policies. B) The disciplinary action is shown to be arbitrary, capricious and not supported by any evidence. 	All Board members	By meeting end
11	Final Resolution	The FHM Board of Directors is the final authority. Decisions of the Board may not be appealed to the Jefferson County School District.		

Adopted:	October 2009
Revised:	September 2011, November 2012
Guiding Authority:	Board of Directors


J. State Policy Waiver - Clarifications

In response to CDE staff feedback, the following clarifications were incorporated into Appendix C – Requested State Policy Waivers prior to submission to CDE for approval. This section is intended to provide transparency and clarity to what clarifications were made.

Statute	Page(s)	Clarification
§ 22-32-109(1)(f) § 22-32-109(1)(t) § 22-32-110(1)(h) § 22-32-110(1)(i) § 22-32-110(1)(k) § 22-32-110(1)(ee) § 22-32-126 § 22-33-104(4) § 22-63-301 § 22-63-302 § 22-63-401 § 22-63-402 § 22-63-403 § 22-1-112	45-54	Added Replacement Plans for the “Charter Automatic Waivers” previously granted to Free Horizon Montessori as a Charter School. The Replacement Plans reflect the current policies, procedures and operations utilized by Free Horizon Montessori.
§ 22-9-106	55	Added Replacement Plan which reflects the current policies, procedures and operations utilized by Free Horizon Montessori. Appendix K was added to provide a sample teacher evaluation tool utilized by Free Horizon Montessori.
§ 22-63-201	59	Removed confusing language.
§ 22-32.5-109	60	Added waiver to clarify intent.
§ 22-32-110(1)(j) § 22-32-110(1)(y) § 22-7-1014(2)(a)		Deleted. No longer requesting waivers from these statutes.

K. Sample Teacher Evaluation Tool

The following is a sample teacher evaluation tool utilized by Free Horizon Montessori. An evaluation system such as this includes quality standards that are clear and relevant to the administrators' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191.

2017-18 FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI PK-8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION							
Teacher Name: TEMPLATE							
	Free Horizon Montessori A JeffCo Charter Public School	<i>Please list <u>date & name</u> of observer</i> Observation #1: Observation #2: Observation #3: Observation #4: Evaluation Meeting Date:					
Teacher Name: TEMPLATE Department: Supervisor:							
<p><i>Levels of Performance:</i> HE = Highly Effective Eff = Effective PE = Partially Effective I = Ineffective</p>							
I.	Professional Preparation	HE	Eff	PE	I	N/A	Evidence
a.	Demonstrates accurate, up-to-date knowledge of subject(s)						
b.	Demonstrates knowledge of how to integrate subject matter/disciplines and literacy across content areas						
c.	Plans and implements research-based best practices						
d.	Develops lesson plans incorporating effective lesson design						
e.	Plans and implements district-adopted curriculum through alignment of resources and assessments						
f.	Aligns content within course and with previous and succeeding grades/courses						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Free Horizon Montessori - Teacher Observation Form Page 1 Rev. 05.2018 </div>							

2017-18 FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI PK-8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Teacher Name: **TEMPLATE**

II. Professional Techniques **HE** **Eff** **PE** **I** **N/A** **Evidence**

a.	Communicates to students expectations for learning						
b.	Models and facilitates higher-level thinking, problem solving, creativity, and flexibility						
c.	Adapts instruction to meet the instructional needs of all students						
d.	Uses a variety of formative and summative assessments to make instructional decisions						
e.	Provides varied opportunities for student demonstrations of learning						
f.	Explicitly communicates criteria for student success						
g.	Provides meaningful and constructive feedback to students						
h.	Maximizes available instructional time						
i.	Develops relationships with students that fosters a culturally responsive learning environment						
j.	Develops a safe and welcoming learning environment						
k.	Collaboratively develops, models, and communicates clear expectations for student behavior within a learning environment						

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2017-18 FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI PK-8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Teacher Name: **TEMPLATE**

I.	Implements classroom and building rules and procedures						
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III. Professional Responsibilities **HE** **Eff** **PE** **I** **N/A** **Evidence**

a.	Participates in professional learning opportunities and applies what is learned						
b.	Establishes and maintains professional communication which is clear, responsible, and respectful						
c.	Establishes and maintains meaningful two-way communication in a timely manner with students, guardians, and/or colleagues						
d.	Collaborates to accomplish team, school-wide, and district-wide goals and practices						
e.	Maintains up-to-date records of student progress according to District policy and school norms						

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

1. **Attendance Rate:** Satisfactory performance is characterized by being at work a sufficient number of days to accomplish the essential tasks of the position without having to distribute to other employees or to delay those essential tasks. Satisfactory performance is generally characterized by not exceeding during the term of the current Employment Agreement the total number of leave days which are earned by an employee on an accrual basis during that period, with the exception of approved FMLA or other approved leaves. Frequent absences and/or questionable absences which result in hardship to other employees or which result in the delay of essential tasks can result in documentation of unsatisfactory performance. All employees are expected maintain an attendance rate that does not exceed their earned leave time as outlined within their Employment Agreement.

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2017-18 FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI PK-8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Teacher Name: **TEMPLATE**

Absenteeism that exceeds the employee's earned leave time is considered unsatisfactory performance. The employee's attendance rate for the current school year is as follows:

Did the employee's absenteeism rate exceed accrued leave time? No Yes

Employee's attendance rate for 2015-16: SATISFACTORY UNSATISFACTORY

2. **Participation in PLC/SIT:** All employees are expected to participate in a School Improvement Team or Professional Learning Community. Describe the employee's involvement and role within their PLC/SIT:

Employee's participation & fulfillment of SIT/PLC responsibilities: MET DID NOT MEET

3. **Timely Fulfillment of Expectations:** SATISFACTORY UNSATISFACTORY

4. **Relationship with Educational Assistant(s), including training, mentorship, communication, feedback, and supervisory responsibilities:**

ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL GOAL:

The employee set an annual professional goal and outlined steps toward achieving that goal.

Annual Professional Goal was: ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Describe:

AREAS OF CONCERN NEEDING IMPROVEMENT:

Please describe any areas in which the employee needs to make improvements in order to meet school expectations relating to professional performance.

2017-18 FREE HORIZON MONTESSORI PK-8 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Teacher Name: **TEMPLATE**

Summary of Strengths & Growth Producing Feedback:

Supervisor's Name/Title: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have received this observation document. My signature does not indicate agreement or disagreement with this evaluation.

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____