

**SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**California Montessori Project San Juan  
Campuses**

**American River**

**6838 Kermit Lane, Fair Oaks, CA**

**Carmichael**

**4718 Engle Road, Carmichael, CA**

**Orangevale**

**6545 Beech Avenue, Orangevale, CA**

**San Juan Unified School District**

**April 3-6, 2011**

**Visiting Committee Members**

Michelle Spencer, Chairperson  
Administrator for Student Learning, Curriculum & Instruction, Visions In Education Charter School

Brent Boothby  
Executive Director, Maria Montessori Charter Academy

Bill Brent  
Teacher, Hearthstone Charter School

Christal Proctor  
Teacher, Chico Country Day School

Undrae Walker  
Principal, Reyn Franca School - Denair

## Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

The California Montessori Project (CMP) is a network of Charter Montessori public schools, operating since August 2001 within the greater Sacramento area. CMP is the result of the desire and vision of a group of parents and teachers who sought to make Montessori methodology accessible to students in the public school sector. CMP schools currently maintain accreditation through MSAC (Montessori Schools Accreditation Commission), and serve over 1,700 students at six campuses, located in Sacramento and El Dorado Counties. The California Montessori Project's San Juan campuses operate within the geographic boundaries of the San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD). SJUSD authorized CMP-San Juan for a five-year term, effective July, 2006. On February 8, 2011, the SJUSD Governing Board authorized the CMP-San Juan Charter for an additional 5-year term, effective through July 2016. CMP-San Juan has three locations and serves approximately 800 students. The American River and Carmichael campuses serve students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The Orangevale campus serves students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade and will be adding 6th grade in the fall of 2011. Orangevale is the newest campus, having opened in the fall of 2010. The three San Juan Campuses, along with three other campuses in the network, are supported by one central administration office, residing at the Carmichael campus. Currently, there are eleven employees operating out of the central administration office.

School Year	Enrollment Increase from Previous Year
2007/2008	4% (626 students from 600)
2008/2009	4% (654 students)
2009/2010	6% (689 students)
Fall 2010 Orangevale Campus opens	13% (790 students)

Despite the fact that the American River campus has had to move several times in the past five years, enrollment continues to increase. The majority of CMP-San Juan students are identified as White, not Hispanic (68%) with their second largest ethnic population identified as Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (15%). This is comparable with the ethnic diversity seen in the San Juan Unified School District. In Fall 2010, CMP had a total enrollment of 790 students at its three campuses. New students are admitted via a lottery process based on space availability. There is a significant number of families on the waiting list, even with all of the enrollment increases.

As CMP-San Juan's enrollment increases, so has their English Language Learner population. Only 10, less than 1%, of their students are English Language Learners. Seven percent of their students qualify for special education services.

The AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) was met for the California Montessori Project's school-wide and subgroups in the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 school years. In the 2009/2010 school year, the AYP criterion was met in English-Language Arts for the whole school as well as all subgroups, however, the AYP criterion for mathematics was not met by the whole school nor was it met by any subgroup (Hispanic/Latino, White, and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged). Because the AYP criterion in mathematics was not met, CMP San Juan Campuses did not meet AYP school-wide criterion in 2009-2010.

The API (Academic Performance Index) for CMP San Juan Campuses has steadily increased over the past four years. Information gathered via CMP San Juan Campuses SARC reports (SARC is prepared by the CMP Central Office) show that API scores increased by 8 points in the 2007-2008 school year, by 23 points the 2008-

2009 school year, and no gains in the 2009-2010-- holding steady at an API of 815. According to CDE, their API scores are as follows: 07-08 API 784, 08-09 API 792, 09-10 API 815. API growth has steadily improved.

Scores on statewide testing show a couple of issues related to student performance. California Standards Test (CST) scores show between 54% to 81% of students proficient or advanced in English Language Arts at all grade levels. ELA is an area of academic strength within the CMP-San Juan campuses, with trends showing that the economically disadvantaged students make gains each year. Mathematics is a focus area for growth at CMP, with fewer percentages of students scoring proficient or advanced at the upper grade levels.

2010 Math Proficiency Levels by Grade	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th Gen	8th Alg
Adv or Prof	68%	53%	57%	41%	46%	46%	23%	35%

2010 ELA Proficiency Levels by Grade	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Adv or Prof	61%	54%	65%	54%	73%	81%	74%

Teachers at CMP are required to hold valid California teaching credentials. Currently, 100% of the teachers are credentialed. Additionally, CMP teachers are strongly encouraged, with tuition assistance and financial incentives, to complete cross certification in Montessori education through accredited training centers. All of the classes at CMP are taught by NCLB compliant teachers.

The school has a variety of resources including extensive hands-on Montessori materials and manipulatives in every classroom, as well as state-adopted textbooks. The visiting committee observed that every single classroom was richly embellished with extensive educational materials and decor.

## Chapter II: Progress Report

Since their initial visit in 2008, the staff has worked to address the growth areas/critical areas of follow-up, the school and its community of learners to evolve. The vision of the CMP administrative team has been to promote leadership from within to maintain focus on pupil achievement and school improvement. Many opportunities for expansion of responsibilities have been provided for staff. Since the last visit by a WASC team, these changes have included: appointment of a new principal and addition of a .5 FTE Vice Principal/Education Specialist at the American River campus; a .5 FTE Vice Principal/Education Specialist at the Carmichael campus; the addition of the CMP Orangevale campus; the addition of new principal at Orangevale; updating the alignment of the Montessori-based curriculum to the California State Standards; and the implementation of the STAR Power Tutoring program.

The school used Focus on Learning as the protocol for its last self-study. As a result of the self-study and Visiting Committee report, the following growth areas/critical areas of follow-up were identified. These included:

Some examples of Updating Policies and Procedures Network Wide are:

- Promotion/Retention Policy – Approved on Nov. 2009;
- Student Discipline Procedures, Suspension and Expulsion – Approved Feb. 2008; and
- CMP Mission Statement and Core Values – Modified 2008.

Implementation of BEST (positive behavioral approach):

- Established school- wide expectations;
- Established commitment from the school administrators; and
- Clearly defined and consistent consequences and procedures for undesirable behaviors.

Analyze reading and math needs, based on data collection:

- Higher student achievement in the areas of basic communication skills of reading writing, listening and speaking;
- Greater emphasis on increased competence in mathematical concepts, applications, and problem-solving skills; and
- Systematic assessment of student performance for use in improving students' achievement and regularly reporting of progress to all stakeholders.

Fully Implement Cultural Rotation of Curriculum Subject Matter:

- Greater emphasis on improvement of the student interdisciplinary study in the areas of Botany, Zoology, History, Geography, Art, and Music for ages 6 – 9 year olds-- 1st through 3rd grade; and
- Greater emphasis on improvement of the student interdisciplinary study in the areas of History, Science (Biology/Chemistry), Geography, Art and Music.

The responsibility to follow up on these recommendations was shared across the staff. Evidence of the extent of the follow-up was included in the results of the parent, staff, and student team meetings, in the written self-study, in the dialogue with key stakeholders and focus groups and in the classroom observations of the Visiting Committee members.

The recipient of the majority of follow-up on the growth areas have been those in the lower grades as they tend to score higher than students in upper elementary and middle school on the California Standards Tests. The school was able to have the assistance of a Special Education teacher and Education Specialist to assist in the planning, implementation, and follow through of Response To Intervention (RTI). Class size has remained manageable and individual student lesson plan are utilized to improve English and mathematics to target specific performance criteria. The BEST program is closer to completed implementation. The program is being utilized to provide positive behavioral supports (PBS) that will improve time on task and reduce behavioral referrals.

Technology has been addressed in many ways since the last accreditation visit. The school has invested in researched based programs such as Rosetta Stone Foreign Language Program, Accelerated Reader, and K- to the 8th Power. The Technology Plan, which was approved by the Education Technology Office of the California Department of Education in 2008, has played a major role in the development of enhanced classroom management strategies including "feedback" to students regarding academic progress.

The school shows evidence of great care and on- going maintenance provided by school staff and administration. The safety of students and staff is demonstrated by the presence and utilization of two-way communication in every classroom the support of parental participation in the classrooms.

### Chapter III: Self-Study Process

#### California Montessori Project Expected School-Wide Learning Results

California Montessori Project Students:

- Make **Safe, Respectful, and Responsible** choices for themselves and empower others to do so as well.
- Are **Montessori Learners** who work independently, demonstrate initiative, utilize the power of concentration, think critically, and are lifelong learners.
- Are **Ambassadors of Grace and Courtesy** who celebrate the diversity in our global community.
- **Agents of Change** who have a strong sense of community, are socially responsible, connected to their environment, advocate for themselves and others, and are empowered to be problem solvers

The Montessori philosophy states that a child has an innate desire to learn and produce purposeful, meaningful work. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the role of an adult in a child's education is to provide an appropriate environment, complete with tools and methods, to facilitate the child's own discovery of knowledge and skills at the time when it has the most impact for the child as an individual. This system has a foundation in trust and respect of the individual, and a belief that children will soar beyond traditional expectations in this environment.

The CMP-San Juan Campuses, whose teachers are trained in Montessori methodology, developed ESLRs that align and validate Montessori philosophy. California Montessori Project San Juan Campuses hold that an educated person:

- Is well-rounded and balanced
- Is a collaborative member of a community
- Is motivated to set and achieve high goals.
- Demonstrates empathy towards others through respectful and productive communications
- Views him/herself as a global citizen
- Is empowered and responsible for making positive changes in the world and within their immediate environment
- Is developing personal habits leading to a healthy lifestyle which include balancing leisure, work, family, exercise, nutrition and community.

Certificated and classified staff and parents were actively involved in the self-study process, analyzing data, assessing needs, and developing the action plan. Stakeholders diligently focus on gathering evidence to verify student learning and achievement. The ESLR stating, "All students are Montessori Learners who work independently, demonstrate initiative, utilize the power of concentration, think critically, and are life-long learners" is genuinely embodied within the culture of learning expectations permeating the school. The Leadership Team members were trained in the Focus on Learning process in order to become more effective team leaders. CMP encouraged Focus Groups to review the guide questions and shared perspective, ideas, and concepts facilitated by dialog. Parents contributed to the focus group discussions when they were able to be present. Support staff members participated and were used to elicit more detailed responses from students regarding the school and its programs. The students were involved in the process by meeting regularly within their teacher grade-level teams for focused group discussions.

The expected school-wide leaning results (ESLRs) were reviewed. The vision statement and ESLRs were refined with input from all stakeholder groups and is closely in connected to BEST. The ESLRs were refined to align with state standards and to facilitate the Montessori methodology which promotes the success of all students, academically, socially and emotionally. Academically, this is measured through multiple instruments including the STAR test results, as well as well assorted Montessori assessments.

Teacher observation, working one - on -one, class work, team teaching, the California Montessori Project uses the several assessment tools to formulate data to identify, evaluate, and recommend the most appropriate instructional path to support. The gathering and synthesis of student data indicated, the CMP San Juan Campuses have experienced success regarding state and federal growth targets. The findings derived from the API scores indicate a consistent rise. The gathering of information via staff and grade level meetings allowed for the strengths and relative weakness to be identified.

The Visiting Committee observed evidence of complete participation of all stakeholders at minor and major levels. Stakeholders spent a great deal of time reviewing the entire school's program in relation to the ESLRs, to the state standards and to the WASC/CDE criteria.

The self-study process allowed the CMP focus groups to analyze data for strength and weakness. CMP identified ten strengths and six areas for growth. The Leadership Team formulated a draft action plan based upon the identified areas. Through focus groups, grade level team meetings, minor to major revisions were

made and a final plan was approved by the Leadership Team, the site governing body that will monitor the accomplishment of the plan.

## **Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program**

### **CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND STAFF, AND RESOURCES**

#### **A1.**

According to the CMP charter, the CMP mission is “to offer a quality, tuition free, Montessori-based educational program.” As a part of its vision, the charter document specifies that the school believes that an educated person is:

- Well-rounded and balanced;
- Is a collaborative member of a community;
- Is motivated to set and achieve high goals;
- Demonstrates empathy towards others through respectful and productive communications;
- Views him/herself as a global citizen;
- Is empowered and responsible for making positive changes in the world and within their immediate environment; and
- Is developing personal habits leading to a healthy lifestyle which include balancing leisure, work, family, exercise, nutrition and community.

The ESLRs referenced in chapter three were developed originally via the leadership of the CMP Network and the Board of Directors.

In accordance with their Mission Statement, California Montessori Project San Juan Campuses believe they offer an environment which has the tools, programs, resources, and support to enable students to become “educated to high academic standards and to develop themselves to their fullest capacity as competent, happy, productive individuals, family members, employers/employees, and contributors to a better society and a peaceful world.”

Key strategies that the school has implemented to achieve its vision and goals include:

- Small total school populations and low student/teacher ratios;
- Responsibility, accountability, and freedom for individual student progress within the academic framework;
- Challenges to develop critical reasoning, openness to encourage creativity, and opportunities to facilitate service;
- High, unwavering standards of conduct, emphasizing respect for self and others, honesty, responsibility, and courtesy;
- Emphasis on collaboration, peer governance, problem-solving, and goal-setting according to developmental readiness; and
- High parental involvement and collaboration in education and governance.

According to the CMP charter, the Montessori philosophy states “that a child has an innate desire to learn and produce purposeful, meaningful work.” This system has a foundation in trust and respect of the individual, and a belief that children go beyond traditional expectations in this environment. The charter, bylaws, website and self study document make it clear that staff, central administration, and the CMP Governing Board believe that

the presentation of the Montessori methodology promotes the success of all students' academic, social and emotional success.

The school solicits parent input via an online parent survey at the end of the year, parents elected to the network board, and opportunity for parental involvement in the Campus Advisory Councils (CAC).

The CMP charter specifies that the CMP Board of Directors will be responsible for the operation of the schools. Quoting specifically:

**CMP Board Duties**

The CMP Board of Directors will be responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the School including but not limited to:

- The general policies of the School;
- Approval and monitoring of the School's annual budget;
- Receipt of funds for the operation of the School in accordance with the charter school laws;
- Solicitation and receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the School;
- Oversight and final approval of the hiring, discipline or dismissal of School employees as recommended by the Principal, or by the Executive Director for the hiring of principals;
- Approving the School's personnel policies and monitoring the implementation of these policies by the Principal and/or duly constituted committees; and
- Hiring and evaluating the Executive Director;
- Approval of contracts with outside entities or persons over ten thousand dollars;
- Financial audit oversight;
- All matters related to Charter approval, amendment, or revocation.

The complete hierarchical structure of the CMP organization, from the individual classrooms and teachers at each site, to the site principals, to the central office, all focus on supporting the ESLRs in an authentic, targeted manner. The ESLRs are embodied in the school's culture and organizational structure.

**A2.**

The bylaws of CMP clearly define the selection rules and procedures for determining the composition of the Board, which includes a diverse mix of representatives from each of the school sites (both parents and staff), as well as outside professionals from the business and educational worlds. Between the network-based CMP website, the regular newsletter communications from each campus and the site-elected parent representatives to the Board, it appears the school community has a good understanding of the role of the Board. The bylaws indicate a clear delineation for the roles and responsibilities of both the professional staff and the Board. It is clear that the overall management of the organization is within the Executive Director's purview.

The charter specifies a clear relationship to the ESLRs, and it is inferred via its oversight that the Board has a supervisory role in the development of the ESLRs. Within the CMP organization, it appears at the professional level that the CMP "round table" leadership groups takes primary responsibility with the development and refinement of the ESLRs, including using data and the regular monitoring of scores to focus learning towards the ESLRs.

The CMP network has established a very detailed escalation-based conflict / complaint resolution procedure. CMP chooses not to participate in federally based categorical funding, therefore does not produce a Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP) or a Single Plan for Student Achievement.

**A3.**

The CMP structure fosters an environment where co-teachers and grade level teacher teams collaborate formally one time per month and at other times as needed. Through the use of grade level mentors, educational specialists, and site principals, teachers appear to have an appropriate level of support. Recent staff meeting agendas indicate a prominent focus on the ESLRs. The CMP Roundtable is responsible for upper level decision-making and meets regularly to analyze student performance data and disaggregate specific goals derived from the data. The Executive Director and site principals comprise the CMP Round Table responsible for upper-level decision-making. Decisions that are within the governance realm of the CMP Governing Board are submitted for approval at the monthly Governing Board meetings, if recommended by the Executive Director.

Based on regular assessment data, CMP's Educational Specialists will create specific intervention models for students with remedial needs academically, including the full implementation of the RTI model for intervention and special education identification.

**A4.**

CMP teachers are required to hold a valid California State Teaching Credential in addition to a Montessori teaching credential from an accredited institution. Beginning teachers participate in BTSA, a new teacher orientation "boot camp" and mentor teachers are assigned to them. Mentor teachers are also used to align curriculum and assessments.

According to the personnel handbook, the CMP Board commits \$600-\$1000 in professional growth incentives per teacher, per year. Professional development is initiated through dialogue at multiple levels. Generally, the needs are stated at the site-based staff meetings and then presented at the administrative Round Table. Further, professional development needs and opportunities are presented within the Executive Director's report at the monthly CMP Governing Board meetings.

CMP does have a Staff Handbook, a Parent Handbook, a Montessori Curriculum Guide, a School Safety Binder and a Policies and Procedures Manual to support teachers, staff and families. These handbooks are readily available to all stakeholders on the CMP website. The CMP Round Table regularly reviews its policies and procedures, and when necessary with the assistance of the CMP Board of Directors, revises them accordingly.

**A5.**

CMP offers each of its employees a \$600-\$1000 stipend to support individual teacher staff development. In addition, the school implements staff-wide professional development on an as-needed topical basis four times per year (example: special education). With a heavy emphasis on Montessori training within the professional development, the Montessori experience of the student is enhanced.

**A6.**

Recent audit records indicate that the overall CMP network has maintained a balanced budget with positive cash flows, with a healthy 30%+ reserve. Each classroom at each campus was started with over \$20,000 in classroom materials and equipment. As teachers identify student needs or curricular enhancements, materials and supplies are recommended for inclusion in future budgets. Teachers also regularly participate in textbook review and adoption processes.

The CMP Orangevale and American River campuses are housed in previously San Juan unified based elementary school campuses. The CMP Carmichael campus is housed in a converted professional office complex. They are responsibly seeking alternative facilities for the Carmichael campus as the current five-year lease for the facility expires.

CMP has an established ten-year operating history as a network. It receives business support services from long-time partner Wheatland School District. The CMP administrative staff participates in regular training to ensure administrative practices meet the guidelines required for annual audits. For the past four years, CMP's annual audits have had clean results with no negative findings. There are also clear guidelines on the use and management of Campus Advisory Council (CAC) funds that are predominantly comprised of fundraising monies.

Recognizing the importance of staff development and teacher training, CMP honors its staff by providing numerous professional growth/orientation opportunities throughout the year, including:

- A summer “Boot Camp” for new instructional staff.
- CMP offers network-wide Staff Development days that feature keynote addresses by nationally-known speakers, as well as break-out sessions and workshops led by experts within the CMP network.
- CMP has committed to support the participation of its Middle School teachers in the pursuit of secondary-level Montessori training.
- The California Montessori Project has partnered with the Sacramento County Office of Education BTSA Consortium to provide BTSA induction programming to all new SB 2042 preliminary credential holders.

#### **A7.**

After reviewing the previous two years worth of audits conducted by Vincenti and Stutzman, the CMP network has regular accounting and external audit procedures, an adequate reserve fund, appropriate notices for informing the public and appropriate authorities, and is fairly transparent in its budget process. Stakeholders have opportunity for involvement in the long term decision making process at both the site and network level. The Round Table, as well as the Board, is responsible for making decisions related to the ESLRs. The Executive Director of the CMP network has primary responsibility in the marketing of the CMP program. While CMP has adequate staffing for its program and mission, they do not appear to be comparably compensated to their peers within the San Juan District.

#### **A8.**

According to the recent audits by Vincenti and Stutzman, the CMP network has adopted adequate written policies and procedures for both fiscal and personnel-related issues, as well as for contracts in excess of \$75,000.

#### **Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.**

During the “Organization” based focus group, participants highlighted “communicating with stakeholders,” supportive leadership at both the central office and site level, and available, open-sourced resources on several levels (peer, administrative and financial). The ability to work “out of the box” with a “do it yourself” attitude is promoted as an organizational culture, similar to the ethic the staff is trying to instill in the kids. Areas of strength included by CMP within their self-study that the visitation group was able to verify include:

- Clear organizational vision and purpose;
- Implementation of RTI Process;

- Low teacher-to-student ratios;
- Active and responsive governing board;
- Active CACs on each campus;
- Professional development for teachers;
- Experienced teachers holding both California teaching credentials and Montessori teaching credentials;
- Parent involvement required

**Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.**

CMP perceives its key organizational issues moving forward as:

- Facilitating better communication with parents to increase their understanding of the Board's role in our organization and how parents can participate.
- Continued workings of strategic plan and implementation
- Liaison between governing board and CAC meetings
- Continue to assist student learning by implementation of new programs: DIBELS, Word Warm-Ups, and new math programs.

In reviewing the 31 page three year strategic plan with over 100 follow-up actions, the organization appears to be pursuing an aggressive expansion and improvement plan, the largess of which will be challenging to manage within a three year time frame.

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- WASC Visiting Committee-led focus group feedback from key stakeholders of the organization
- California Montessori Project Charter Document
- California Montessori Project Website ([www.cacmp.org](http://www.cacmp.org))
- Classroom Newsletters
- Campus Newsletters
- Staff Agendas
- Staff Development Agendas
- Staff Credentials
- Credentialed and Classified Pay Scales
- Annual Budget Audit
- Governing Board Agenda and Notes
- Staff Handbook
- Parent Handbook
- Montessori Curriculum Guide
- School Safety Binder
- Policies and Procedures Manual
- Round Table Agenda

**CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM**

**B1.**

CMP reports that they have collectively built a curriculum guide that aligns the California academic standards and the Montessori curriculum. This curriculum guide breaks down instruction into periods of learning based on calendar months, so that all students have access to grade level curriculum in a multi-age classroom. The curriculum guide allows teachers to create lesson plans and student planners based on the ESLRs and

academic standards. State-adopted texts support the Montessori curriculum (Harcourt Math, SRA, Zoophonics, Houghton Mifflin, History Alive!, etc.). Students work at their own academic level on an independent basis, where they advance only when a concept is mastered via assessment scores. Instruction is also offered in small groups either to review, differentiate instruction, or to introduce new concepts. Students receive whole-group instruction in cultural subjects such as zoology, biology, social studies, art, etc. At some sites, there is a "cultural rotation" where teachers rotate to various classrooms to teach cultural subjects. Other sites utilize a co-teaching model all day (ie. 2 teachers: 30 students), so the team-teaching work is being done in cultural subjects the same way that the core curriculum is.

The CMP ESLRs are visibly posted in each classroom visited at the San Juan campuses. The ESLRs are common language throughout the schools. The ESLRs are referred back to in helping kids reflect on poor behavior choices and ESLRs are located on the CMP behavior tracking forms (minor incident reports). Administrators are able to see behavior trends that arise due to the fact that the forms are inputted into their student information system, Aeries. This allows the school to take a proactive approach to behavior at the schools. CMP ESLRs are clearly taught in lessons as evidenced by student work (writing and art work specifically). Character education, peace education, and environmental education is embedded within the Montessori curriculum guide.

Staff development offerings in current brain research and Montessori instruction are highlighted in CMP's self study. CMP also takes part in the BTSA early teaching support program. Financial incentives are offered to teachers who seek out training and many of the teachers hold both a California teaching credential as well as a Montessori teaching certificate. The CMP pay scale shows the stipend categories and amounts.

All students have individualized work plans and performance goals that are customized for their instructional needs. Students who are not meeting their goals and benchmarks move into the RTI process. CMP employs staff members necessary to support all student needs. A special education director, program specialist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and school psychologists are available to the students who have Individualized Education Plans within the CMP San Juan Campuses. Students needing educational support, receive services within the classroom or are pulled out depending on their specific needs. CMP reports that students who are English Learners have been identified through the CELDT test that is given yearly. These students are supported within the classroom with the core curriculum and the Rosetta Stone American English program.

CMP employs Education Specialists who review, evaluate, and ensure the alignment of the curriculum guide with the California academic standards and the Montessori curriculum. CMP recently adopted a state recommended spelling text. This process was used as an example of how the school adopts new curriculum with staff input. Teachers and Education Specialists work together to implement the curriculum and evaluate the program's effectiveness. The spelling program was implemented in Fall 2010. Teachers received an in-service training at that time and will be following up with a post-year in-service to review the programs effectiveness and fit with the Montessori curriculum. Based on the current assessments, students are often performing above grade level in this area.

CMP has identified the need for alignment of homework expectations and guidelines for teachers through a staff survey, and work is still needed to create that document.

CMP administration recognized a curricular need for health education beyond what was provided to them by the San Juan Unified School District. Principals and Education Specialists selected what they felt was a good option and presented it to staff. Upper elementary school teachers brought up valid concerns with the new program. Instead of implementing the new program, a curriculum committee was formed to do more research and find the best fit for CMP. Unified School District curriculum from the four overseeing districts was ultimately brought together to create a customized program for CMP. The voice of the teachers has been heard and put into action. CMP school sites are currently implementing the new curriculum in Spring 2011. Clearly, CMP has put the curriculum review and evaluation process in the hands of the teachers and offers to support their staff to find the best fit for their schools.

CMP has identified math as an area of growth based on the past three years of CST math scores. The Albanesi independent work process is the core curriculum used to guide students in kindergarten through third grade through the Montessori math materials, the main focus of which is for students to move from concrete to

abstract forms of math. Albanesi is supplemented by state-adopted math curriculum, such as Harcourt Brace, in grades 4 through 6. The classroom work environment has concrete math materials readily available to all students. Focus groups made it clear that staff has identified basic math facts as a priority for curriculum and instruction to support student learning. The Rocket Math program is already being used to help support students. Students needing additional interventions in math go through the RTI process. The school uses the Accelerated Math program and the after-school STAR tutoring program to assist students who are not moving forward at the expected rate in the Albanesi curriculum.

CMP does not have a formal way to track students after they graduate from CMP. Informally, students that are still in contact with the school have transitioned well and have had positive experiences. The Education Specialists are considering creating a formalized survey to send out to former CMP graduates.

CMP seems to have a strong relationship with feeder schools, specifically private Monetsori preschools.

## **B2.**

CMP provides many opportunities for students to participate in creating a personalized learning plan. Students undergo a beginning of the year assessment process before starting the core curriculum. Once assessed, students are placed at a developmentally appropriate starting points. The Albanesi curriculum is an independent work system that reviews and introduces new concepts at the student's current level and pace. Mathematics, Language Arts, Spelling, and technology programs are all independently paced programs. Student progress is monitored regularly and adjusted to meet the student's needs. In addition to the independent curriculum, students participate in small group instruction in math and language arts. All students have access to academically appropriate manipulatives to support their learning in math and language arts. Often realia items are displayed or used to teach cultural subjects such as history, botany, etc. (for example, tangible examples of different root systems that plants use).

The self study and focus groups concurred that structured curriculum is needed in art, music, and p.e..

Technology programs are offered to all students within CMP. Accelerated Reader is a reading program that focuses primarily on reading comprehension skills. Students work at their own levels and pace. Assessment data is provided by the program to inform teachers, parents and students of their progress. Rosetta Stone is a web-based foreign language instruction program that allows students to participate in self-guided tutoring sessions. K-3rd grade students can choose a different language each year and 4th-8th grade students select a language to stay with long term. K to the 8th Power is a web-based computer literacy and technology program where students learn about the internet as a research tool, how to work with basic software programs for word processing and spreadsheets, as well as practicing their keyboarding skills. Scores for these technology programs are located directly on the student's report cards.

CMP parents participate by working in the classrooms, assisting with student research projects, field trips, and volunteer hours. Parents have access to classroom information through weekly newsletters, emails, calls, and notes home. Parents also view the students work plan that documents the students' academic progress in class. Depending on the grade level, students may have a daily or a weekly work plan that goes home. Work plans for older students allow them to make personal learning goals. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to review progress reports. Older students also participate in these conferences. Conferences are used to review student progress, achievements, concerns, strategies and goal setting. Report cards then go home at different times in the year to inform parents on student learning.

Post high school transitions are not highlighted in CMP's self study as they are a K-8 system. However, the current curriculum supports students in a way that will help them move towards a post high school option (especially with regard to research projects, technology education, real world education, and foreign language instruction).

**B3.**

CMP is a K-8th grade network of schools that offers real world applications. CMPs curriculum guide melds together the California academic standards and the Montessori curriculum that includes “Practical Life” education goals. The Practical Life expectations include daily living activities such as pouring water, cleaning activities, sewing a button, food preparation skills, etc. The CMP philosophy is to educate the “whole child” by preparing them for independent adult life. Technology education and field trips are also highlighted as ways that the CMP curriculum offers real world applications to all students.

In middle school, CMP students participate in a three-day “Business Internship” which allows students select a possible career interest to experience first hand. Middle school students are also expected to complete a minimum of 50 hours of community service per year that is recorded on the Student Grade Report.

Middle school students at the Carmichael campus also run a weekly concession stand called the Iris Cafe. These experiences offer students the opportunity to participate in real-world business operations, responsibility, handling finances, etc.

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum:**

Adherence to the Montessori Philosophy of teacher observation, customized learning, differentiation of instruction, fostering independence, providing freedom of choice, hands-on materials, etc.;

- Individualized student work plans to help students move through the Albanesi and state-adopted text at their own pace;
- CMP Curriculum Guide that aligns the California academic standards and Montessori curriculum;
- The curriculum adoption and review process/ policies are used to ensure that curriculum is coherent and relevant;
- Real world experiences are offered in a variety of ways to support student learning (technology, Practical Life curriculum, field trips, realia, Middle School Business Internship; and
- Parent participation in student learning through helping in the classroom (parent hours), field trips, parent-teacher conferences, etc..

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

- Ongoing curriculum review process and continued progress in supporting students in math. Specifically, basic math fact acquisition;
- Ongoing review and updates of the Albanesi curriculum and core curriculum;
- Ongoing training and implementation of the BEST Behavior program in place; and
- Structured, formal curricular needs for art, music, and p.e..

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Focus group and Home group responses;
- CMP Curriculum Guide;
- Albanesi Curriculum Cards and Assessments;
- State-adopted texts;
- Lesson Plans and Student Work Plans;
- Student Work and Portfolios;
- Progress Reports and Report Cards; and
- Curriculum by way of Technological Programs (K to 8th Power, Rosetta Stone, Accelerated Reader).

**CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION****C1.**

The CMP formulates its instruction based on the basic pedagogy of the Montessori philosophy, which employs several strategies to ensure every student is supported and challenged in the learning process. First, teachers receive training to be tactical observers and proctor assessments to determine the students ability level. The

teacher then matches the instruction and work plan based on the student's level and "zone of proximal development" (the level of learning where the child can be successful, yet still challenged). Other items are also used in student placement such as the Student Profile form that parents fill out when the student enrolls at CMP, and student portfolios. Student portfolios may include student work, but primarily are used as an articulation file of classroom based assessment scores which can be handed off to the future teacher and used to help make class lists.

After placement, students use a work plan to assist them in working through the Montessori curriculum and text book curriculum independently or in pairs. Peer tutoring is naturally built into the work time. The Albanesi curriculum has built in review, reteach, and assessment portions. Teachers are then free to work with small groups to provide direct, differentiated instruction. Teachers may also provide one on one support for students needing assistance to complete the items within their work plan. Student work plans list goals and expectations for student learning. Students are then free to select the order of assignments and work at their own pace until mastery is achieved. Once assessments show that concepts have been mastered, a student will be promoted to the next level of exercises. Thus ensuring that all students are being challenged at their own capacity. Many students are working above grade level in spelling, math, and language because the customized learning process constantly challenges each student at their unique level. Students also utilize the textbook curriculum in an independent fashion (modifications to SRA, Harcourt Math, and Rocket Math). In other words, these curricula, which are typically taught in whole class or small group fashion, have been modified to fit the independent learning style. The independence of the students allows the teacher to perform assessments and make alterations in the students work plans freely. Students that are not progressing within a reasonable pace with teacher assistance, are moved into the RTI (Response to Intervention process). The RTI team meets to discuss possible accommodations to help the student find success. Students with IEPs are mainstreamed and receive services within the classroom for most of the day.

The class meets together daily during circle time or a class meeting, to discuss expectations and guidelines for students. This may also serve as a chance for teachers to introduce a new "jobs" that may be added to the students' work plan. Students are free to share their experiences and perceptions about their learning. Class agendas are created and students can add agenda items as necessary, giving students a sense of ownership in discussions.

## **C2.**

CMP reports that they primarily use hands-on Montessori materials to assist children in learning the state content standards. There are several other ways in which CMP encourages students to become fully engaged in their learning process.

First, research shows that students become more engaged in learning when technology is used. Every classroom visited at CMP had computers readily accessible to students. To help prepare students for the future, CMP primarily utilizes three web-based programs to support student learning. K to the 8th Power is a program used throughout the CMP system to teach computer skills and technology literacy. Rosetta Stone is a program that allows students to move through self-guided foreign language sessions. Accelerated Reader is a program that promotes reading comprehension and is used as an assessment tool. Students also use software such as word processing, database software, and power point presentations to enhance their classroom learning. Teachers have access to technology to assist in instruction such as; projectors, AV equipment, DVD players, etc.

CMP also encourages engagement and exploration of the real world through field trips. These field trips become longer and more intensive in 4th-8th grade. Fourth grade takes day-long outdoor education trips. Fifth and sixth grades have regular "intensive study immersion weeks" that conclude learning units with hands-on project based learning. Seventh and eighth grade students attend multi-day field trips called "immersion weeks" to support learning and expose students to experiences not typical for their community (such as visiting a big city, working on a farm, cultural events, etc.) Middle school students also participate in real world, three-day "Business Internship" at the local business of their choice. In addition, 50 hours of community service must be completed by each middle school student per year. Hours are documented on the CMP Middle School Student Grade Report.

Curriculum and instruction focus groups agree with the self study in regards to a need for increased staff development support in art, music, and p.e. instruction. Additional p.e. equipment may be needed to support teachers in implementing any new curriculum adoptions.

Teachers facilitate learning by prioritizing classroom environment preparation for independent work times, fostering independence and problem solving, providing whole group and small group instruction, working with parents/students to achieve learning goals, offering enriching field trips, and regularly assessing progress to ensure content mastery. CMP highlights the staff development opportunities that directly impact instruction such as Montessori conferences/trainings, Professional Learning Communities, BTSA (California Beginning Teachers Support and Assessment program), as well as on-site trainings and resources. Financial incentives are located on the pay scale.

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

- Montessori Philosophy of teacher observation, individualized instruction, fostering independence, creating a prepared environment conducive to learning, etc.;
- Clear expectations for student learning and student work plans;
- Students constantly engaged and challenged;
- Educational experiences outside the classroom; and
- Use of technology to support learning.

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

- Continued support and upgrades to technology for instructional purposes (i.e. student wikis, smart boards, ELMOs, etc.); and
- Continued support and staff development offerings in math, art, music, and p.e. as specified by the self study and focus groups.

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include:**

- Student portfolios of assessment scores and work samples;
- Student work plans;
- Lesson Plans;
- Field Trips;
- Professional Development offerings, agendas, and incentives as seen on pay scale; and
- Well prepared classrooms.

## **LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **D1:**

CMP reports that they collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data in accordance with California Charter School Law through a variety of mandated assessments (STAR, CSTs, CELDT, Physical Fitness for 5th and 7th, and writing for 4th and 7th) along with a variety of other formal assessment as diagnostic and achievement tools.

CMP's report stresses the strong informal assessment practices inherent in their day-to-day instruction. Observation is the key assessment in a Montessori environment. Teachers are constantly watching students interacting with each other and the materials. Student's grades and growth are determined based on the California state standards and the results of assessments, as well as the student's classroom work.

CMP Education Specialists are in the process of developing universal core-subject screening assessments administered as benchmarks throughout the year. Performance levels are continually evaluated through daily classroom work as well as with informal and formal assessments. This information is used by the teacher to

determine if concepts should be taught again to the whole class or isolated to individual students. Parents can view their student assignments, quizzes, test results, progress reports and grades. Middle school parents can view this information online through Aeries.

Students have a portfolio of sample work and classroom assessment scores collected over each year in attendance. These portfolios are stored in the child's classroom and moved to the next classroom with the child.

The results of the California STAR tests are available to the community at large and can be accessed by visiting the California Department of Education website. They also prepare a School Accountability Report Card (SARC) every year showing their student achievement results based on STAR tests which can be viewed at their school's website.

The visiting committee found that CMP uses several tools to disaggregate data. Aeries is used for determining school-wide trends based on State testing results. Teachers can use the same information as well for classroom and individual student achievement needs. Other programs used to collect data are:

- Accelerated Reader;
- Accelerated Math; and
- Curriculum Associate's Benchmark Analysis.

CMP is also anticipating the debut of Aeries Analytical to expand the capabilities of existing resources.

CMP's assessment schedule is embedded in their Monthly Overview documents. These documents provide a detailed outline of the year's curriculum for each subject in each grade.

## **D2:**

Montessori teachers respect their students and the learning process. The interactions between students can give the teachers insight to the effectiveness of their classroom community. Lessons can be given as needed to support student grace and courtesy, attention to rules, and how proper behavior contributes to a positive learning environment for all students.

Journal writing is used in language, math, writing and cultural subjects for K-6 students. Middle school students use interactive notebooks, portfolios, and folders.

Students are given a voice by becoming involved in parent-teacher-student conferences. This is a time for students to verbalize what is working for them and what they find challenging in the learning process. As students get older, they are asked to develop personal learning goals. Progress toward these goals is evaluated during conferences. Findings from formal assessments are used to guide individual student curriculum, including modifications and accommodations. Based on the results of these assessments, teachers modify student's work plans and performance expectations for the classroom. Teachers regularly use these results to communicate with parents during parent-teacher conferences conducted in October and March.

For K-6, CMP uses rubric markings based on California state standards and Montessori benchmarks for formalized reporting in January and June. For 7th and 8th grades, students are receiving letter grades.

## **D3:**

Many CMP stakeholders are involved in reviewing student progress. Teachers and teaching assistants, as well as special education staff administer, correct and record assessment scores and classroom work. Teachers, mentor teachers, teaching assistants, special education teachers, and administration communicate regularly

how to effectively meet the needs of individual students. Grade level teams meet monthly to discuss student assessment data, curriculum, instruction, remediation, and advanced work options.

Middle school students' progress and grades are entered in an online grade book program called Aeries. Teachers input data after each assessment and/or assignment and students and their parents have password-protected access to the program and may visit the site as often as they wish for immediate feedback.

CMP's STAR and API scores are released to the general public each year and can be accessed via the California Department of Education website. Additionally, each campus posts their SARC (School Accountability Report Card) on the CMP website. CMP's Governing Board reviews these scores annually, as does San Juan Unified School District, who authorizes their charter.

**D4:**

CMP's teachers and administrators review assessments, and based on those reviews, implement a wide variety of supports to aide student achievement. Parents and teachers communicate verbally on a daily and/or weekly basis via work plans, written notes, behavior reports, phone calls, emails, conferences, RTI meetings, SST meetings, and IEP meetings.

They have implemented a wide variety of curriculum interventions and strategies to increase student achievement. Additionally, CMP frequently invites and sponsors guest speakers on a variety of issues including peace education, Montessori education, Positive Behavior Supports, classroom interventions for students with ADHD, and curriculum or text book experts to educate the staff on the proper use of educational materials

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

- Regular assessment schedule;
- Monthly grade level meetings;
- Twice per month staff meetings;
- Weekly Special Education Team meetings;
- Albanesi system of on-going assessment of student achievement of Montessori curriculum;
- Correlation of CA State Standards and Montessori curriculum;
- CMP encourages parents to participate in classroom and school-wide activities;
- Parents have the opportunity to observe during student work time, on field trips, and at various events showcasing students' skills;
- Portfolio assessments;
- Student work kept in journals and compiled for a complete year to show progress;
- Teachers as observers of student progress;
- Teacher mentoring program; and
- Education Specialists provide teachers with support for student learning.

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

- Streamlining universal assessments and data collection for each grade level;
- Improving on existing assessments and data collection;
- Entering all assessment data into their student database;
- Assessments that specifically target areas of weakness;
- More math assessments for the earlier grades; and
- More structured phonemic awareness assessments for younger emergent readers.

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Regular assessment schedule;
- Teacher instructional practices;
- Assessment Results Binder;
- Samples of formal assessments;
- Student portfolios;
- Sample rubrics for student reports, projects, and assignments;
- Correlation of CA State Standards and Montessori curriculum;
- CDE website for STAR assessment data;
- Classroom RTI Log;
- Education Specialists provide teachers with support for student learning;
- Parent-teacher-student conferences; and
- Parents have the opportunity to observe during student work time, on field trips, and at various events showcasing students' skills.

**CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

**E1.**

CMP strives to partner with parents to best serve the needs of their students. An essential component in creating a peaceful school community is participation and inclusion of all parties involved: teachers, support staff and administration, as well as parents and the broader local community. This is accomplished through parent education and orientation, frequent and positive communication between staff and families, and regular parent involvement.

CMP provides a variety of parent education opportunities and events throughout the year. Teachers also communicate weekly with parents via a newsletter, sharing curriculum highlights, upcoming field trips or fundraisers, and opportunities for parent involvement.

All enrolled CMP families are encouraged to contribute 40 hours of volunteer service to the school (70 hours for two or more enrolled children) for the purpose of participating and assisting in the ongoing development of the school and its academic goals.

CMP recognizes parent and teacher collaboration is integral to student academic success. In addition to informal discussions and communications throughout the year, CMP offers two formal opportunities each school year for parents and teachers to discuss their child's progress one-on-one. These parent-teacher conference periods are scheduled in the Fall to provide an overview of the goals and objectives of the student's academic plan for the year, and in the Spring, to provide a final update on the student's progress toward subject mastery.

Grades K-6, students use a work plan to monitor their class work progress. In the middle school program, students have weekly study guides for each subject, outlining the assignments for the week. Middle school students also record assignments daily in an agenda planner, which may be viewed by their parents to track daily work. Grades are available online for middle school students and parents through the web-based Aeries grade book program. Teachers send weekly grade reports from Aeries to parents via email.

**E2:**

The Montessori philosophy emphasizes having a carefully prepared classroom environment, creating a beautiful, clean, and orderly setting to maximize learning potential. Students learn the proper use and placement of the materials and are able to progress through the lessons, easily finding the tools to move to the next level. Teachers instruct each student how to properly care for their classroom environment and students assume responsibility through the assignment of clean-up jobs. In addition, parent volunteers often come in to

help clean the classrooms. Each campus has a unique feel and personality; all three strive to create a beautiful and warm environment for the students.

The safety of their school begins with the Montessori philosophy of peace. Beginning in kindergarten, students are taught how to cultivate peace and settle conflicts respectfully. CMP San Juan campuses have a high standard for safety. There is adequate supervision of students at all times. There are several playground assistants who are trained to supervise students in a systematic way. The use of the common areas is strategically planned to limit the number of students in a given area at one time. A school safety committee oversees and implements necessary safety procedures and plans. CMP San Juan campuses regularly schedule fire, earthquake and lockdown drills.

Classroom sizes are small and most classrooms have an assistant or a co-teacher. The high adult-to-student ratio allows CMP to deal with classroom disruptions quickly and effectively. CMP also teaches the Best Practices of Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible, which are reinforced through classroom activities and discussions and are posted in classrooms and common areas.

Grace and courtesy are central to the Montessori environment. Teachers and staff conduct themselves with this principle in mind at all times and interactions with students, staff, and parents always emphasize respect. Because of this, CMP has been successful in creating a trusting community. CMP's commitment to maintaining a low total school population and teacher/student class ratios also allows trust to flourish between teacher and student, as well as teacher and parent.

At the end of each school year, CMP has a two-day staff retreat. During this time, teachers and administration come together to discuss the successes and challenges of the previous year, and plan for the upcoming year. Teachers are encouraged to have a voice. Their input is respected by the administration and a true bond of trust and teamwork has been cultivated and maintained.

Continuous collaboration and professional development also play a key role in their staff's professionalism and consistency. CMP is committed to highly trained teachers and dedicates significant resources to ongoing professional development.

Academic expectations are clearly established by teachers in the classroom. Teachers in upper and lower elementary classrooms prepare a work plan for each of their students to guide their daily/weekly lessons and independent work.

CMP conducts annual surveys of parents and staff, collecting feedback on the school, teachers, administration and program. The results of these surveys are shared with Principals, Governing Board, and staff, and are used to effectively implement positive program change. Additionally, we regularly invite parent input and feedback on all aspects of CMP operations.

### **E3:**

To help students receive appropriate support and to ensure all students have individualized learning plans, CMP follows the Montessori philosophy of following the child. Teachers match the difficulty of work to the student's ability, creating individualized work plans, differentiating instruction, and creating rubrics for evaluating work. To affirm understanding of concepts, students are exposed to materials that not only teach the concepts, but also integrate many different learning modalities. This ensures all students are able to access presented concepts.

Throughout the year, all students are assessed for their academic level. When students are not performing at grade level academically, or are struggling with socialization or behavior issues, they are escalated through the RTI process. During the process, teachers, parents, and students work together to support student success and interventions and accommodations are implemented. The Montessori philosophy of education works well to keep students who are academically gifted feeling challenged and motivated to learn. CMP has multi-aged classrooms that provide for a wide span of ability levels.

**E4:**

Throughout the year, all students are assessed for their academic level. When students are not performing at grade level academically, or are struggling with socialization or behavior issues, they are escalated through the RTI process. If adequate progress is not made throughout this process, the student is escalated to the Student Study Team (SST). Throughout the SST process, if the student still does not make steady progress, an assessment plan for special education may be needed. Relevant testing and assessments are given and an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meeting is scheduled. CMP also has a Special Education Program Specialist who assists with compliance with all laws and rights protecting students. Each year, general education teachers, special education teachers, the Education Specialist, and the principal seek out professional development opportunities in the area of special education.

Students are allowed to progress through curriculum at their own pace, especially in math and language. In the cultural subjects, teachers can make lessons challenging to advanced learners by providing extensions to lessons, advanced assignments, and rubrics that allow for maximum potential. Occasionally, students performing at higher academic levels are placed in the SST process to be certain CMP is adequately meeting their needs. In cultural subjects teachers can make lessons challenging to advanced learners by providing extensions to lessons, advanced assignments, and rubrics that allow for maximum potential.

**Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth:**

- Intentional community formed by being a school of choice;
- Strong school to parent communication;
- High degree of parent involvement;
- Fully credentialed and qualified teachers (both CDE and Montessori credentialed);
- Numerous extra-curricular activities;
- Curriculum-based field trips;
- Individualized learning;
- Multi-age classrooms;
- Campus Advisory Council and Governing Board as additional forums for parents and students to communicate with the CMP administration; and
- Beautiful, well-maintained environment.

**Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth:**

- Creating a stronger sense of community via regular classroom meetings with parents;
- Lack of an athletic field (Carmichael campus);
- Lack of a multipurpose room (Carmichael campus);
- More interventions and assessments for math;
- More interventions/programs for advanced learners; and
- Lack of running water available in each classroom (Orangevale).

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Weekly newsletter;
- Love and Logic Training for parents;
- Parents can choose to complete their hours by volunteering as a classroom aide, playground assistant, cafeteria helper, art docent, photocopier, serving on the Fundraising Committee;
- Campus Advisory Council (CAC);
- Parent-teacher conferences;
- Teachers send weekly grade reports from Aeries to parents via email;
- Carefully prepared classroom environment, creating a beautiful, clean, and orderly setting;
- A school safety committee oversees and implements necessary safety procedures;
- Classroom sizes are small;

- Teachers instruct each student how to properly care for their classroom environment and students assume responsibility through the assignment of clean-up jobs;
- At the end of each school year a two-day staff retreat allows teachers and administration to discuss the successes and challenges of the previous year, and plan for the upcoming year;
- Teachers in upper and lower elementary classrooms prepare a work plan for each of their students to guide their daily/weekly lessons and independent work;
- CMP conducts annual surveys of parents and staff;
- The Montessori philosophy of education works well to keep students who are academically gifted feeling challenged and motivated to learn;
- RTI process;
- Student Study Team (SST); and
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

## **Part B: Synthesis of Schoolwide Areas of Strength and Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up**

### **General Comments:**

The Visiting Committee was impressed by the significant strengths that the three San Juan campuses had, in both the school culture and academic expectations. Staff, parents and students spoke the same language about the Montessori program and rationale. Through this pervasive, common understanding of the “why” for learning, the stakeholders quite naturally reach common ground on the “hows” and logistics of the academic and cultural program. There is impressive buy-in around the school’s ESLRs.

### **Schoolwide Areas of Strength**

1. Clear organizational vision and purpose
2. High degree of collaborative administrative, teacher, parent, and student investment, commitment, and passion for the model
3. Individualized instruction and core Montessori curriculum aligned with state standards
4. Variety of assessment tools designed in a sequential formative order to track and ensure student learning.

### **Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up**

1. Increase STAR scores in mathematics for all students in grades 2-8 by 3% through professional development, curricular review and updates, and the centralized use of data analysis to drive instruction and decision-making.
2. To develop a BEST (Building Effective Schools Together) team to move their BEST behavior program forward by reducing the number of office discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions.
3. Improve two-way communication between home and school by implementing regular classroom parent meetings, increase support for parent education opportunities and information regarding school policy, and the creation of a stronger sense of school community.

## Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

CMP's action plan was developed as part of the self-study process and focuses on three major components:

Goal 1. Increase STAR scores in mathematics for all students in grades 2-8 by 3% through professional development and the use of data to drive instruction and decision-making.

Rational: Through the analysis of data to drive curriculum and by implementing a variety of intervention strategies, teachers and staff will support and help meet the needs more effectively of CMP students in grades 2-8 in order to lessen the achievement gap in the area of mathematics.

Goal 2: To develop a BEST (Building Effective Schools Together) team to move their BEST behavior program forward by reducing the number of office discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions thus creating an environment more conducive to learning.

Rational: A systematic, consistent BEST behavior program team is needed to ensure the forward momentum begun two years ago so that students have a safe environment conducive to learning that all teachers actively understand and utilize in a uniform manner.

Goal 3: To implement regular classroom parent meetings in order to support parent education and create a stronger sense of school community.

Rational: Hosting regular parent meetings will increase the opportunities to educate families about the Montessori methodology, provide a venue where families can network and socialize, and discuss areas that need more support. This will create a stronger sense of school community.

The Visiting Committee agrees with the action plan developed by CMP, and is confident that their plan will address the critical areas for follow-up. The CMP action plan will further enhance student learning, and facilitate powerful opportunities for CMP to proactively intervene and target student needs before end of year, summative CSTs occur. Whereas the Visiting Committee saw evidence that all teachers target students in an individualized growth model, the action plan in place will facilitate a streamlined level of centralized support for all teachers. If the central office and school leadership team are better able to identify school-wide trends and areas of strength, they are poised and ready to facilitate a collaborative model of growing best practice between teaching teams. Likewise, if a centralized data system reveals areas of weakness within the curriculum or instruction, CMP has the human and material resources to make needed improvements.

It is clear that all staff as well as many parents participated in setting these goals, and that they believe the goals are important and worthwhile endeavors. There is a high degree of enthusiasm, support, and professional commitment by the leadership and staff of CMP. Several factors exist within the school to support school improvement, including

- training and materials already in place as pilots at the various campuses
- structures built in to the school year calendar and the work day to facilitate collaboration and training,
- increasing enrollment, strong facilities, and solid finances, and
- a well educated, committed staff that is united in its philosophical rationale to educating students.

In summary, CMP is looking forward to an ongoing celebration of progress, and a plan that the Visiting Committee feels confident will assist them in attaining their goals.