



# 2020 NEW SCHOOL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION REPORT FOR: PULLMAN COMMUNITY MONTESSORI

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This document was adapted in large part from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) *Charter School Request for Proposals Recommendation Report*. The Commission wishes to express its thanks to NACSA for their willingness to share both the document and the background information that led to its adaptation in Washington.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) was created in 2013, after the approval of Initiative 1240 and subsequent passage of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6194, to serve as a statewide charter school authorizer. The eleven-member Commission is tasked with running a process to approve new charter schools, and effectively monitoring the schools it authorizes through ongoing oversight.

## Mission

To authorize high quality public charter schools and provide effective oversight and transparent accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students.

## Values

Student-Centered  
Cultural and Community Responsiveness  
Excellence and Continuous Learning  
Accountability/Responsibility  
Transparency  
Innovation

## Vision

Foster innovation and ensure excellence so that every student has access to and thrives in a high-quality public school.

The Commission is committed to being culturally responsive. To that end, the Commission has adopted cultural competence definitions to support this commitment.

## Cultural Inclusion

Inclusion is widely thought of as a practice of ensuring that people in organizations feel they belong, are engaged and are connected through their work to the goals and objectives of the organization. Miller and Katz (2002) present a common definition: "Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work." Inclusion is a shift in organization culture. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes each feel valued and essential to the success of the organization.

Individuals function at full capacity, feel more valued and are included in the organization's mission. This culture shift creates higher-performing organizations where motivation and morale soar. <sup>1</sup>

## Cultural Responsive Education Systems

Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the beliefs that all culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavors when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development, and they are provided access to high quality teachers, programs, and resources.<sup>2</sup>

## Cultural Competency

Cultural competence provides a set of skills that professionals need in order to improve practice to serve all students and communicate effectively with their families. These skills enable the educator to build on the cultural and language qualities that young people bring to the classroom rather than viewing those qualities as deficits.

Cultural competence allows educators to ask questions about their practice in order to successfully teach students who come from different cultural backgrounds. Developing skills in cultural competence is like learning a language, a sport or an instrument.

The learner must learn, relearn, continuously practice, and develop in an environment of constant change. Cultures and individuals are dynamic – they constantly adapt and evolve.

Cultural competence is:

- Knowing the community where the school is located
- Understanding all people have a unique world view
- Using curriculum and implementing an educational program that is respectful of and relevant to the cultures represented in its student body
- Being alert to the ways that culture affects who we are
- Places the focus of responsibility on the professional and the institution

<sup>1</sup> Puget Sound Educational Service District. (2014). Racial Equity Policy. (p. 7) Seattle, WA: Blanford, S.

<sup>2</sup> Leadscape, National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (2010) Culturally Responsive Coaching for Inclusive Schools. (p. 4) Tempe, AZ: Mulligan, E. M., Kozleski, E. M.

- The examination of systems, structures, policies and practices for their impact on all students and families viewing those systems as deficits.<sup>3</sup>

### Focus on Quality

The New School Application solicitation and the resulting evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is designed to ensure that charter school operators possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate high levels of expertise and capacity in the areas of education, charter school finance, administration, and management, as well as high expectations for excellence in professional standards and student achievement.

### Autonomy and Accountability

Charter schools have broad autonomy, but not without strong accountability. Charter schools will be accountable to the Commission for meeting academic, financial, and organizational performance standards. The three areas of performance covered by the evaluation policy correspond directly with the three components of a strong charter school application and the three key areas of responsibility outlined in charter contracts.

#### Accountability

Evaluation of charter school performance is guided by three fundamental questions:

- Is the educational program a success?
- Is the school financially viable?
- Is the organization effective and well-run?

The answers to each of these three questions are essential to a comprehensive evaluation of charter school performance.

Charter schools are evaluated annually against standards in the following categories:

*Academic Performance* – Charter schools are required to make demonstrable improvements in student performance over the term of the charter. Schools are required to administer all state standardized tests and to adhere to academic standards.

*Financial Performance* – Schools must demonstrate the proper use of public funds, as evidenced by annual balanced budgets, sound audit reports, and conforming to generally accepted accounting practices.

*Organizational Performance* – A nonprofit corporation holds the charter school contract and is responsible for complying with both the terms in the contract and all applicable laws. This charter school board of directors is a public body and is required to adhere to public meeting and public records laws.

Approved charter schools will be granted a five-year charter contract. Schools unable to demonstrate academic progress or unable to comply with legal/ contractual or financial requirements may face sanctions, non-renewal, or charter revocation.

#### Autonomy

In exchange for rigorous accountability, charter school operators experience substantially greater authority to make decisions related to the following:

- Personnel
- School management and operations
- Finances
- Curriculum
- School day and calendar
- Education Service Provider (ESP) agreements

### Evaluation Process

Commission staff manage the application evaluation process and evaluation teams that include national and local experience and expertise on the operation of successful charter schools. The Commission staff leads these teams throughout the evaluation process to produce a merit-based recommendation regarding whether to approve or deny each proposal. This report from the evaluation team is the culmination of three stages of review:

#### Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation team conducted individual and group assessments of the merits of the proposal based on the complete submission. In the case of experienced operators, the Commission and NACSA supplemented the evaluation team's work with due diligence to verify claims made in the proposals.

#### Capacity Interview

After reviewing the application and discussing the findings of their individual reviews, the evaluation team conducted an in-person assessment of the applicant team's capacity.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Improvement of Student Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CISL/EliminatingtheGaps/CulturalCompetence/default.aspx>

### Evaluation Team Ratings

The evaluation team members each produced independent, ratings and comments regarding whether to recommend the proposal for approval or denial.

Commission staff collated the team ratings into an overall recommendation report to approve or deny each application based on its merits as outlined in the rubric. The authority and responsibility to decide whether to approve or deny each application rests with the members of the Commission.

### Recommendation Report Contents

This recommendation report includes the following:

#### Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the application.

#### Recommendation

An overall rating regarding whether the proposal meets the criteria for approval.

#### Evaluation

Analysis of the proposal based on four primary areas of plan development and the capacity of the applicant team to execute the plan as presented:

##### *Educational Program Plan and Capacity*

- School Overview
- Family and Community Engagement
- School Culture and Climate
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- Program Overview
- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Student Performance Standards
- High School Graduation Requirements (if applicable)
- Supplemental Programming
- School Calendar and Schedule
- Special populations and at-risk students
- Student Discipline Policy and Plan
- Educational Program Capacity.

##### *Organizational Plan and Capacity*

- Legal Status and Governing Documents
- Board Members and Governance
- Organization Structure
- Advisory bodies
- Grievance/Complaint Process
- District Partnerships
- Education Service Providers (ESP) and Other partnerships

- Staffing plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation
- Professional Development
- Performance Framework
- Facilities
- Transportation, Safety, and Food Service
- Operations Plan and Capacity

##### *Financial Plan and Capacity*

- Financial Plan
- Financial Management Capacity

##### *Existing Operators (if applicable)*

- Track record of academic success
- Organizational soundness
- Plans for network growth

### Rating Characteristics

Evaluation teams assess each application against the published evaluation rubric. In general, the following definitions guide evaluator ratings:

#### Exceeds

Clear and complete responses to all prompts. Consistently detailed, comprehensive explanations provided, including specific evidence that shows robust preparation. Presents a clear, explicit picture of how the school expects to operate. When applicable, responses connect cohesively to other sections of the program. When applicable, the information/evidence demonstrates a high degree of capacity to implement the proposed program.

#### Meets

Clear and complete responses to all prompts. Sufficient explanations provided, including evidence that shows preparation. Presents a clear picture of how the school expects to operate. When applicable, responses connect to other sections of the program. When applicable, the information/evidence provided demonstrates capacity to implement the proposed program.

#### Partially Meets

Clear and complete response to some but not all prompts. The response provides partial explanations and lacks meaningful detail or requires additional information in one or more key areas. When applicable, responses provide limited connections to other sections. When applicable, the information/evidence provided demonstrates some/limited capacity to implement the proposed program.

**Does Not Meet**

Unclear and/or incomplete responses to most prompts. The response provides insufficient details to most prompts. Responses lack connections to related sections. Responses demonstrate lack of preparation and/or raises substantial concerns about the applicant's understanding of, or ability to, implement an effective plan.

# APPLICATION OVERVIEW

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## Applicant Name

Laylah Sullivan

## Proposed School Name

Pullman Community Montessori (PCM)

## Proposed Location

Pullman

## Board Members

Laylah Sullivan – Board Chair

Beverley Wolff – Vice Chair

Doreen Main - Secretary

John Cassleman – Vice Secretary/Incoming Board Chair

David Powers

Henry Merrill

Nomin Batmunkh

## Proposed School Leader

Laylah Sullivan

## Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Planned Enrollment	Maximum Enrollment	Grades Served
2021/2022	80	80	Grades K-5
2022/2023	124	124	Grades K-6
2023/2024	178	178	Grades K-7
2024/2025	214	214	Grades K-8
2025/2026	242	242	Grades K-9

## Mission, Vision, Values

**Mission:** To prepare all students to reach their full potential for future success in high school, college, career, and life, using the rich resources of our community.

**Vision:** To serve as an instrument of change, helping to progress our education system to better meet the needs of students, families, and educators.

## Long Term Goals

1. PCM graduates will enter high school with strong academic, executive functioning, and social-emotional skills; prepared for rigorous college-prep courses; and on-track for graduation.
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2. PCM will work with a back-office provider and a consultant chief financial officer to meet standard on all financial indicators outlined in the financial performance framework and maintain a strong cash reserve for contingencies.

## Education Program Terms

1. **Program Term 1:** Developmentally appropriate age-grouped classrooms
2. **Program Term 2:** Self-directed learning environment
3. **Program Term 3:** Learning through action and community

## Educational Model/Instructional Design Elements

Pullman Community Montessori is designed to serve, at capacity, 280 students in grades K-9 from Pullman and its surrounding communities. The school would provide rigorous academics, a robust social-emotional program, and career and life skill in a place-based Montessori program, with features to include the following:

- Three-year blocking of ages by developmental appropriateness, in accordance with international Montessori standards;
- State certified teachers that are dually certified as Montessori teachers, each paired in the classroom with a certified paraprofessional classroom assistant;
- Specialized services for special education students, English Language Learners, and highly capable students in inclusion settings;
- A self-directed learning environment, with morning and afternoon blocks of uninterrupted work time;
- Student personalized work plans that incorporate individual interests, setting SMART goals, reflecting on progress, and recalibrating;
- Learner-centered classrooms, where freedom is expanded with show of responsibility and where students may work alone or in teacher-devised groups;
- Activities grounded in a real-life context as frequently as possible, with knowledge constructed through authentic experiences during project-based learning;
- Explicit and integrated social-emotional learning curriculum across all grades;
- A Universal Design for Learning approach to guide the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences;
- Place-based education features aligned with the Teton Science Schools Place Network;
- Engagement of the five guiding principles outlined in the Equity Literacy for All principles for maintaining an environment of cultural humility and ensuring the multicultural Montessori curriculum; and
- Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards integrated into relevant core content to help put these principles into action and measure progress.

## Anticipated Student Population

Pullman is the largest city in rural Whitman County, with a population of some 32,400; 37.5% of whom are estimated to be living below the poverty line. Pullman School District (PSD), the only public school option, serves nearly 3,000 students, and nearby districts a few hundred each. The private Montessori School of Pullman serves grades preK-3. Some students from nearby, rural communities with higher rates of poverty already attend schools in Pullman rather than in their smaller home districts.

<b>Free and Reduced Price Lunch Eligible</b>	<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	<b>English Language Learners</b>	<b>Students with 504 Plans</b>
50%	19%	8%	5%

# RECOMMENDATION

Pullman Community Montessori

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

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## Application Strengths Summary

- The idea for the school was originally conceived and developed by a dedicated group of parents from the local community.
- The Montessori model and academic program are exceptionally cohesive and well planned, well understood, grounded in Montessori experience elsewhere, and well supported by state and national strategic partners and resources.
- The school aims to expand the educational opportunities available to families in the Pullman community, expanding the charter school options in Eastern Washington.
- The applicants have assembled an impressive group of current or likely strategic partners and resources well positioned to support the school's success on many levels, including the support of the Head of School of Spokane International Academy, one of the state's highest performing charter schools.
- The Montessori model, by design, is intended to serve students in a way that is individualized and developmentally appropriate. This could prove to be beneficial for serving learners with diverse educational needs.
- The applicants have a likely facility that is highly suitable, well priced, and advantageously located.

## Application Weaknesses Summary

- Unless the focus on recruiting and enrolling at-risk students is comprehensive, sophisticated, and well executed from the outset, the proposed school could end up serving a student population that is not fully representative of the "at-risk" student populations that the school desires to serve.
- The applicant team and their constellation of support currently may not be quite as experienced in and prepared for the operational challenges of a start-up public school
- The school intends to start with multiple grade levels. While the grade-level enrollment targets are small, multi-grade start-up can be challenging and is not considered a best practice in the charter school sector. The school also plans to provide 9<sup>th</sup> grade which could prove challenging.
- The founding principal, while well supported, has limited executive experience generally and school leadership experience specifically, as well as limited Montessori background.
- The physical proximity to a private Montessori school may cause confusion amongst parents who are unaware of the enrollment practices of charter public schools.

## Recommended Conditions for Approval

The following recommended conditions for approval are broad due to the timing of the release of this report. Details regarding the recommended conditions will be provided via the draft resolution that Commissioners will receive on June 19<sup>th</sup> in preparation for the Commission's June 25<sup>th</sup> public meeting.

- Pullman Community Montessori must develop a detailed job description for the Head of School position and cross walk this job description to the professional development and coaching the
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identified Head of School is receiving or plans to receive to ensure alliance and clarify accountability measures.

# EDUCATIONAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Pullman Community Montessori

MEETS

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## Summary

At capacity Pullman Community Montessori will serve 280 students and feature stand-alone kindergartens, four lower elementary classrooms (Grades 1-3), three upper elementary classrooms (Grades 4-6), and three adolescent classrooms (Grades 7-9), with students grouped into three-year developmentally appropriate bands aligned with best Montessori practices.

The founding group has a range of experience and professional backgrounds and includes the current head of the local private Montessori school. They have identified a range of high capacity partners to support them in program development and implementation. The school also has a likely and suitable prospective facility.

Since 2014, a small group of parents expressed interest in opening a “free, high-quality, whole-child focused public elementary option accessible to all families” have worked to develop this application (pg. 14). Many of the involved families were in some way affiliated with the Montessori School of Pullman, a private school serving students aged 2-9. A member of the group, Laylah Sullivan, was accepted into the Washington State Charter Schools Association (WA Charters) School Leadership and Design Fellowship (SLDF).

Through the SLDF, the applicant developed “a robust plan to engage with the community” based on the “Pomegranate Center’s strategy for community engagement” (pg. 14). This community engagement “illuminated [the] demand for; multicultural education; behavioral support for students requiring more strategies; music and drama in rural schools; supports for students with different needs; opportunities for middle school students to learn vocational and home/life skills; and more targeted support for at-risk students, particularly those who have disabilities or are on 504 plans. Concerns for adequate academic rigor for the highly capable student population has also been voiced, as well as concerns about this population’s social-emotional preparation upon graduation” (pg. 15).

Given that the proposal appears to be at least partly developed using the input of private school families, targeted outreach of “at-risk” students will be necessary if the school intends to serve the demographic profile outlined in the application, including a student body of 50% free and reduced price lunch-eligible families. Assuming there is significant demand for the school that warrants a public lottery, the proposed weighted enrollment preference for low-income families will be valuable in enrolling the target student population. This is particularly essential in the school’s first year of operation due to the automatic sibling preference granted under Washington State law.

The applicants anticipate drawing students from the Pullman School District and other smaller, more rural districts serving populations with a higher rate of poverty. They have engaged in community outreach, including to families of color, low-income families, and Montessori and non-Montessori families, and have

garnered pre-registrations that would account for 25 of the 80 Year 1 students. While starting a school with multiple grades is not a best practice for charter schools, very few students will need to be recruited at each grade level in Year 1, a fact that was acknowledged by the team at the Capacity Interview. This may also be beneficial considering PCM wants to recruit students for grades that outside of the natural transition points seen in public education.

The model is driven by the school's mission and vision "to serve as an instrument of change to progress our education system to better meet the needs of all stakeholders and to help all of our students reach their full potential as self-empowered lifelong learners, global citizens, environmental stewards, compassionate and collaborative leaders, and change-makers" (pg. 18). The school's core values, developed in collaboration with the community and infused throughout the work of the school, modelled by teachers, and discussed as core values from grades K-9, take the form "We Are LEADERS":

- I LEAD by example; empowering others to be humble, collaborative leaders.
- I show EXCELLENCE by taking care in my work.
- I take ACTION, showing integrity and compassion at all times.
- I work with others to uphold a DIVERSE, equitable, and inclusive environment.
- I ENGAGE with my community.
- I build RESILIENCE in myself and others.
- I strive to be a systems-thinking problem SOLVER!(pgs. 32-33.)

The school will use a "Universal Design for Learning approach to guide the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences," as well as in its cultural design of inclusion and support for all students (pg. 18-19). Other curricular and instructional program features, many of which are core to the Montessori model, include:

- A self-directed learning environment, with three-hour morning and two- to three-hour afternoon blocks of uninterrupted work time;
- Student personalized work plans that incorporate individual interests, setting SMART goals, reflecting on progress, and recalibrating;
- Learner-centered classrooms, where freedom is expanded with show of responsibility and where students may work alone or in teacher-devised groups;
- Activities grounded in a real-life context as frequently as possible, with knowledge constructed through authentic experiences during project-based learning;
- Explicit and integrated social-emotional learning curriculum across all grades;
- Engagement of the five guiding principles outlined in the Equity Literacy for All principles for maintaining an environment of cultural humility and ensuring the multicultural Montessori curriculum: (1) Equity literacy is important in every subject area; (2) The most effective equity literacy approach is integrative and interdisciplinary; (3) Students of all ages are primed for equity literacy; (4) Students from all backgrounds need equity literacy; and (5) Teaching for equity literacy is a political act -- but not more so than *not* teaching for equity literacy; and
- Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards are integrated into relevant core content in support of equity and social responsiveness to help put these principles into action and measure progress.

The K-6 curriculum has been developed by AMI and is cross-walked to the Common Core standards. Grades 7-9 (known as the “Adolescent” program on Montessori vernacular) will be built out, with partners such as the Teton Science School, over several summers. The applicants offer research that suggests that the Montessori model strengthens executive functioning skills and supports student agency as they engage the curriculum. Fidelity to the Montessori model and the selected science curriculum is assured through partnerships with organizations that oversee the respective models.

The school’s social-emotional learning programming is integrated into the multi-tiered system of support intervention framework and is integrated into the science framework.

According to the application, “the Montessori model by design lends itself to accommodating and welcoming students with a wide range of personal and educational experiences” (pg. 52). The model, coupled with the use of a multi-tiered and multi-dimensional framework of interventions, will serve all students with a range of additional supports. The school will have structures to promote student engagement, including daily check-ins (pg. 24). The applicants intend to provide special education professional development to instructional staff and will use external partners to determine which differentiated level of professional development is suitable.

The application states that the school will use the home language screener to identify English Language Learner (ELL) students as well as the ELPA21 to determine placement. Given the size and budget of the school and the expectations that students in the school will speak multiple languages, PCM will use a program of sheltered instruction to support ELL students. This alternative instructional program is common amongst WA charter public schools.

Plans are presented to use multiple interim and formative assessments including Smarter Balanced Assessment for ELA and Math, the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science, NWEA’s Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), AIMSweb, and the Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale. One benefit of the multi-grade start is that PCM and the Commission will have assessment results after the first year of operation.

Before- and after-school care will be offered onsite at the school’s facility to students in one or more programs operated by specific local providers. This has been included in direct response to the community engagement. The applicants have negotiated to contract with the YMCA of the Palouse for this service.

The school leadership team represents a core of varied experience from which to build to a full board that should succeed in implementing the model, including the following key members:

- Laylah Sullivan, current board chair and future founding principal, WA Charters School Leadership and Design Fellow who has a record of significantly improving science achievement at Pullman High School overall and of redesigning a science intervention course for at-risk students, and who also has varied volunteer experience in the private Montessori School of Pullman, including as board chair;
- John Cassleman, current board member and future board chair, a former public school educator and currently manager of K-12 outreach at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, also brings a range of

- local nonprofit governance experience; and
- Beverley Wolff, board vice chair, has 11 years of experience as head of Montessori School of Pullman;

Overall, the applicants demonstrated their strong dedication and intent to expand educational options for “at-risk” student populations in Pullman and surrounding rural communities. The application provides a strong Montessori education program, while also adapting the program to integrate all of the required elements of a charter public school. The model naturally lends itself to individualized education which may prove particularly effective in serving the needs of students with disabilities or other learning supports. In order to attract the student population PCM plans to serve, student recruitment efforts must be intentional and targeted in order to attract a heterogeneous student population. This will be particularly critical for the founding class – a lesson learned by other charter schools in WA. While the school leader and leadership team do lack some experience and do not possess all of the typical skills compared to other charter operators, these deficits are offset by the team’s deep ties to the community along with a demonstrated eagerness to learn from other successful charter operators (both Montessori and more traditional). Additionally, if the recommended conditions are satisfied by the applicant team, there is a strong likelihood that this charter public school can be successful.



## Educational Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- The plan states as a priority addressing the needs of the community's at-risk populations and calls for representative student population, notably by including a weighted enrollment preference of 3 to 1 for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch (pgs. 5, 12).
- The application highlights – and is grounded in --examples of Montessori schools successfully serving at-risk populations (pg. 10).
- The vision contemplates a systemic impact on public education, rather than just the creation of a good school: "To serve as an instrument of change, helping to progress our education system to better meet the needs of students, families, and educators." (pg. 13).
- The application provides ample evidence of community engagement, including surveys, focus groups, community and individual meetings, and information sessions (pgs. 15-16, Attachments 3, 8). Written materials for parents/community members will be available in multiple languages (pg. 16).
- There is a strong commitment to continued community engagement, with tools already identified. Communication pitfalls are acknowledged. (pgs. 16-17.)
- The plans to produce and distribute materials and notices in areas that serve underserved populations including laundromats, libraries, rural post offices, and to work through organizations like Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse, Boost Collaborative, Pullman food banks (Pullman Child Welfare, Community Action Center, Little Free Pantry on Main), DSHS, and WSU family services are good strategies for student recruitment, so long as the engagement is proactive and personalized (pgs. 16-17).
- The school's Montessori culture is coherent, well envisioned, and well understood. The plans for establishing and maintaining the culture are strong, including identifying areas of student input, building of diverse cultural knowledge, leadership opportunities, and conflict resolution skills. (pg. 19.) Multiple strategies and events are cited by the applicant that will support staff and leaders in an exploration of the school culture and ongoing development of that culture (pgs. 20-21). Mid-year enculturation will be supported by peer teams for the students and the Head of School, and the Montessori Coach will support the parents/guardians (pg. 21).
- The school-wide individualized academic approach reduces stigma of individualized interventions for at-risk students (pg. 19).
- Cultural humility and awareness are addressed for serving an at-risk population, with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training (pgs. 78-81), and Teaching Tolerance (pg. 31) provided by outside providers.
- The section recognizes the need for systems and structures for academic intervention for disengaged students (pg. 24).
- The applicants highlight the importance of managing the expectations of private school families (pg. 26).
- The application identifies well-conceived educational program terms that are not so numerous and complex as to be administratively overwhelming (pgs. 28-30).

- The design plans for curriculum and instruction are highly developed and grounded in Montessori best practices, research, and resources (pgs. 33-43).
- Mixed age groups in each age band can be used to support individualized learning, objectives and pace of learning (pgs. 29-31).
- The discussion of culturally responsive environment and pedagogy does not approach the challenge as one to be addressed in a stand-alone training or program in isolation but to be integrated systematically (pgs. 31, 38, 41, 54-55, 61 and 68).
- The student performance standards set forth a credible plan to ensure alignment, despite the challenges that the Montessori multi-grade approach sometimes has in its interface with state systems (pgs. 44-45).
- The additional student performance standards are overall well thought-out (pgs. 104-107).
- The Strong Start and Kindergarten Warm-up programs will help acclimate students to the new school (pg. 51).
- Extended school day and school year are strong features of this application, especially for meeting the needs of students who may need more time to get to grade level. The application reflects sensitivity about burnout and stigma while still providing these much needed additional supports (pgs. 7, 30, 50, 57 and 65).
- The design for a student disciplinary system and the proposed discipline policy reflect awareness and humility; an appropriate reluctance to resort to measures that interrupt learning; attention to cultural awareness, equity, and bias; a focus on underlying causes of behavioral challenges; and engagement with families. The plan is persuasive in its choice of elements, including training in restorative practices and trauma-informed, attachment-based practices (PBIS) (pgs. 67-68). A strong point is the plan for consistent and regular reflection on the effectiveness of the system during staff development time (pg. 70).
- The founding board brings a range of educational and other experience, including one member's experience as leader of the private Montessori school, and is well connected to the community (Attachment 14). The founding head of school has participated in the Washington Charter Schools Association cohort and has experience in public school and coaching public school teachers (pg. 74).

### **Weaknesses**

- While the demand for the school clearly arose from parents in the community, it is not clear how the school was specifically designed to serve the at-risk population the application prioritizes. Based on the narrative, it seems likely that the Montessori model was adopted from the outset based on interest from the private school families. (pg. 11).
- The applicants' explanation for their assumption that they will attain a representative population of at-risk students, other than students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, is not well explained (pg. 52). High interest from families whose children attend the private school, even though they are identified as "international," does not necessarily suggest that they will meet the statutory "at-risk" definition (pgs. 11, 14 and 52).

- Whether socioeconomically disadvantaged students from Albion and other low-income, rural communities materializes as predicted will depend on factors like active, targeted recruitment and transportation (pgs. 9, 52).
- The school plans to use an annual survey to solicit parent/family member input. Given that there was a low rate of return for completed surveys in the planning process, this strategy may need to be revised or expanded to gather parent/family feedback (pg. 51).
- The enrollment plan requires students to transfer to the school during non-transition years and requires not just that the school retain, but grow, its per grade enrollment from year to year may prove challenging. (pgs. 11-12).
- The enrollment plan also retains students through a key transition year (9<sup>th</sup> grade) (pg. 4). The inclusion of 9<sup>th</sup> grade is explained, but it may complicate, as much as it facilitates, matriculation to high school. Middle school students and parents may prefer not to miss the first year in their high school.
- Stated enrollment interest at this stage, while early, is relatively low for a school of the anticipated size, and demand could be better substantiated (pgs. 14-15). The twenty-five families who have pre-registered account for 41 children, only 25 of whom would be eligible to enroll in grades served in 2021-22 (pgs. 14-15), out of 80 seats in 7 grades (pg. 11).
- Little information is provided about robust marketing specifically to families of English language learners, especially those not affiliated with the university or the laboratory (pg. 26).
- Identified partnerships are not with organizations that can provide wrap around services to families in need. Given the anticipated percentage of students in poverty, these services may be essential (pgs. 89-82).
- Limiting the Strong Start program to the school's first year does not make sense given the school's enrollment growth plan, which calls for years of acclimating new students in higher grades to the school -- even in the unlikely event that there is no turnover of students (pg. 19).
- While the application includes multiple resources for curriculum standards, there is no plan as to how they will be integrated into a single tool/framework that can be used by instructional personnel. For example, the applicant describes project based learning as one strategy (pg. 7) but provides no plan for how projects can be aligned with the various standards reflected in the multiple resources that will be used to design the curriculum.
- The application does not provide details about supplemental strategies and supports for parents who are not able to use Transparent Classroom independently (pg. 17, Attachment 7).
- It does not appear that there are any plans in place for faculty to work collaboratively to use Universal Design principles for instruction to design curriculum during the summer institute (pgs. 18-19).
- One special education teacher may not be adequate staffing. In year three, this one teacher would cover an anticipated 24 of 178 students in grades K-7 (pgs. 11, 57-59)
- The founding head of school's executive and supervisory experience is limited, does not include school leadership, is mostly at the high school level rather than serving the ages of the proposed school's students, and includes only one year of substitute/summer school teaching in a Montessori environment (Attachment 11).

- One of the core components of the Montessori program is a long uninterrupted block of self-directed learning time. There seems to be some dissonance between the emphasis on self-directed learning for long blocks of time and the support of specialists to support learning in the least restrictive environment; even if individualized intervention is envisioned as an option during the uninterrupted block, this may prove so necessary as to be challenging for the premise of self-directed learning (pg. 52). While the Montessori schedule is well explained (pgs. 29-30, 65-66), the school will need to be highly attuned to the progress of students who are struggling or behind to ensure that the promise of extended learning opportunities is fully realized and effective in a schedule that is lengthier in part because of so much self-directed time and flexible time.

# ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Pullman Community Montessori

MEETS

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## Summary

The leadership staff of the school will comprise:

- A head of school, who will be responsible for oversight and accountability for schoolwide operations and finances, the liaison role to the governing board and charter authorizer, external-facing leadership on communications, partnership-building, fundraising, facilities and business management duties, collaboration with external contractors and coaches, and until the hiring of the director of operations in Year 5, the functions of chief financial officer;
- A Montessori coach, who will serve as director of instruction and assessment, instructional coach, staff professional development manager, being joined by Year 5 by a second Montessori coach, one for the Kindergarten and lower elementary, and one for the upper elementary and adolescent cohorts; and
- A director of operations in Year 5, who will serve as chief financial officer and oversee purchasing and food, transportation, and coordination of community-based organizations.

PCM has been extremely transparent regarding the make-up of the board and many of the members original affiliation with Montessori School of Pullman. The application indicates that the founding board will transition to a governing board with the addition of several additional members which allays any concern regarding the “affiliation” clause of the charter contract. Based on the current skill-set of the board, PCM’s board could be strengthened by members with a background in law, finance, and/or public school administration. If approved, the composition of the board will need to be monitored by Commission staff.

The founding board of trustees will partner with BoardOnTrack for resources on board duties and goal tracking. Standing committees will include Governance, Finance, Development, and Leadership Evaluation and Support.

PCM states that it is “committed to ensuring and promoting an open line of communication with all stakeholders” and as a result has developed three advisory councils that report to the head of school and/or the board. These councils include:

- Community Advisory Council – Their responsibility is to provide feedback about school and leadership performance and is made up of families and the members of the larger Pullman community.
  - Specialized Support Council – The purpose of this council is to provide families of students received “elevated support” with a safe and supportive environment to share challenges, resources, and to identify gaps in support. This council was formed in response to community feedback.
  - Student Advisory Council – The Montessori coach and a parent volunteer with guide and support the
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student advisory council.

The applicants also have identified an excellent network of potential community partners and have relatively well-developed plans already in place with several, including:

- The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector;
- The Teton Science Schools Place Network;
- The Washington State Charter Schools Association;
- The Pullman School District;
- NorthEast Washington Education Service District 101;
- Joule Growth Partners;
- Montessori Northwest;
- Spokane International Academy and two other public Montessori schools;
- The YMCA of the Palouse;
- Gladish Community and Cultural Center;
- Washington Charters School Development;
- Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, the community's largest employer; and

The applicants have pursued positive relations with the local districts, and potential areas of collaboration with the Pullman School District include transportation maintenance, food service, and extracurriculars.

The staffing plan calls for the school to strive to be what is called a "Greenhouse School" by The New Teacher Project, which is a school that accelerates student growth by developing and retaining high-quality teachers through strong leadership practices, including (1) Consistent learning environments that enable a focus on student growth; (2) Teacher development through observation, feedback, and peer modeling; (3) Early hiring with a high bar; and (4) Right responses to good (and bad) performance (pg. 93).

Teachers will be recruited using state and national Montessori resources, compensated competitively, carefully selected, evaluated to support high expectations, and supported to maximize retention. Evaluation of staff from the head of school on down will reference each employee's annual growth portfolio.

The school will use a software called Transparent Classroom, that is used by over 1,200 Montessori schools nationwide, to manage performance data reports and facilitate dissemination of student progress to parents/family members.

Professional development (PD) plans call for over 40 days of PD annually, including a three-week Staff Summer Institute. Teachers will participate in "room swap" observations of one another's classrooms five times per year and will have Wednesday half-day. PD will include a work in cultural competency and inclusion with Dr. John Scott and other expert trainers.

The applicants have identified a likely facility site at the Gladish Community and Cultural Center and is in the process of finalizing a lease. The site meets the needs of the proposed school, at an acceptable price, and its location community-based services housed in the building; central location within Pullman; and proximity to

the local library, bus routes, biking/walking paths, parks, and WSU campus. Given the facilities challenges that many charter public schools have experienced in Washington, the identification of a suitable and affordable facility is a strength of this application.

The applicants expect that over half of students will require school-provided transportation, while the other half will likely walk or be driven to school. While they expect to collaborate with Pullman Transit, the local public transportation provider, to secure free or reduced-cost public transportation passes, this option will likely not be of interest until the school begins serving older students. PCM predicts they will need for one school bus in Year 1 and will contract with a private transportation company. Given the location of the school and the desire to provide transportation to rural communities, one bus may not be sufficient to allow for timely transportation of students, particularly those in the lower grades.

Overall, the applicant has presented a sound organizational plan. Growth of the board will be critical to rounding out the essential skills and competencies to ensure they are meeting their obligations and fiduciary responsibilities a party to the charter contract. The plan for teacher recruitment and professional development is well thought out. However, the applicant may experience challenges when trying to recruit experienced teachers to come to a small community. PCM is fortunate to have already located an established facility that will meet its needs. Starting a charter public school is a heavy lift for even the most experienced operators, but if PCM executes on the strong plan they have provided, they have an excellent opportunity to build a high-quality school.

While the school leader has partnered with qualified individuals and organizations to increase her executive leadership abilities and is currently engaged in significant professional development, it is unclear as to the extent to which the board of directors are clear about expectations and accountability of the school leader. Research along with the Commission's experience in authorizing and overseeing charter public schools have demonstrated time and again the importance of strong, competent and skilled school level leadership that is complemented with a board that clearly understands its role in establishing clear expectations of and holding the school leader accountable. This lack of clarity is the key reason that this application is being recommended with conditions.

## Organizational Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- The applicants articulate a commendable vision of serving as an instrument of change in the larger school system (pg. 6).
- The application reflects a solid understanding of charter governance, including its focus on the charter contract and on school performance; awareness and proactive thinking about the differences between a founding board and an governing board; a sound plan for organization, member expectations, committee structure and operations, and a continuous improvement model (pg. 77-82, Attachment 16).
- Governing for Greatness and BoardOnTrack are identified as resources for the board regarding its governance role as well as continual board development (pg. 77).
- The student teacher ratio is 19:1 at full capacity, not including special education staff or assistants. Inclusive of these assistants the ratio is 10:1.
- The proposed advisory bodies (Community Advisory Council, Specialized Support Council, and Student Advisory Council) would fulfill valuable roles and are well designed to allow for continuity but also not be of daunting length for volunteers (pg. 85).
- Documentation shows outreach to Pullman School District from the inception of planning (pg. 88, Attachment 18).
- The applicants plan or already have established engagements with a well-conceived group of high capacity partners to supplement the school's capacity in critical areas or enable it to grow to scale. Partners include the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector and the Teton Science Schools Place Network (pg. 12 and 33). Supports include support in designing for equity in the planning year, ensuring place-based instruction by Teton Science Schools, support from the charter schools association, special education file reviews, equity and inclusion workshops, special education compliance workshops, before- and after-school care, and back office functions (Attachment 20). The terms of these arrangements are either already established or can be anticipated with some confidence based on the documentation submitted.
- Significantly, the partners include Spokane International Academy, a successful K-8 charter school, and its head of school (pg. 84, Attachment 3)
- Staff recruiting plans fully appreciate how critical will be the initial hires to the near-term and mid-term success of the school and recognize the challenges of recruiting dual certified teachers (pgs. 94-98). The applicants are actively working to create a teacher pipeline with Montessori accredited training institutions in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho (pg. 12).
- In general, professional development plans are thorough and well thought out. The three-week pre-opening Staff Summer Institute is particularly important for a newly assembled team (Attachments 8 and 23).



- Proposed goals set for Academic and Organizational Growth are strong. Academic targets require a minimum of one year’s growth for students, but for student who enter Pullman Community Montessori below grade level, the goal is 1.25 years of growth on the NWEA MAP assessment (Attachment 24). Performance goals for the Smarter Balance Assessment are stretch goals and, if realized, will significantly outperform the Pullman district (pg. 106).
- The applicants describe a comprehensive system of data use at the classroom, school, and board levels. Strategies used to track and monitor student academic progress will include weekly parent updates, formal conferences three times a year, administrative team reviews, and weekly data dives, with sufficient time on a weekly basis for instructional teams to collaboratively review data and adjust instructional plans and supports (pgs. 106-107).
- The applicants have a viable prospective facility and location (pg. 13, Attachment 25). They have identified and quantified their facility needs, including specialty rooms, classrooms, teacher work areas, administrative offices, family service areas, etc. (pgs. 108-109). They are receiving in-kind consultation services from Washington Charter Schools Development to augment their capacity for build-out and renovations (pg. 110).
- The applicants have collaborative possibilities with the Pullman School District, the Pullman Transit system, and a commercial bus company for transportation and transportation maintenance, and they recognize the importance of transportation for their rural community (pg. 111).
- The applicants are exploring contracting for food service with the school district, and the prospective facility has a commercial kitchen (pg. 113).
- The start-up plan is comprehensive and detailed regarding school operations (Attachment. 27).

#### **Weaknesses**

- The applicants’ vision for an educational impact beyond the school (pg. 6) could be strengthened by collaborative plans for sharing practices, experiences, and insights even with non-Montessori schools (many of the school’s program elements are not Montessori-specific); mutually beneficial collaboration with nearby school districts; planning for the positive impact of serving as a feeder school for Pullman High School; and in the description of the board’s commitments.
- As in other areas, reliance on an online communication portal for the grievance process may not be effective for some families (pg. 86). In addition, for most complaints final disposition will rest with the Board of Trustees, not the Commission, and for others, the appropriate public entity for the type of complaint should be identified (pg. 87). Confidentiality of some kinds of complaints cannot legally be guaranteed, for example where disclosure may be required by law or necessary for due process. (pg. 87)
- The partnerships could be further strengthened by clear oversight mechanisms with better defined board, staff and contractor roles. In most cases, the “how” of the proposed partnership is not described, only the “what.” (pgs. 89-92, Attachment 20).

- It is not clear what outreach, if any, has been done to the other nearby school districts from which the school is expected to draw students, or to any of the school boards beyond Pullman School District (pg. 88).
- It may be a significant challenge to hire and retain dually certified teachers to work in a brand new school in a small community with extended day and extended year in at-will positions at salaries average for the area (pg. 12).
- Even with supplemental services provided by True Measure Collaborative (Attachment 20, pg. 423) and by ESD 101 (Attachment 20, pg. 436), having one special education teacher on staff for a student population of this size with a high anticipated percentage of students with disabilities could be risky.
- The eventual organizational structure might prove top heavy, with five leaders for 29 staff members and 280 students (Attachments 17 and 21).
- The head of school will be doing classroom observations but does not have strong Montessori experience (Attachment 14). The desire to preserve the Montessori coach's coaching relationship with faculty is smart, but observations would be better informed with Montessori background. Conversely, some of the jobs of the Montessori coach regarding the maintenance of culture seem like they should be managed by the head of school.
- The board will need to have a comfort level with effectively overseeing a former colleague once the founding head of school transitions to that role. (pg. 74).
- Some of the facility space does not currently have a certificate of occupancy, though preliminary conversations indicate that there are no substantial change of use requirements for the space PCM intends to occupy (pg. 110 and Attachment 25).
- It may be that little retrofitting of the premises is required, but if some work should be needed, the stated budget is \$200,000 for this contingency (pg. 116). This amount is not explained and does not appear in the startup budget (Attachment 28), but it was explained in the interview.
- Professional development plans do not appear to include a focus on classroom management and student discipline, including training regarding bias in discipline determinations (pgs. 100-103, Attachment 23). The focus on continual reflection appears to focus on equity and due process (pg. 70). The school should be prepared for the contingency of leadership and faculty who may be less experienced as leaders and/or teachers thus need support and guidance regarding classroom management and student discipline.

# FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

Pullman Community Montessori

MEETS

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## Summary

Policies and procedures for financial planning will be finalized by the school's board of trustees and led by its finance committee, in collaboration with the head of school, contracted CFO support organization Joule Growth Partners, and contracted back-office service provider NEW ESD 101. The head of school will assume the CFO duties in collaboration with the contracted CFO support and ESD liaison at NEW ESD 101 during start-up through Year 4. In Year 5, a Director of Operations will be brought on by Year 5 to assume CFO duties (pg. 117).

The school's financial plan and accompanying attachments have been developed using templates developed by, and with permission and assistance from, the WA Charters. Internal controls will be in accordance with the charter contract and the School District Accounting Manual (SDAM). PCM will look to the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) for examples of model policies and procedure.

The board will receive monthly financial reports by the head of school, with support from the CFO support organization and the finance committee, which will complete detailed quarterly reviews in addition to the board's monthly review. The board also will:

- Approve and adopt the budget and revise them in the fall if necessary;
- Through the finance committee, review electronic payment methods;
- Select contract bids and approve contracts exceeding \$10,000, and determine their duration;
- As a board or through a representative, review monthly bank reconciliations;

The founding team brings a variety of experience in overseeing finances, including:

- The head of school has experience as co-owner of a family construction business;
- The board vice chair manages the budget, finances, and fundraising of the private Montessori school as its head;
- The board chair-in-waiting has overseen budgets and fundraising as a board member and as interim executive director of a local science center;
- Other board members have varied experience with budgets and fundraising; and
- The applicants indicate they have identified candidates to serve as the board treasurer (pgs. 123-124).

Overall, the applicant team provided a financial plan that is sound and sustainable.

## Financial Plan and Capacity: Analysis and Evaluator Comments

### Strengths

- The phased staffing plan of financial management with initial use of capable vendors before growing to full staff is strong (pgs. 117, 120-121, 124).
- Financial safeguards are thorough (pgs. 118-122, 124). Budget and narrative are complete (Attachments 28 and 29).
- Grant prospects appear favorable and the budget does not include those that may be less likely (Attachment 29, pgs. 547-548).
- The combination of the experiences the applicants bring with the contracted assistance they will have inspires confidence in the school's financial management (pgs. 123-124).

### Weaknesses

- Under the sample financial controls provided, the same individual – the financial consultant -- is responsible for making deposits, drafting checks, and creating financial reports (Attachment 30). The board treasurer is responsible for reconciling reports, typically an operations function (Attachment 30).
- The plan to retain the consultant to coach the head of school in financial oversight could be strengthened by specifying the board's oversight role in that relationship, with a coaching plan and monthly reporting to the board on the head of school's progress (pg. 92, Att. 20).
- Special education spending appears only to include the one special education teacher. If students come to the school with need that require outside support, it is unclear where this funding will come from (Attachments 28 and 29).

## EXISTING OPERATORS

Pullman Community Montessori

**NOT APPLICABLE**



## EVALUATION TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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### **Tom Hutton, Team Lead**

Tom is a Honolulu-based independent educational consultant and the Interim Executive Director of the Education Law Association, a national association of attorneys, professors, administrators, students, teachers, students, public officials, and other stakeholders with a professional or personal interest in the law of P-20 education. He is the former Executive Director of the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission, where he led the reconstitution of that state's charter school system under new legislation. He has been both a participant and a coach in the Leaders Program of the National Association of Charter School Administrators. Prior to that Tom had a career as a school lawyer, both in-house with the National School Boards Association and then with the Seattle law firm of Patterson Buchanan Fobes Leitch and Kalzer. Tom also was a co-founder, with a group of fellow law students, of Thurgood Marshall Academy, a law-themed charter high school in Washington, DC, and he currently serves on the governing board of Wai'ālae Elementary Public Charter School in Honolulu. He earned his B.A. at Connecticut College, a graduate certificate in Public Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

### **Gayle Burnett, Evaluator**

Gayle Burnett has been leading and facilitating courageous conversations regarding diversity, race, and equity for much of her lifetime. She is the co-author of *Peace in Everyday Relationships* (Hunter House Publishers, 2003), a fellow alum of Harvard's Strategic Data Project, and a certified Gallup Strengths Coach. Gayle's career choices have been diverse. She was as an assistant vice president and analyst for a Wall Street clearinghouse bank in the international markets of Singapore, Australia and London, a past partner and principal of Inter-Change Consultants, from 1990 to the 2004, she worked with a wide array of diversity and leadership clients, including Ernst & Young, Lucent Technologies, AT&T and the NCAA. More recently, Gayle served the Atlanta Public Schools by developing leadership programming, providing research and analysis to senior leaders, and supporting and facilitating the development of innovative learning environments in several capacities, including the Executive Director of the Office of Innovation. Finally, she worked with The Rensselaerville Institute as the Special Projects Guru & Interim President, supporting that organization's transition of leadership while maintaining excellence in performance. Gayle holds an MA in Economics from the City University of New York.

### **Kaaren Heikes, Evaluator**

Kaaren Heikes is an education and government affairs leader currently based in Olympia. Kaaren has taught middle and high school both in the Pacific Northwest and in Indonesia, served as a building and regional administrator, state-wide consultant, non-profit founder, and state-level government affairs professional in both Oregon and Washington. Kaaren founded and directed an Oregon charter school association, designed and launched many public charter schools in rural, suburban and urban areas, and worked with many charter authorizers to evaluate proposed and operating charter schools. Kaaren co-founded and co-led KairosPDX, a nonprofit designed to eradicate the racial opportunity and

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achievement gaps for children of color in Portland, Oregon; core elements include a K-5 charter school and early learning programs, as well as professional development and policy advocacy related to culturally responsive education and systems transformation. Kaaren spent the past three years as Director of Policy and Partnerships for the WA State Board of Education, during which time she served as a Commissioner on the Washington State Charter School Commission. She earned her B.A. and teaching credential at Central Washington University, her M.S. in Education Policy, Foundations, and Administration and her K-12 administrative credential at Portland State University.

## **Elisabeth Krimbill, San Antonio, TX**

Elisabeth Krimbill is an Assistant Professor of Education Leadership at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Her research focuses on School Law, Leadership, Early Childhood Education, and Ethics. She is a former elementary school principal in San Antonio in a school dedicated to excellence, creativity, and educational choice. Prior to moving into administration, Elisabeth taught middle school math and science. Additionally, she taught Algebra, Geometry, and American History in an Adolescent Program in a Montessori School. She is Montessori trained at the primary, lower elementary, upper elementary, and adolescent program levels. Elisabeth earned her doctorate in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, a masters' degree in Educational Leadership from Lamar University in Houston, a masters' degree in Elementary Education from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and a bachelor's degree in Education from St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. In addition to her work in education, Elisabeth volunteers with several community organizations including the Science Mill, Transplants for Children, and Up Partnership.

## **William Sharpton, Evaluator**

William Sharpton, Professor Emeritus of Special Education at the University of New Orleans, holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education from Georgia State University. Prior to retirement, Dr. Sharpton directed the teacher education program in special education with an emphasis on serving students with severe disabilities. While Associate Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, the University of New Orleans established a network of charter schools in New Orleans following the conversion of the city school district to a charter school model in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Dr. Sharpton has served as a consultant for several state departments of education and local districts as well as the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools. He has also served as a team member for the State University of New York System to review applications to establish charter schools in New York City.