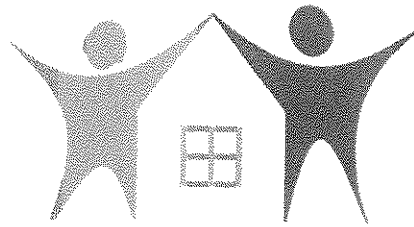


CASA ESPERANZA MONTESSORI
2014 – 2018 FIVE YEAR
STRATEGIC PLAN



CASA

ESPERANZA
MONTESSORI

2600 Sumner Boulevard

Suite 130

Raleigh, NC 27616

919-855-9811

www.cemcs.org

Table of Contents

I-Executive Summary

II-Mission Statement

III-Vision Statement and Core Values

IV-Organizational History and Profile

V-Strategic Goals and Measurable Actions

VII-Summary of Findings (SWOT ANALYSES)

VIII-Conclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The staff, parents, and Board of Directors of Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School developed this strategic plan. It provides the school with a five-year roadmap for support, services and organization development. The Board of Directors and staff will review progress quarterly and update the plan as needed.

The strategic planning committee was responsible for defining the strategic direction and for providing the analysis to complete the plan. The strategic planning committee consisted of the Head of School, Board of Directors, School Finance and Development Director, HR Director, School Faculty, and Parents. This committee met once a month for one year to reflect on the mission, vision, core goals and values underlying the organization's approach to its work.

We have looked closely at our strengths as well as our vulnerabilities and have learned from our experiences. As a result, over the next five years, we will focus on expanding our reach, improving our programs, fundraising, and providing better services to our students. The plan recognizes that if we are to continue to provide the best to our stakeholders, we must ensure that we have a sufficiently strong infrastructure to sustain our current and future programs as well as invest in our most valuable resource – our staff

This plan is firmly rooted in our values and in our commitment to serve our students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Esperanza Montessori, a public charter school and private preschool, uses Montessori philosophy and pedagogy in an English-Spanish dual-language environment. The Casa Esperanza community of families, educators and dedicated volunteers actively fosters enthusiasm for learning, independence, individual academic progress, cultural awareness, and social and emotional well-being.

VISION STATEMENT

Following today's child; cultivating tomorrow's global leader. We envision a time when CASA will be recognized as one of the top 10 schools in the state of NC. To accomplish this vision, the CASA community will:

- ❖ Create and maintain beautifully ordered Montessori indoor and outdoor environments which encourage the organic, affective, intellectual, and character development of children
- ❖ Encourage school-wide integration through regularly-scheduled activities designed to nurture and provide careful consideration for children of all age ranges and abilities
- ❖ Foster joyful, cooperative, multicultural relationships amongst children, families, school faculty and the local community, through community service projects, Montessori excursions, and community participation in the life of the Montessori school.

CORE VALUES

- ❖ C – Culture of Respect
- ❖ A – Ambition
- ❖ S – Small Learning Community
- ❖ A - Achievement

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY AND PROFILE

Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School is a non-profit Public Charter School (K-8) and private preschool founded in 2002 on the principles of the Montessori Method. Our approach to education uses a unique dual-language curriculum that strives to cultivate our students to become tomorrow's global leaders. This approach affords cognitive and academic benefits to build a foundation for lifelong success.

Started in 2003 with 54 Kindergarten through second grade students, our Spanish immersion and enrichment programs have grown to serve more than 400 Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade students from culturally diverse families united by their educational, social and ethical high standards. At Casa, students develop a world view that is both practical and thoroughly inspirational. Because Montessori philosophy guides our instructional practices, our students are creatively independent. With our multicultural options, families may choose a Spanish immersion curriculum where students spend the majority of their day learning in Spanish or a Spanish enrichment curriculum where students receive a Spanish class several times a week.

A NC Certified teacher and paraprofessional teach all elementary age classes. As a North Carolina Public School, our curriculum follows the Common Core Standards. Staff uses Montessori pedagogy and philosophy when teaching the Common Core.

Italian pediatrician Maria Montessori developed the child-centered Montessori educational movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dr. Montessori found that children's innate drive to acquire and develop knowledge can best be cultivated by providing children with tools and manipulative materials for learning. The tools are tailored to particular stages of development which occur naturally in children around the world. In a Montessori classroom, the teacher serves as guide, presenting a variety of materials and activities to students. As a professional educator, the teacher also studies the nature of children. The Montessori "guide" provides activities appropriate to children's needs, guiding students toward mastery of themselves and their environment. The Montessori trained teacher uses a variety of tools to assess the progress of each individual child.

Children direct their own work by touching, manipulating, and experimenting with materials that are self-teaching and self-correcting. They develop physically, intellectually and socially. In the classroom, children are free to work independently or with others, to move about, to speak, to help others, and to seek help from adults or classmates. Dr. Montessori developed specific “Lessons of Grace and Courtesy,” which appeal to children’s interests in relationships and help them develop valuable social skills.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND MEASURABLE ACTIONS

FUNDRAISING / FINANCE:

Goal: Grow and strengthen fundraising and community partnerships

Actions:

- ❖ Increase giving through appropriate identification, cultivation, and stewardship of current and prospective donors
- ❖ Enhance collaboration among the board, staff, and community in relation to raising funds
- ❖ Lay the ground work for a capital campaign with clear set goals
- ❖ Create enticing sponsorship opportunities for program or project related school events by identifying and cultivating sponsors
- ❖ Increase annual fund giving by 10% each year
- ❖ Increase grant writing by researching the appropriate funders. Dedicate a team (committee of grant writers) to write grants with a goal of 5 grants per year
- ❖ Raise funds or attain a grant for a new outdoor green playground

Goal: Incorporate financial management that focuses on maximizing revenues

Actions:

- ❖ Continue to enhance budget process by evaluating spending in all departments
- ❖ Budget for reserves to start building a cushion to help with the capital campaign
- ❖ Reduce the number of withdrawals by creating an environment that encourages students to stay from kindergarten through eighth grade
- ❖ Ensures that all faculty and staff are fairly compensated and that all programs are properly funded

FACULTY:

Goal: Hire, develop, and retain exceptional educators

Actions:

- ❖ Create a work environment with competitive salaries and benefits that rewards innovation and dedication – document the program, policy and procedures around salaries and rewards
- ❖ Increase the number of Montessori-trained staff
- ❖ Provide internal educational opportunities for staff that do not have formal Montessori training.
- ❖ Survey faculty and staff annually to assess their satisfaction with policies and procedures
- ❖ Increase professional development training by the use of grants provided by corporations or foundations for Montessori education
- ❖ Measure satisfaction of policies and procedures with faculty, staff, and board
- ❖ Assess current general orientation system for all staff

Goal: Provide innovative teaching that uses research based methods of education.

Actions:

- ❖ Implement the technology policy and ensure that it defines the use of technology in the classroom, equipment, software, networking, etc.
- ❖ Create a benchmark for how technology is used today in the classroom
- ❖ Define and develop plans around research based methods used in learning and innovative learning methodologies that align with Montessori philosophy and pedagogy
 - Measure the use of the innovative teaching methods and the impacts to the students and teachers
 - Measure the impacts of the innovating methods and programs and if they are meeting expectations

CURRICULUM:

Goal: Create school culture of high student achievement

Actions:

- ❖ CASA will offer a rigorous and challenging program that promotes academic excellence, Montessori learning, and 21st century skills
 - 90% or greater of CASA students will be proficient on the North Carolina End of Grade Tests and continue to maintain growth according to state standards
 - Complete a curriculum map that incorporates state standards and Montessori philosophy and materials.
- ❖ Create a school environment that is clearly defined and conducive to learning, and aligns with Montessori philosophy
- ❖ Align NCSCOS (Common Core State Standards, NC Essential Standards for Science and Social Studies) with Montessori
- ❖ Expand on opportunities for Middle Grades Students to earn High School credits (e.g. Math 1, Math 2, Foreign Language, and Career and Technical Education)
- ❖ Strengthen the Arts program by expanding to Choral, Drama, and Concert Band.

FACILITY:

Goal: Provide a school facility that is well-maintained and meets the needs of students and faculty.

Actions:

- ❖ Build a maintenance committee that can maintain the internal and external facility.
- ❖ Develop playground space that meets the needs of elementary and middle grade students and incorporates Montessori's focus on the outside environment.

- ❖ Create spaces that will enhance the school's focus on Montessori philosophy and pedagogy learning, i.e. science labs and technology.

ADMINISTRATION/GOVERNANCE

Goal: Maintain a highly qualified and diverse Board of Directors.

Actions:

- ❖ Increase participation from the Hispanic Community.
- ❖ Increase the community participation by increasing the number of non-parents serving on Board Committees and the Board of Directors.
- ❖ Provide regular training for Board Members on issues related to education and policies affecting charter schools.

Goal: Operate in a way that maintains our compliance with State, Federal and Local regulations.

Actions:

- ❖ Provide adequate support to administration to ensure that they can meet the increased demands from regulating agencies.
- ❖ Provide professional development for administrative staff to ensure they stay up to date with policies and procedures.
- ❖ Develop a system to make sure that staff has knowledge of school policies and procedures.

SWOT ANALYSES

FUNDRAISING / FINANCE

<p>Strength(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Active community● Steady Income from state and local funding● Our mission (Montessori and Spanish curriculum)● Our private programs	<p>Weakness(es):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Engaging community at annual fund● Grant writing● Active community● Difficult to balance the budget
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Broader community action● Grant writing● Outreach to the Latino community● Private programs – growth in facility to accommodate more● to build a positive and active community	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● More charter schools opening● Lottery mix● Montessori materials are expensive● Decrease in funding per child

CURRICULUM

<p>Strength(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Process wise, the Common Core emphasizes the complex reasoning processes ● Our test scores (EOG's) ● Our mission (Montessori and Spanish curriculum) ● Data driven assessment (MAP testing) ● Proven research based curriculum ● We have been in existence for over 10 years ● Unique and innovative model. There are no other Spanish Immersion Montessori programs in the area. ● Studies show that learning a second language is very beneficial-It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles. (Word that differently of course) 	<p>Weakness(es):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not being able to add students due to immersion ● Not selling our middle grades program ● Extracurricular activities ● Social studies common core materials not available in Spanish ● Use of workbooks ● Not enough preschool students in the Children's House program. ● Not enough elective options in MG ● Sustained little or no growth in reading throughout the years
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To blend common core standards with our Montessori curriculum to boost our Composite scores (ELA and Math) ● To increase the number of teachers exceeding expectations on students growth ● Middle grades – make it a stronger curriculum ● To align the immersion and enrichment curriculums for continuity ● To sell our middle grades program to upper elementary parents ● Integration of technology for middle schools such as project based learning ● Math and science in Spanish for middle 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technology ● Space ● Updated Equipment and Furniture ● School preparation for upcoming requirements from DPI: reading program/preparation for standardized test ● Availability of space to develop labs and exploration activities in Science and SS.

<p>grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High School credits for Spanish and Math ● Montessori curriculum also needs to be aligned between all classrooms at all levels 	
---	--

FACULTY

<p>Strength(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dual Language, Montessori Charter School program is one of a kind. ● Studies show that learning a second language is very beneficial-It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles. (Word that differently of course.) ● Diverse, multicultural faculty ● Two adults in every room all the way through sixth grade. ● Hard-working and motivated teachers. ● Teachers dedicated to students success ● Exceeds State Standards for Highly Qualified (HQ) teachers in the subject they teach ● School pays for Faculty professional development ● Beginning teacher mentor program in place. ● School offers H1B (3 yr. work visa) that may lead to residency sponsorship. 	<p>Weakness(es):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every faculty member has not received Montessori training. ● Challenging set of requirements-Immersion program requires native Spanish speakers, HQ in Elementary Ed and Master's Degree or Bachelor's degree plus 5 years of experience. ● NO incentives for teacher mentors/no time to perform their task ● We need a Montessori expert or mentor that can guide new teachers at least for a year. ● Teachers may change grade levels on a yearly basis.
--	---

Opportunities:

- More training and professional development for faculty, especially Montessori training
- Opportunities for PLC and grade-level planning.
- Investigate the Visiting International Faculty Program for hiring of Immersion Program.
- Grant application/implementation for Professional Development.
- To increase the number of teachers exceeding expectations on students growth
- flexibility in the way to compensate faculty

Threats:

- Licensed, Highly Qualified, bi-literate teachers are hard to find.
- Middle Grades requires a teacher to be licensed in every subject they teach. Funding makes it hard to have enough teachers in all subjects and have bi-literate staff.
- Teachers may opt to work in a larger school where they only teach certain subjects.

FACILITY

<p>Strength(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have an active community that is committed to get a new building. ● We have a landlord who is willing to let us stay in our current space and work with us to expand. ● Located in a convenient location close to I-540. Makes it easy for many people to get here. Increases student base. ● Most classrooms are big. 	<p>Weakness(es):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not enough money raised to date to afford our own building. ● Will take time to raise money. ● Current facility does not have enough green space. ● Current space does not have enough room for expansion. ● Need more meeting and storage space. ● Bad location ● Expensive rent ● Not enough space to accommodate population. ● no space for recess, labs, private meetings/conferences and electives ● no storage room
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ability to purchase land and have a building that fits our needs. ● Incorporating the Montessori farm or urban gardening into our education program. ● Design a building that fits our needs. ● Expansion ● Renting a storage unit to keep materials, tools or supplies. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inability to fund the down payment. ● Indirect costs associated with owning a building. ● Located in expensive area to obtain land.

ADMIN / GOVERNANCE

<p>Strength(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have a diverse board with a unique knowledge base who is committed to the school. ● We don't have the red tape of a big LEA. All administration is done in-house. ● Ability to set our own policies and procedures. ● Strong committee structure on the board. 	<p>Weakness(es):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We need a spokesperson for the school that can market to the public. ● Need more representation from the Latino community on the board. ● Hard to find individuals from outside the school community willing and able to serve on the board.
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional Development for leadership ● Professional Development for curriculum alignment among grades and immersion/enrichment. ● More board members who come from outside the school community, especially the Latino community. ● More charters increases the voice of charter schools on a state-wide level. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons that are bilingual, educated in the Montessori curriculum, and familiar with the needs of a Pk-8th grade program are probably hard to find. ● The requirements from state agencies continue to grow which increases the workload on administration.

CONCLUSION:

The goals and actions outlined in this strategic plan will engage CASA as a community by increasing parent, faculty, and community involvement in the next upcoming years. This is an exciting time for CASA as we have just increased additional space to the current fit. The strategic plan will be broken out into annual timelines to be able to track improvements and realize the full vision of CASA.

