



RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL
montessori made public

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL	3
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	5
FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER	5
CRITERION 1: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS	5
Amendments to the Charter	6
CRITERION 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY	6
CRITERION 4: DISSEMINATION	8
ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS	9
CRITERION 5: STUDENT PERFORMANCE	9
CRITERION 6: PROGRAM DELIVERY	9
ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY	11
CRITERION 10: FINANCE	11
FY24 Unaudited Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets	11
FY23 Unaudited Statement of Net Assets (Balance Sheet)	12
FY24 Approved Budget (approved June 9, 2023)	13
FY24 Enrollment Table	14
APPENDICES	16
APPENDIX A: ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN EVIDENCE 2023-2024	16
Faithfulness to the Charter	16
Dissemination	20
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN 2024-25	21
Recruitment Plan 2024-25	21
Retention Plan 2024-25	23
APPENDIX C: SCHOOL DATA TABLES	26
Administrative Roster and Staff Attrition Data	26
Information About the Board of Trustees	27
APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION	28
Facilities	28
Enrollment	28
APPENDIX E: CONDITIONS, COMPLAINTS AND ATTACHMENTS	28

INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL

<i>River Valley Charter School</i>			
Type of Charter	<i>Commonwealth</i>	Location	<i>Newburyport</i>
Regional or Non-Regional	<i>Regional</i>	Districts in Region	<i>Amesbury, Newburyport, Pentucket, Triton</i>
Year Opened	<i>1999</i>	Year(s) Renewed	<i>2003, 2009, 2014, 2019, 2024</i>
Maximum Enrollment	<i>288</i>	Enrollment for 2023-24	<i>288</i>
Chartered Grade Span	<i>K-8</i>	Grade Span for 2023-24	<i>K-8</i>
Number of Instructional Days per School Year (as stated in the charter)	<i>180</i>	Students on Waitlist for 2023-2024	<i>144</i>
Number of Instructional Days during the 2023-24 School Year	<i>180</i>		
School Hours	<i>8:25-3:10 (Monday-Friday) Wednesday Early Release Dismissal 1:30 (approx. twice per month)</i>	Age of School in 2023-24	<i>25 years</i>
Mission Statement: The mission of River Valley Charter School is to provide a rigorous academic program based on the Montessori philosophy and rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Students will reach their full potential as scholars and become self-reliant and productive members of society. They will be adept at critical thinking and creative problem solving and will be fully prepared to succeed in future schools, careers, and civic life.			



July 15, 2024

To the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,

On behalf of the River Valley Charter School community, we are pleased to present our Annual Report for the 2023-2024 academic year. We are celebrating our 25th year of operation, and the school continues to exceed expectations on aligning our mission to actuality. The faculty at River Valley Charter School is committed to the Montessori philosophy while providing a rigorous academic program rooted in the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.

River Valley Charter School is committed to a high-quality public Montessori program and completed a two-day Montessori audit with the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. The leadership team also focused on faculty and staff growth by continuing Montessori certifications for three teachers and piloting DERS, a Montessori-specific appraisal tool, in K-3 classrooms.

We are very excited about the kickoff to our Grounds Redesign capital campaign. The leadership team looked at the existing playground, and a holistic approach was taken to redesign the grounds while keeping our Montessori mission top of mind. The team has included the faculty, students, and community in this work, and it is creating a great buzz around campus.

River Valley is experiencing a transition in leadership. Jonnie Lyn Evans' retired and Karen Kuse was hired to be our Interim Director. Under Jonnie Lyn's guidance, from co-founder to Director, River Valley has blossomed into a beacon of excellence for K-8 public Montessori education. Jonnie Lyn's profound influence has shaped the very essence of our school. We are immensely grateful and inspired by her years of dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment.

The Board has implemented a new management tool, Board on Track, that will allow the Trustees to perform their duties while maintaining transparency and intellectual property. The board continues to provide sound governance and fiscal oversight to the school and ultimately the Director. We are extremely proud of our 5th Charter Renewal and thank the administration, teachers, staff, trustees, families, and students for the accomplishment. Together we can achieve greatness.

Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed report, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Denise Herrera
Chair, Board of Trustees, River Valley Charter School

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

CRITERION 1: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

An Education Program Based on the Montessori Philosophy

River Valley Charter School continues to cultivate a learning community based on the Montessori philosophy. We started the year with an all-staff professional development “Child of the Universe” led by Biff Maier from [METTC](#), the Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative. Our work centered around our identity and purpose as Montessori educators. Each of our classrooms is led by a Montessori trained and/or certified teacher, and many of our assistant teachers and specialists also have training in Montessori pedagogy.

The structure of our multi-age classrooms in grades 1-8 allow students to learn from and teach each other. Most lessons are given in small groups and are customized to the learning needs of each student. Teaching teams prepare learning environments for River Valley students where they have access to active, hands-on learning opportunities. Each classroom environment is centered around lessons and materials that promote deep learning, provide self-correction, and encourage collaboration. Classrooms typically operate on the principle of freedom within limits. This contributes to the development of independence and strong decision-making skills.

A Curriculum Rooted in the History, Culture, and Ecology of the Merrimack River Valley

Place-based learning is a central element of a child’s learning experience at River Valley. Students at every level experience local history and culture through field trips, lessons, and research projects. Experiences included a Middle School trip to Salem, MA to visit historical sites related to their Salem Witch Trial studies, Elementary 2 weekly excursions and learning at Maple Crest Farm in West Newbury, connecting to the history and land in that area, and Elementary 1 visits to [Spencer-Peirce-Little-Farm](#) where they participated in lessons with farm staff and exploration walks on the property. Our youngest students in Kinderhaus enjoyed a visit to a local apple orchard in the fall and learned from our Elementary 2 students when they visited the farm to plant bulbs and explore the woods.

A Focus on the Development of Students’ Critical Thinking and Problem-solving Skills

A Montessori classroom inherently provides opportunities for both critical thinking and problem solving. Students at all levels participate in research presentations and discussions. This year, Kinderhaus children researched and wrote their own play on the water cycle, Elementary 1 students presented research on animals and historical figures to their classrooms and families, and Elementary 2 students presented their research on the history of Maple Sugaring to our local community. Middle School students participated in a research project in collaboration with the Parker River Wildlife Refuge, presenting their findings at a yearly Salt March Conference at Endicott College.

Our classrooms often use critical thinking and creativity to solve problems in their classroom or the greater community. Each classroom comes up with norms and uses class meetings or circles to discuss issues that arise during the week. One Elementary 2 classroom even extended their work

into the greater community by taking a trip to downtown Newburyport businesses to discuss using less plastic to keep our planet clean.

Amendments to the Charter

No charter amendments were submitted in the 2022-2023 school year.
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CRITERION 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY

Student Demographic Information

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)

Student Data by Race/Ethnicity (2023-24)	
Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Student Body
African American	1.0
Asian	0.3
Hispanic	6.9
Native American	0.0
White	86.8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	4.9

Selected Populations (2023-24)

Selected Student Populations (2023-24)	
Title	Percentage of Student Body
First Language not English	0.3
English Language Learner	0.0
Low-income	9.0
Students with Disabilities	16.7
High Needs	22.6

2022-23 Student Discipline Report

2022-23 Student Discipline					
Student Group	Total Number of Students	Students Disciplined	Percent In-School Suspension	Percent Out-of-School Suspension	Percent Emergency Removal
All Students	296 ¹	0	Not applicable		
English Learner	0				
Economically Disadvantaged	26	0			
Students with Disabilities	63	0			
High Needs	78	0			
Female	152	0			
Male	144	0			
American Indian or Alaska Native	0				
Asian	3				
African American/Black	3				
Hispanic/Latino	19	0			
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	18	0			
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0				
White	253	0			

Historically, River Valley has very low rates of in-and out-of-school suspensions. Our Montessori philosophy includes Grace and Courtesy lessons, which serve as the backbone of behavioral expectation for all students and staff. Disruptive behavior is viewed as an opportunity for learning, and natural consequences are utilized over punishments. School Counselors and the Assistant Director track behavior incidents that require support more than the classroom teacher. River Valley's SST (Student Support Team) meets to support students struggling with behavior during school, offering supports such as counseling, peer groups, and alternative work options.

¹ Maximum enrollment is 288 students.

CRITERION 4: DISSEMINATION

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Best Practices, Collaboration	Salt Marsh Science Conference (Endicott College)	Middle School Science Teacher and 10 Middle School Students	Parker River Wildlife Refuge, Salt Marsh Science Conference Attendees and Community	Middle School Science students conducted research on the health of the Salt Marsh at the Hellcat Observation Area on Plum Island. They analyzed their data and presented their findings to local scientists and the local community at the Salt Marsh Science Conference.
Best Practices, Mission/Pedagogy	Maple Sugar Days (Spencer Peirce Little Farm)	6th Year students and Place-Based educator	Open to entire community	6th year students created presentations about the history of maple sugaring as well as current practices to present at a Maple Sugar Days event at Spencer Peirce Little Farm, which was open to the greater community.
Best Practices, Mission/Pedagogy	AMS Conference Presentation "Science for All"	Three Elementary 1 Teachers	Other Montessori Educators, Community	Three Elementary 1 teachers applied and were accepted to present at the National Conference hosted by the American Montessori Society. Their presentation "Science for All" emphasized creative opportunities for young students to access science in the classroom.
Best Practices, Mission/Pedagogy	Teacher training	Three current assistant teachers	Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative , other teacher trainees and faculty	River Valley currently funds three assistant teachers who are completing their Montessori training. They are able to share and discuss our mission and philosophy, and especially our Place-Based Education program, with their cohort and teachers.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS

CRITERION 5: STUDENT PERFORMANCE

[2023 School Report Card](#)

CRITERION 6: PROGRAM DELIVERY

Curriculum & Instruction: The Montessori Method

River Valley Charter School endeavors to stay true to the Montessori approach in all academic areas while also meeting the needs of students as our world evolves. The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS) has recently published a series of curriculum guides that align Montessori Standards with the most widely adopted public school curriculum standards (MA Curriculum Frameworks), which we will use as a tool and resource moving forward. Our schedule allows for K-6 classrooms to have uninterrupted work blocks as well as Specials classes and Place-based learning opportunities that enrich the classroom curriculum. Middle School students participate in a rich curriculum with four basic content areas (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Humanities), in addition to project groups and elective courses. Mixed age classes and time built into the schedule for individual work and group projects is an integral part of the Public Montessori experience at all levels.

Assessments

Children who learn in a Montessori classroom are assessed in a variety of ways. Observation is a key tool for teachers, and they use this informal formative assessment to continually adjust lessons for student learning and engagement. Creative projects, oral presentations of research, performances, and written work are also part of our evaluation process.

Progress reports and parent-teacher conferences are held three times per year. In preparation for their conferences, students create portfolios of their work, divided into our Habits of Learning (Curiosity, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Commitment, Communication, Citizenship, and Compassion).

Sixth year students prepare oral research presentations to culminate their E2 experience, which are presented to the school community. Eighth year students end their River Valley journey by giving a presentation we called “Celebrations of Learning (COLs). The COL is an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and growth both academically and outside of the classroom. In an interactive presentation given by each eighth year student, a group of panelists ask questions, challenge the student’s thinking, and engage in open conversation. Presentations include: A Story of Self, Expression of Gratitude, Evidence of Learning, and a panel discussion.

Supports for All Learners

River Valley prioritized social emotional learning for students during the 2023-24 school year by adding an additional school counselor. Our two counselors supported classroom teachers with small group lessons and students through counseling, social groups, and classroom support. The current staffing structure at River Valley, with two teachers in each classroom, enables teachers to provide individualized and specialized instruction for students who need extra support. Students with 504 or

IEP plans are supported by our Special Education staff, which include special education teachers, a literacy specialist, a speech language pathologist, and special education assistants at each level. We continue to refine our SST (Student Support Team) process to provide help for students who need more but do not qualify for Special Education services. Summer sessions are offered for free to our Special Education students, taught by River Valley staff, to provide math, reading, and social skills practice to maintain learning during the summer months.

Accelerated Learning

Our schedule and staffing gave us the flexibility to meet the needs of students who needed extra academic support this year. Students were supported with small group tutoring especially in math and reading as we evaluated their needs throughout the year through our DIBELS literacy and Acadience mathematics assessment and SST meetings. We were able to hire additional staffing for our Elementary 1 level to assist in classrooms with children who needed social-emotional and learning support.

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

CRITERION 10: FINANCE

FY24 Unaudited Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

Tuition	\$ 5,164,353
Grant Income	165,716
Private Income	100,000
Program Fees	100,174
In Kind Contributions	54
Interest/Investment Income	61,313
Other Income	<u>4,023</u>

Total Income	<u>\$ 5,595,633</u>
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Personnel and Related

Professional Development	52,150
Payroll taxes	110,437
Fringe Benefits	430,935
Wages	3,729,752

Total Personnel and Related	<u>\$ 4,323,274</u>
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Occupancy

Operating/Maintenance of Building/Grounds	162,175
Utilities	48,931
Equipment Maintenance	2,387
Networking & Communications	13,972
Building Liability	-671.00
Rent Expense	246,766

Total Occupancy	<u>\$ 473,560</u>
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Instructional

Instructional Contracted Services	57,187
Instructional Equipment	10,495
General Supplies, Textbooks, & Curriculum	44,632
Field Trips	71,958
Technology - Hardware & Software	34,311

Total Instructional	<u>\$ 218,584</u>
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Pupil Services

Health & Wellness Supplies	1,885
Health Services	400

Food Services	8,131
Transportation	18,062
Student Activities	53,794
Total Pupil Services	<u>\$ 82,272</u>
Administration	
Contracted Professional Services	162,753
Advertising & Recruitment	2,586
Travel, Dues, & Other	46,842
Administrative Supplies	28,891
Legal Fees	8,628
Insurance (Non-employee)	40,501
Amortization and Depreciation	103,542
Total Administration	<u>\$ 393,743</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 5,491,432</u>
Net Operating Income	<u>\$104,200.95</u>
Net Income	<u>\$104,200.95</u>

FY23 Unaudited Statement of Net Assets (Balance Sheet)

Assets

Current Assets:

Bank Accounts	\$ 2,612,954
Accounts Receivable	375
Other	72,595
Total current assets	<u>\$ 2,685,174</u>

Fixed Assets:

Property, Plant & Equipment	890,038
Right to Use Lease Asset	2,613,511
Construction in Progress	50,213
Total fixed assets	<u>\$ 3,553,762</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 6,238,936</u>

Liabilities and Equity**Current Liabilities:**

Accounts payable	\$ 28,8449
Credit Cards	1,802
Accrued Expenses, other	528,140
Total current liabilities	<u>558,591</u>

Noncurrent Liabilities:

Lease Liability	2,849,534
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Total noncurrent liabilities	<u>2,948,434</u>
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Total liabilities	<u>3,408,125</u>
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Net Position:

Total Equity	<u>2,830,811</u>
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Total liabilities and equity	<u>\$ 6,238,936</u>
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FY25 Approved Budget (June 5, 2024)

Tuition	\$ 5,327,489
Grant Income	90,000
Private Income - Foundation	75,000
Program Fees	110,000
Interest/Investment Income	45,000
Total Income	<u>\$ 5,647,489</u>

Personnel and Related

Professional Development	35,000
Payroll taxes	153,084
Fringe Benefits	497,523
Wages	3,827,101
Total Personnel and Related	<u>\$ 4,512,708</u>

Occupancy

Operating/Maintenance of Building/Grounds	150,000
Utilities	53,000
Equipment Maintenance	2,387
Networking & Communications	18,000
Building Liability	13,000
Rent Expense	242,698
Total Occupancy	<u>\$ 476,698</u>

Instructional

Instructional Contracted Services	62,000
Instructional Equipment	11,000
General Supplies, Textbooks, & Curriculum	23,000
Field Trips	85,000
Technology - Hardware & Software	28,000
Total Instructional	<u>\$ 214,000</u>

Pupil Services

Food Services	10,000
Transportation	25,000
Student Activities	40,000
Total Pupil Services	<u>\$ 75,000</u>

Administration

Contracted Professional Services	142,000
Advertising & Recruitment	4,000
Travel, Dues, & Other	35,000
Administrative Supplies	25,000
Legal Fees	10,000
Insurance (Non-employee)	45,000
Amortization and Depreciation	105,223
Total Administration	<u>\$ 366,223</u>

Total Operating Expenses \$ 5,644,630

Net Operating Income \$ 2,859

Net Operating Income \$ 2,859

FY25 Enrollment Table	Enter Number Below
Number of students pre-enrolled via March 15, 2024 submission	288
Number of students upon which FY25 budget tuition line is based	288
Number of expected students for FY25 first day of school	288

FY24 Capital Plan Update

The River Valley Charter School Board of Trustees has committed to funding a restricted Capital Reserve Fund for future infrastructure needs. Through careful fiscal planning, the Trustees expect to position the school to absorb any unforeseen infrastructure costs without significant impact on annual operations. The Capital Reserve Funds balance as of 6/30/2024 was \$238,399.32.

During FY 2023-2024, River Valley Charter School completed the following capital improvements:

- Purchase of an industrial refrigerator for the NSLP – Investment of \$5,000
- Purchase of an industrial food warmer for the NSLP – Investment of \$3,770

FY25 Capital Plan Summary

River Valley Charter School commissioned a Capital Needs Assessment and Replacement Reserve Analysis from On-Site Insight in 2022. According to the plan, FY25 will have the Capital Expenditures listed below. The school is currently fundraising for a larger grounds redesign plan, which would incorporate some of the items below.

- Replace the 40-gallon hot water heater with basin – Expected cost \$2,652
- Camera and Keyless Entry Maintenance – Expected cost \$5,835
- Carpet replacement in key rooms – Expected cost \$11,626
- Replace vinyl composition flooring in E1 and E2 rooms – Expected cost \$17,824
- Front sidewalk maintenance – Expected cost \$4,560
- Playground equipment refresh – Expected cost \$35,000

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN EVIDENCE 2023-2024

Faithfulness to the Charter

	2023-24 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Objective 1: River Valley Charter School will provide a Montessori learning environment that reflects best practices for public Montessori education.		
Measure 1A: River Valley will alternate between a self-assessment and an external audit of its Montessori program every year using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector's Essential Elements Rubric. Every year the audit will switch such that there are three external audits and two internal during this charter term. Annually, River Valley will obtain at least a satisfactory rating in each of the five domains of the rubric (Adults, Montessori Learning Environment, Family Engagement, Leadership and Organizational Development, Assessment). The rating is based on a four-point rubric (unsatisfactory, needs improvement, satisfactory, exemplary), and will reflect the average score of all the standards within each of the five domains.	M	River Valley Charter School contracted with the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS) to conduct an audit of their Montessori program based on the NCMPS Essential Elements rubric. The audit was conducted in March 2024. The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector rated River Valley as follows in each of the five domains: 1. Adults: Strong/Exemplary Implementation 2. Montessori Learning Environment: <i>Strong Implementation</i> 3. Family Partnerships: <i>Strong Implementation</i> 4. Leadership and Organizational Development: <i>Strong Implementation</i> 5. Assessment: <i>Strong Implementation</i>

	2023-24 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Measure 1B: Every year, all grade K-6 lead teachers will self-evaluate their Montessori classroom environment and practices using the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector's Teacher Reflective Practice Inventory. All lead teachers who have been asked to return to River Valley for employment the following year will score at least 80% on the instrument, which includes 22 indicators of Montessori best practices as defined by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Teachers Reflective Practices Inventory (Appendix E)	NM	There were two lead teachers at the Kinderhaus level, five lead teachers at the Elementary 1 level (including one class where there were co-teachers), and six lead teachers at the Elementary 2 level (including two classes where there were co-teachers). Of the 13 grade K-6 lead teachers, only five of the teachers, or 38%, self-reported that they achieved 80% or higher on the NCMPS Teacher Reflective Practices Rating Scale. Results of the inventory are on file at the school. It has been stated in prior reports that school administration does not believe this measure accurately reflects the quality of the K-6 faculty. Our teachers rate themselves far more critically than administration would on the same practices inventory. The Montessori audit, referenced above, supports this assertion. In it, RVCS programming is specifically cited for successfully providing the following critical foundations of successful public Montessori programs: peaceful staff and students; cohesive, holistic, child-centered service; engaged, purposeful teaching and learning. Further, the Adult domain, which rates the faculty and staff specifically, received the highest rating in the audit, scoring "strong" to "exemplary".
Objective 2: River Valley Charter School will provide educational experiences that connect student learning to the history, culture, and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.		

	2023-24 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Measure 2A: Annually, every class will engage in a minimum of three place-based learning experiences related to the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley.	M	Every classroom participated in at least three experiences related to the history, culture and ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. A copy of every learning experience is maintained electronically including the relevance of the experience.
Measure 2B: All grade 5-8 students will participate in an annual survey to rate students' understanding of the connection of in-school learning with the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Ninety percent of the surveyed students will indicate that at least one of their out-of-classroom experiences connected in-class learning to the history, culture, or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. In addition, on a 1-5 Likert scale (with 1 indicating the place-based experience was not relevant to classroom learning and 5 indicating that classroom learning was amplified through place-based experiences which tied learning to the real world), ninety percent of served students will rate their experiences at least 3.	NM	Grade 7 and 8 students did not participate in an annual survey that rated their understanding of the connection of in-school learning with the history, culture or ecology of the Merrimack River Valley. Instead, they were assessed using more traditional methods such as quizzes, tests, projects, and presentations. Grade 5 and 6 students were administered a survey to check their understanding of the connection of in-school learning. Of 94 responses in the survey, 83% of respondents indicated they participate in place-based education to “learn about the ecology of where we live”; 86% indicated it is was to learn about “the history of where we live”; 77% indicated it is to learn about the “culture of where we live”. Survey results are on file at the school.

Objective 3: Learning experiences at River Valley Charter School will support students in the development of critical thinking and creative problem solving.

Measure 3A: Annually, with at least a 50% response rate of River Valley Charter School caregivers, 80% or more respondents will agree or strongly agree in separate questions that River Valley Charter School provides opportunities for their child(ren) to develop critical thinking skills and creative problem-solving skills.	M	River Valley had a greater than 50% response rate in the Caregiver survey administered in March 2024. 88% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed that River Valley provides their child(ren) with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Similarly, 83% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed that River Valley provides their child(ren) with opportunities to develop creative problem-solving skills.
Measure 3B: Each year, the overall percentage of grade K-6 students, including River Valley's primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), whose progress report scores show that they usually or consistently demonstrate critical thinking skills (defined as making connections and challenging assumptions, supplying evidence for arguments, and using reflections/feedback as a tool for growth) will increase from the fall to the spring grading period.	M	The overall percentage of K-6 grade students with progress report scores showing they usually or consistently demonstrated critical thinking skills increased from 73% in the fall to 80% in the spring. The overall percentage of the K-6 primary subgroup of students with progress report scores showing they usually or consistently demonstrated critical thinking skills increased from 38% in the fall to 75% in the spring. Evidentiary documentation is maintained at the school.
Measure 3C: All graduating students will participate in a River Valley Celebration of Learning (COL) event, and 90%, including River Valley's primary subgroups (students with high needs and students with disabilities), will earn an average final score of	M	100% of RVCS' graduating 8th grade students participated in a Celebration of Learning (COL) event. All students, including high needs and students with disabilities, earned an average final score of 3 or better on the rubric that

3.0 or better (out of a 1-4 scale), on a rubric that assesses content and presentation. The presentation is a culminating experience that integrates the River Valley Charter School academic curriculum as well as River Valley's Habits of Learning curriculum, thereby representing application of critical thinking and creative problem solving.		assesses the content and presentation of the COL. Supporting documentation is on file at the school.
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Dissemination

	2022-23 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Objective 4: RVCS will share its Montessori curriculum with other public schools in Massachusetts over the course of its charter term.		
Measure 4A: By the end of the charter term, RVCS staff will deliver at least five mission-related presentations to five different MA public school audiences to disseminate best practices in public Montessori education.	M	River Valley has participated in more than five mission-related presentations during our current charter term. In 2023-24, our Art Teacher began a collaboration with the Art Department at Amesbury High School, which will result in a mural project to be created in downtown Amesbury. Currently in the planning phase, the mural will be created and installed during the 2024-25 school year.

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN 2024-25

Recruitment Plan 2024-25

Implementation Summary 2023-24
Successes: - Increased applications received (up from 192 in 2023-24 to 223 for 2024-25) “Word of mouth” continues to be what most families list on survey of how they heard about River Valley - Social Media via Facebook and IG increased reach to families in sending districts - Current families in sending districts other than Newburyport posted lawn signs during open application season - River Valley Ambassadors (current families) reached out to their sending districts via social media - Strong attendance at information sessions held at school Challenges: - Staffing to advertise and connect with local organizations - Connecting with families from other towns for whom transportation is a challenge - Collecting and tracking data as to which strategies are making the most impact

General Recruitment Activities for 2024-25
- Work with current students and families to share information by word-of-mouth to support a diversity of applicants across our community (River Valley Ambassadors) - Social media marketing efforts via Facebook and Instagram - Advertise in literature distributed by Newburyport Youth Services and the Merrimack Valley Boys and Girls Club - Continue membership with two local Chambers of Commerce - Hold in-person and online enrollment and information sessions - Advertise in local libraries and preschools - Email all families on our waitlist to invite them to reapply in our next lottery

Recruitment Plan - 2024-25 Strategies	
Students with Disabilities/Special Education Students	
(a) CHART data Met CI School percentage: 16.7% CI percentage: 16.1% The school is <u>above</u> CI percentages	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies Met CI: no enhanced/additional strategies needed - Observe and meet with pre-schools serving kindergarten applicants to better support transition to River Valley - Similarly, meet with prior schools of new students to support the transition to River Valley

English Learners/Limited English-proficient Students	
(a) CHART data Did not meet CI School percentage: 0.0% CI percentage: 1.0% The school is <u>below</u> CI percentages	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • “Google Translate” link will be available on our website • Our website will include a statement welcoming LEP applicants • Find and reach out to local pre-schools known to have greater populations of limited English proficient families • Reach out to local religious organizations that provide services in languages other than English
	(c) 2024-25 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed Did not meet CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies needed. • Reach out to local refugee organizations (North Shore Friends of Refugees); Distribute flyers • Connect with current bi-lingual families to serve as tour guides for information sessions • Research adult ESL programs in our areas to advertise, distribute translated flyers We expect it will take three years using these strategies to realize their effectiveness.
Low-income/Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	
(a) CHART data Did not meet CI School percentage: 9.0% CI percentage: 16.3% The school is <u>below</u> CI percentages	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Outreach and connections at local WIC and SNAP sites • Brochures and applications made available at local food pantries and Head Start locations (Seacoast Center Head Start) • State in our brochures and advertisements that our program serves all students, including students of all socio-economic backgrounds • Distribute materials at local libraries in our sending districts • Include advertising signage on local busses
	(c) 2024-25 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed Did not meet CI: additional and/or enhanced strategies needed. (c) 2024-25 • Provide refreshments and child care at one or more information session • Research transportation options for residents of our sending districts other than Newburyport • Partner with affordable housing networks to share application and promotional materials • Promote our new participation in free/reduced lunch for the 2024-25 school year via social media and in our flyers We expect it will take three years using these strategies to realize their effectiveness.

<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	(d) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Provide summer sessions to qualifying students • Provide Homework Help for grades 4-8 • Provide students with computer-based programming to reinforce/practice math skills
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	(e) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Providing summer school programs and after-school drop-in sessions for middle school students are helpful for families who may have students at risk of dropping out of school.

Retention Plan 2024-25

Implementation Summary 2023-24
Successes: • New Family Mentor program • Minimal withdrawals • 93.7 retention rate, exceeding our goal Challenges: • Funding for staff for summer school and extra tutoring • Funding/service provider for free/reduced lunch • Maintaining SEI/ELL staff when we do not currently have any ELL students

Overall Student Retention Goal	
Annual goal for student retention (percentage):	94%

Retention Plan - 2024-25 Strategies	
Special education students/students with disabilities	
<u>(a) CHART data</u> School percentage: 8.3% Third Quartile: 6.6% The school's attrition rate is <u>above</u> third quartile percentages.	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Child study/SST process for early intervention on a pre-special education evaluation basis • Frequent parent conferences • Student Support staff will meet regularly with general education teachers to monitor and accommodate students on IEPs.
	(c) 2024-25 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed Above third quartile: additional and/or enhanced strategies needed. • Ensure that special education teachers, general education teachers, and members of the Student Support Team collaborate with the use of data and instructional strategies to support students with disabilities We expect it will take three years using these strategies to realize their effectiveness.
Limited English-proficient students/English learners	
<u>(a) CHART data</u> School percentage: NA Third Quartile: 0% The school's attrition rate is <u>at</u> third quartile percentages.	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies At or below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed. • Maintain a relationship with an ELL service provider • Ensure adequate number of teaching staff are SEI-endorsed • Maintain SEI endorsement of at least one member of the administrative team and increasing numbers of the teaching staff • Provide extra services (by an ELL service provider) to students who are not qualified ESL learners but whose backgrounds suggest that they are struggling due to English language learning (e.g., parents speak a language other than English at home, etc.) • Ensure current families are aware that RVCS offers ELL services
	(c) 2024-25 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed No ELLs were enrolled during the 2023-24 school year. No retention strategies needed.
Students eligible for free or reduced lunch (low- income)	
<u>(a) CHART data</u> School percentage: 4.5% Third Quartile: 7.25%	(b) Continued 2023-24 Strategies At or below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed • Provide access to school-based counselor to identify additional services available in the area • Provide a high quality free or reduced-price lunch program to qualifying students. • Provide reduced cost before care program to qualifying students

Retention Plan - 2024-25 Strategies	
The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> third quartile percentages.	• Provide reduced cost enrichment programming to qualifying students • Specifically state in our promotional materials that our program serves all students, including students of all socio-economic backgrounds • Collaborate with counselors from CATCH, the Children and Teen Center for Help, to ensure families have access to community resources We expect it will take two years of using these strategies to fully evaluate their effectiveness.
<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	(d) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Provide summer sessions to qualifying students • Provide Homework Help for grades 4-8 • Provide students with computer-based programming to reinforce/practice math skills • Reduced cohort sizes in grades K-6 to ensure students receive additional 1:1/small group instruction
<u>Students at risk of dropping out of school</u>	(e) Continued 2023-24 Strategies • Provide drop-in summer sessions for Middle School students

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL DATA TABLES

Administrative Roster and Staff Attrition Data

Administrative Roster During the 2023-24 School Year			
Name	Title	Start date	End date
Jonnie Lyn Evans	Executive Director	07/01/2019*	06/30/2024
Jane Patterson	Assistant Director	07/01/2023*	NA
David Draper	Operations Manager	07/01/2023*	NA
Tricia O'Leary	Data and Compliance Coordinator	07/01/2015*	NA
Colin Vandenberg	Middle School Coordinator	09/01/2014*	NA
Pamela Dawe Jones	Technology Coordinator	11/01/2011	NA
Lisa Kelley	Special Education Coordinator, 4-8	08/01/2015*	NA
Christina Carico	Special Education Coordinator, K-3	08/01/2023*	06/14/2024
* date represents start date for this position; staff was previous River Valley employee			

Teacher and Staff Attrition for the 2023-24 School Year				
	Number employed as of the last day of the 2023-24 school year	Number of departures during the 2023-24 school year	Number of departures following the end of the 2023-24 school year through July 31st	Reason(s) for Departure
Teachers	45	0	3	- Found employment elsewhere - Contract not renewed - Accepted to grad school
Other Staff	20	0	4	- Retirement - Found employment elsewhere - Contract not renewed

Information About the Board of Trustees

Board Membership During the 2023-24 School Year					
Name	Position on the board	Committee affiliation(s)	Number of terms served on the board	Length of each term Terms begin July 1 and end June 30	Final year of service possible based on term limits in bylaws
Bradley-Irose, Erin	Trustee, Secretary	Committee on Trustees, Executive	First term completed, extending into second term	07/20-06/23 07/23-06/26	2026
Connerton, Meg	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	07/23-06/26	2029
Durkee, Nancy	Trustee	Accountability	First term completed, extending into second term	07/19-06/22 07/22-06/25	2025
Evans, Jonnie Lyn	Ex-officio, School Leader	Executive Accountability Finance Development	First term completed, extending into second term	07/19-06/22 End of Term: 07/22-06/24	NA
Fields, Ali	Trustee, Faculty Representative	Committee on Trustees	1 Yr Term Completed	07/22-06/23 End of Term: 06/30/24	2024
Herrera, Denise	Trustee, Executive (Chair)	Finance Executive	First term in progress	07/22-06/25	2028
Jackman, Ken	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	07/22-06/25 End of Term 01/24	2028
Martin, Catherine	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term completed, extending into second term	07/18-06/21 07/21-06/24	2024
Murdy, Tanya	Trustee	Development	First term in progress	07/22-06/25	2028
Rankin, Elizabeth	Trustee, Chair	Development	First term in progress	07/23-06/26	2029
Seaton, Erin	Trustee	Committee on Trustees	First term completed, extending into second term	07/19-06/22 End of Term: 07/22-06/24	2024
Simone, Eric	Trustee, Chair	Accountability	First term in progress	07/22-06/25	2028
Ting, Albert	Board Officer Committee Officer	Accountability Committee on Trustees Executive	First term completed, extending into second term	07/20-06/23 07/23-06/26	2026
Whitford, Chris	Board Officer, Committee Officer	Finance, Executive	First term in progress	07/22-06/25	2028

Board of Trustee and Committee Meeting Notices

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION

Facilities

Address	Dates of Occupancy
2 Perry Way, Newburyport, MA 01950	8/1999 - current

Enrollment

Action	2023-24 School Year Date(s)
Student Application Deadline	Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Lottery	Thursday, February 13, 2025

APPENDIX E: CONDITIONS, COMPLAINTS AND ATTACHMENTS

Conditions

Not applicable

Complaints

Board of Trustees Contact Information

Date	Summary of Complaint	Summary of Complaint Resolution
12/18/2023	The Board of Trustees received one written complaint regarding a Trustees behavior during board meetings.	When discussed with the Trustee, they resigned from the Board, effectively immediately.

Teacher Reflective Practice Inventory

Using the scale on the right, circle the number that corresponds to the degree of emphasis needed for your growth this year. A rating of 5 represents an area you believe warrants intense focus, not necessarily because it is a weakness, but because growth in this area will help you move toward mature practice.

Every object in my environment is chosen with regard to development of the child; there is nothing extraneous.	1	2	3	4	5
The environment is impeccably clean and tidy, and all materials are displayed in sequence from simple to complex.	1	2	3	4	5
Furniture is arranged to nurture concentration and to provide smooth flow.	1	2	3	4	5
There is variety in shapes, colors, textures and materials in the objects in the environment—trays, containers, rugs; and a variety of arts and crafts on the walls and integrated in various areas of the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
The children in my environment understand that the classroom belongs to them; they are fully oriented to the environment and show strong trust for one another and the adults.	1	2	3	4	5
There is an attitude of learning from mistakes and an acceptance that errors are a part of the learning process	1	2	3	4	5
There are routines for cleaning and ordering the classroom, introducing more complex materials based on student interest and need, rotating language materials to enrich vocabulary development, and refreshing pictures/art on the walls and in culture folders.	1	2	3	4	5
I am direct, specific, and consistent in communicating expectations with regard to social interactions, care of the environment, and purposeful work.	1	2	3	4	5
I consistently use the environment, and the materials to provide the first level of support for children's development and I intervene directly only when this support is insufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident in my repertoire of lessons, and I consistently provide presentations with fluency, clarity and economy of movement.	1	2	3	4	5
My lesson planning is based on ongoing observation of the children; I take time every day to sit and observe students in the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
While engaging with individual children, I am aware of the general classroom and the children's activity	1	2	3	4	5
I consistently identify student learning challenges early, and make necessary adaptations to my environment and/or presentations to meet the unique needs of individual students.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a reliable system for documenting ongoing observation of student work, and use that system to monitor student development as well as to communicate progress with parents, support staff, and, when needed, school/district officials.	1	2	3	4	5
I am highly sensitive to cultural differences and always appropriately respectful in communications with families.	1	2	3	4	5
I am proactive with respect to sharing student concerns and/or challenges with families. I make myself available for e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face conferences with families.	1	2	3	4	5
I approach each family with a spirit of empathetic inquiry, with the acceptance that parents want the best for their child.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself a child development expert, and am up-to-date on the latest research on the subject, including new insights on neuroscience and cognition and their relationship to Montessori theory and practice.	1	2	3	4	5
I strive to be fully present in every interaction—whether the other is a child, an adult or the environment	1	2	3	4	5
I understand Maria Montessori's Cosmic vision and regard daily work with children and families as a contribution to the larger cosmic effort.	1	2	3	4	5
I continually strive to realize my own human potential, and I look toward the child for inspiration.	1	2	3	4	5
I am intentional about caring for my physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.	1	2	3	4	5