

**Maria Montessori Charter Academy
Charter Council Meeting
Minutes
Monday, September 19, 2005**

The MMCA Charter Council held a regularly scheduled meeting at the school, called to order at 6:00 pm. Eight (a majority) voting members were present: Tracy Estridge, Amy Christian, Kevin Shaffer, Banetta Bacchi, Fallon Vaughan, Julia Bass, Petsy Wendt and John Elo. Brent Boothby was also present.

Public comment:

Laura Koerner: Concerned that test scores seem low relative to other Rocklin schools and that the scores may deter prospective parents of high-achievers from selecting MMCA. Does not want classrooms to focus on testing. Asking CC to consider ways to improve the scores or improve the presentation of the scores via a PR approach.

Ken Joy: Does not want the classrooms to focus on testing. Suggests students receive more practice at doing their best the first time (vs. opportunities for repeated corrections).

Betty Foley: Believes that test-taking skills are part of a well-rounded education and that we should be focusing more on teaching kids how to take tests throughout the year.

Kelly Elo: Vehemently opposed to teaching to the test.

CC response:

1. Brent reiterated the information in his article about test scores in the Thursday Flier of Sept 8, 2005 (attachment 1).
2. teacher reps will discuss with teachers for input/ideas.
3. topic will be placed on next month's agenda for further discussion.

Consent Items:

05/09/19:1 Carried 8-0-0. Minutes of 05/16/05 were approved.

05/09/19:2 Carried 8-0-0. Minutes of 08/15/05 were approved.

Action Items

05/09/19:3 Carried 6-2-0. Revision of uniform policy (attachment 2) such that cargo pockets are allowed on pants and that shirts may include solid-colored and completely unadorned (no logos, lettering, graphics, sparkles, decorative accents, etc.) white, light blue, navy or forest green long or short sleeved T-shirts. A Uniform Notice (attachment 3) will be sent home with students not in compliance with the Uniform policy.

05/09/19:4 Scott van Epps resigns his position as a Community Professional on the CC.

Administrator's Report:

05/09/19:5 2005-06 budget had covered a 10.25% contribution toward STRS. New projections have our share being at 8.25%. Categorical Block Grant funding is expected to increase over the next few years. Enrollment still light in 2nd and 8th but is almost full in 3rd. Goal is to try to fill by Oct 1.

05/09/19:6 Orange room still not fully furnished. RUSD states that situation is not unusual; furnishings expected within a few weeks.

05/09/19:7 Property in escrow. City of Rocklin has issues with access roads and grading/retaining walls; working to resolve. May need to seek alternative source for enhanced cash flow as project progresses. Should work to promote school publicly as new school project gets underway.

Closed Session (8:30-8:40pm), teacher reps depart:

Amy Christian is directed to draft an agreement that items donated to any classroom become the direct property of MMCA.

Charter Council Members comments:

Amy Christian: handed out packets from TRESA superintendent for the Governance Charter Council

Workshop to be held in Yuba City on 9/29/05. Reviewed/discussed will be the Brown Act, contracts, confidentiality, hiring practices and by-laws. Brent, Tracy and Amy will attend.

Meeting adjourned 8:55 p.m.

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be September 19, 2005 at 6 pm at the MMCA Sunset site.

MMCA CHARTER COUNCIL MINUTES SEPT 19, 2005 ATTACHMENT #1

STAR Testing Reports Update

With the County mailing home your child(ren)'s individual STAR testing reports last week, I have the usual annual questions about 'what does this mean?', or 'how did we do versus other school districts?', etc.

First off, aggregated STAR testing results are available via the state website, <http://star.cde.ca.gov>. To find MMCA's scores, you can either do a search with 'Montessori', or select by school district (note: this is via our sponsoring school district, which is the Twin Ridges elementary School District of neighboring Nevada County).

Explanation of categories:

On the CST ("California Standards Tests") student record sheet, there are five scoring categories:

- ❖ Far Below Basic is significantly below grade level, and infers that additional support beyond the regular classroom may be needed;
- ❖ Below Basic is considered below grade level;
- ❖ Basic is currently at grade level;
- ❖ Proficient is currently above grade level, but it is the state's target range for all CA students by 2014 (the state's goal as a part of the 'No Child Left Behind Process' process)
- ❖ Advanced infers the student may be in the significantly gifted range

Used as an informational resource for parents about their child(ren), I think STAR testing is somewhat informative. In general, our MMCA kids did very well on the tests – approximately 89 of our 99 test takers school-wide achieved "basic" or better on their tests. Our composite (average per grade level) scores were also solid, with just about all of our grade levels averaging "proficient". That said, comparing our composite test scores to that of other larger schools and school districts can produce some pretty flawed data in my opinion. Here are things to consider when comparing our school to other schools in the area:

Sample Size

When looking at our score's versus your neighborhood school's scores, you have to take sample size into consideration. Comparing our 20 students or so per grade level versus schools with 200 students is not statistically valid. For example, a 1 student variance for MMCA affects our school's test scores **25** times more than a sample with 200 students or more.

Percentage of students taking the test

When you are looking at other school district's scores, most participation rates on the test will be in the 96-98% range, not the 100% participation rate that MMCA has. In California (and federally via No Child Left Behind), the required percentage for standardized testing is 95% of the student body. Now, with a larger school district with 200 students per grade, if their lower performing kids are not included (at 200 kids, it would be about 8 kids per grade level), the aggregate average scores can be improved dramatically. To emphasize this key point, I want to use our 2005 3rd Grade STAR ELA scores as an example. If you look up our aggregate scores, our 3rd Grade ELA scores, while respectable, were our lowest composite score – 334. If I exempt our lowest individual test score from this grade level, our composite score jumps all the way to 374! When we originally applied for the facility grant that we have now received, the percentage of the student body taking the STAR test was a part of the screening process with the application. Thus in all likelihood, we will continue to test and report all of our students in the STAR process.

Our school's philosophy regarding standardized tests

Finally, and probably most importantly, especially compared to a traditional public school, we place a minimal emphasis on STAR testing preparation. Basically, while we obviously teach the content of the test, our teachers spend minimal time teaching how to take the tests. As a Montessori School, our curriculum is much broader than that of a traditional public school, and our primary emphasis is on the development of the whole child, not just the child's multiple choice test taking abilities. Some of our local school districts are literally doing hundreds of hours annually on test prep-oriented activities – and maybe 30 minutes a week of history, science or art instruction. In the long term, I believe this is detrimental to a student's overall development.

If you have any additional questions regarding your child's STAR test scores, please feel free to email me at brent@mmcharter.org

MMCA CHARTER COUNCIL MINUTES SEPT 19, 2005 ATTACHMENT #2

Maria Montessori Charter Academy Uniform Policy (2005-06)

Students are expected to be in uniform each day without exception. The school requests full parental support for the uniform policy. Repeated non-compliance will result in a call for parents to pick up the student or to deliver an appropriate uniform.

Uniform requirements

Tops

Styles: Oxford, Polo, turtleneck, T-shirts or uniform-style shirts or blouses. Tops must be sleeved (long or short). Other than the MMCA logo, all tops must be completely unadorned (no logos, lettering, graphics, sparkles, decorative accents, etc.).

Colors (solids): white, light blue, navy blue, or forest green.

Second layer: sweater, cardigan or vest in navy blue, MMCA sweatshirts (available thru PTA) are allowed.

Outerwear: not regulated.

Bottoms

Styles: Uniform-style pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers, capris.

Colors (solid): Navy blue or tan khaki.

Not acceptable: jeans, sweatpants, overalls, leggings as pants.

Footwear

Socks or tights in white, navy blue or forest green.

Indoor and outdoor shoes are to be closed at toe and heel, with non-skid soles.

Outdoor shoes must be appropriate for P.E. and running games.

Accessories/Hair

Hairstyles are expected to be neat, tidy, and out of the student's eyes.

Hair accessories are to be minimal, non-distracting and in one of the uniform colors.

Jewelry and other accessories are limited to wristwatches and stud earrings.

General

1. Clothing should be clean and should fit properly.
2. Please mark all removable clothing with the student's name in permanent ink.
3. Shirts and blouses with shirttails are to be tucked in except during recess or P.E.
4. There are to be no bandanas.

MMCA CHARTER COUNCIL MINUTES SEPT 19, 2005 ATTACHMENT #3

Maria Montessori Charter Academy Uniform Notice

M.M.C.A.'s Uniform Policy has multiple purposes including behavior management, equality, school unity and identification. Students are expected to be in uniform each day without exception. This is an FYI notice to help parents and students adjust to our expectations.

Today, _____
date

student's name

was out of uniform as highlighted or noted below. The school requests full parental support for the uniform policy. Please contact the office with any questions. Thank you.

Uniform requirements

Tops

Styles: Oxford, Polo, turtleneck, T-shirts or uniform-style shirts or blouses. Tops must be sleeved (long or short). Other than the MMCA logo, all tops must be completely unadorned (no logos, lettering, graphics, sparkles, decorative accents, etc.).

Colors (solids): white, light blue, navy blue, or forest green.

Second layer: sweater, cardigan or vest in navy blue, MMCA sweatshirts (available thru PTA) are allowed.

Outerwear: not regulated.

Bottoms

Styles: Uniform-style pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers, capris.

Colors (solid): Navy blue or tan khaki.

Not acceptable: jeans, sweatpants, overalls, leggings as pants.

Footwear

Socks or tights in white, navy blue or forest green.

Indoor and outdoor shoes are to be closed at toe and heel, with non-skid soles.

Outdoor shoes must be appropriate for P.E. and running games.

Accessories/Hair

Hairstyles are to be neat, tidy, and out of the student's eyes.

Hair accessories are to be minimal, non-distracting and in one of the uniform colors.

Jewelry and other accessories are limited to wristwatches and stud earrings.

General

5. Clothing should be clean and should fit properly.
6. Please mark all removable clothing with the student's name in permanent ink.
7. Shirts and blouses with shirttails are to be tucked in except during recess or P.E.
8. There are to be no bandanas.