



**Lakeland  
Montessori  
Schoolhouse**

## **Charter Renewal Application November 2006**

**Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse Charter School**  
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## **Mission Statement:**

The mission of Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is to provide an enriched academic environment which also emphasizes the development of character, particularly the virtues of **Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness**.

## **Vision as related to Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness:**

Children are encouraged to become **respectful** by being in an environment where children of mixed ages, abilities, and backgrounds work together, where adults model respectful behavior and where the manners and courtesies of our culture are presented and practiced.

Children become **responsible** by caring for themselves, their environment, and their community, and by experiencing the results of their choices.

Children become **resourceful** by directing the course of their day, making decisions and solving problems as they arise.

## **Introduction & Background Information**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse, Inc. (LMS), a charter school & preschool located in Lakeland, Florida, served 54 students in Kindergarten through third grade and 14 three and four year old preschool students during the first year of operation. At the present time we serve 73 students in Kindergarten through fifth grade and 17 three and four year old preschool students. Currently our demographics in grades K-5 consist of 23% free and reduced lunch, 19% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 5% Asian students. The school opened in August 2004 to provide an educational alternative as the first public or private Montessori elementary program in Polk County, and is located near downtown Lakeland at 837 E. Parker Street. As stated by the American Montessori Society:

“A Montessori program is based on self-direction, non-competitive and cooperative activities that help a child develop a strong self-image, high levels of academic and social competence, and the confidence to face challenges with optimism. Encouraged to make decisions from an early age, Montessori educated children are problem-solvers who can make appropriate choices, manage their time, and work well with others. They exchange ideas and discuss work freely. These positive communication skills build the foundation for negotiating new settings.”

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse started the first school year of 2004-05 as a small school in order to ensure the consistent quality of the program and to provide the extensive Montessori teacher training required to properly execute an authentic Montessori program. In addition, as the key to implementing the Montessori Method is early childhood education, the school started with only a small number of children (26) over Kindergarten age. Implementation and enrollment during the developmental period from age three through six provides unmatched opportunities for both academic and personal development in the sensitive, crucial areas such as language development, self-discipline, and concentration. It is during this period that the foundation of the Montessori educational environment is built. The age 3-6 classroom is the setting in which curiosity is sparked and the love of learning is nurtured along with teaching the essential skills to succeed academically.

Academically, children are encouraged to move ahead in a challenging curriculum that is supported by ingenious and time-tested materials designed by Dr. Maria Montessori and other Montessori professionally trained educators. The students work either in small groups or individually within a multi-age classroom that is developmentally based. The teacher guides students to the next level of difficulty within the parameters of the individual child's interest and ability. Through being provided with spontaneous and creative opportunities as well as an organized curriculum, students are stimulated and encouraged to practice the self-discipline and responsibility necessary to become informed, creative citizens and leaders. While students are expected to master the same Sunshine State Standard reading, writing, and computation skills required of them in any public school curriculum, there is flexibility inherent in the system to accommodate each student's academic interests and potential. The aim is to encourage active, self-directed learning and to strike a balance of individual mastery with group collaboration. Parental

involvement is considered to be the foundation for the academic achievement of students and each family is required to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours per school year in order to be re-enrolled for the following school year.

Not only are the academic and cognitive aspects of the child nurtured by the Montessori method, but the “whole child” (intellectual, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual). The social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the child’s education have to do with practicing the values of compassion and empathy, service, integrity, self-reliance, and tolerance. At Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse adults model these core values. In such an atmosphere, children learn to become peaceful and tolerant members of society who wish to succeed by bringing others along. Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is founded on the belief that all differences are to be respected. We are dedicated to teaching the core values of peace, integrity, community, and tolerance through a scientific and culturally oriented Montessori curriculum revealing to the child the diversity and richness of human experience. LMS is committed to providing a safe environment that is psychologically and emotionally nurturing and is conducive to learning-about academics as well as oneself.

## **Charter Renewal Document Question and Answer section:**

### ***1. Is the academic program a success?***

1A. Has the school made reasonable progress in meeting internally established educational goals during the term of the charter?

As referenced in the sections below, Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has met 100% of the Accountability Plan goals. As the School Board’s review committee is interested in clear quantitative evidence, we present below the progress data relating to the educational goals of our approved Accountability Plan.

### **Educational Goal Accomplishment:**

#### **Goal One: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse students will become proficient in Reading.**

#### **Indicators of Progress:**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse averaged grade 3-4 students that are enrolled at LMS beginning with the first day of the 2005-06 school year and take all portions of the spring FCAT Reading SSS, will meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goal set by the State of Florida of 44% Reading proficiency on the 2006 administrations of FCAT SSS Reading.

**2005 & 2006 DATA RESULTS:**

**Percentage of Students Scoring at Level 3 or above FCAT Reading SSS**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b># of students 2005</b>	<b>FCAT Reading SSS 2005 Level 3 or above</b>	<b># of students 2006</b>	<b>FCAT Reading SSS 2006 Level 3 or above</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Average of all grades:</b>		<b>60%</b>		<b>100%</b>

More than 80% of our averaged K-3 students that are enrolled at LMS beginning with the first day of the school year will be at the Initial or Strategic Instructional Levels on the fourth assessment of the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) annually.

**2005 DATA RESULTS:**

<b>Grade level</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Percentage in each Instructional Level:</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Initial: 96%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 4%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 0%</b>
<b>First</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Initial: 55%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 36%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 9% (1 student)</b>
<b>Second</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Initial: 80%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 20%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 0%</b>
<b>Third</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Initial: 60%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 20%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 20% (1 student)</b>
<b>Average of all grades:</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Initial: 72%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 20%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 7%</b>

**2006 DATA RESULTS:**

<b>Grade level</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Percentage in each Instructional Level:</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Initial: 100%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 0%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 0%</b>
<b>First</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Initial: 90%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 5%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 5%</b>
<b>Second</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Initial: 91%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 0%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 9%</b>
<b>Third</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Initial: 86%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 14% (1 student)</b>
		<b>Intensive: 0%</b>
<b>Average of all grades:</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>Initial: 91.7%</b>
		<b>Strategic: 4.8%</b>
		<b>Intensive: 3.5%</b>

100% of our students in grades 3-4 that attend LMS for a minimum of three months will participate in the online FCATexplorer.com reading program in order to build increased reading skills, as documented by teacher’s record book and/or student performance reports.

**Outcome:** 100% of LMS grade 3-4 students referenced above participated in the FCATexplorer.com online reading program.

1. 100% of our first and second grade students that are enrolled at LMS for both the October and February FTE counts will be given the opportunity to participate in the Letter P.A.L.S. (Personalized Adventure Letter Series) school to home reading program as documented by a student roster check list. All parents will be given the invitation and instructions to facilitate participation in the program.

**Outcome:** 100% of LMS grade 1 & 2 students referenced above were given the opportunity to participate in the Letter P.A.L.S. school to home reading program. The program begins in October of each year and participation at home is required by the program, which is why the goal is written as an opportunity rather than a requirement.

**Goal Two: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse students will become proficient in Mathematics.**

**Indicators of progress:**

1. Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse averaged grade 3-4 students that are enrolled at LMS beginning with the first day of the 2005-06 school year and take all portions of the spring FCAT Mathematics SSS, will meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goal set by the State of Florida of 50% Mathematics proficiency on the 2006 administrations of FCAT SSS Mathematics.

**2005 & 2006 DATA RESULTS:**

**Percentage of Students Scoring at Level 3 or above FCAT Math SSS**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b># of students 2005</b>	<b>FCAT Math SSS 2005 Level 3 or above</b>	<b># of students 2006</b>	<b>FCAT Math SSS 2006 Level 3 or above</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Average of all grades:</b>		<b>60%</b>		<b>100%</b>

2. 100% of Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse students that attend a minimum of three months at LMS will utilize hands on Montessori mathematics materials such as those listed on the 6-9 Monitoring Student Progress Form as documented by teacher's record books.

**Outcome:** All students attending LMS utilized hands on Montessori mathematics materials.

**Goal Three: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse students will become proficient in Writing.**

1. More than 80% of students in grades 2 – 4 that are enrolled at LMS for the entire school year will show at least 1 point improvement using the pre and post test scores or have a score of three or higher on the post (May) assessment of the Montessori Made Manageable Test Pro Writing as

documented by teacher's record books. The Florida Writes Rubric will be used for scoring.

**Outcome:** More than 80% of the LMS students referenced above in grades 2 - 4 accomplished the goal listed above.

**Goal Four: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse students will become proficient in Science.**

1. More than 80% of our 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> grade students that are enrolled at LMS for the entire school year will participate in a minimum of two cultural social science or science research activities throughout the school year as documented by teacher's record books.

**Outcome:** More than 80% of the LMS students referenced above in grades 3 & 4 accomplished the goal listed above.

**Goal Five: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse will provide a school environment which emphasizes the development of character, particularly the virtues of Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness.**

**Indicators of progress:**

1. Teacher record books will document that more than 80% of Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse grade 1-4 students that are enrolled at LMS for the entire school year will participate in one or more of the following:
  - a) A Montessori Grace and Courtesy curriculum project demonstrating their understanding of topics such as:
    - Community
    - The environment
    - Prejudice
    - Peace
    - The homeless
    - People in crisis
    - People of the world
    - Family
    - The hungry
  - b) Participation in a community service experience with a community development organization such as:

- Talbot House services
- Lighthouse Ministries services
- Area Nursing home services
- LMS school neighborhood environmental clean-up activities
- Canned food drives
- Establishing relationships with foreign school community contacts
- Services to the elderly.

c) Participation in etiquette lessons from LMS staff which will culminate in the opportunity to participate in a real-life restaurant experience with LMS staff.

**Outcome:** More than 80% of the LMS students referenced above in grades 3 & 4 accomplished the goal listed above.

**Goal Six: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse will provide an environment which encourages critical thinking ability and individualized academic and personal success.**

**Indicators of progress:**

1. 100% of LMS students enrolled for the entire school year will participate in a Personalized Education Plan, which is an individualized comprehensive progress report, as documented by teacher record book. (example attached)

**Outcome:** Each student enrolled for the entire school year received a Personalized Education Plan.

2. 100% of LMS parents will be invited to attend two parent conferences for each child that is enrolled throughout the entire school year as documented by parent newsletter and/or school email group records. Individual progress and goals for each area of development will be reviewed, including such items as: Language, Cultural subjects, Mathematics, and patterns of learning, behavior, attitudes and social interaction.

**Outcome:** Each family was given the opportunity to attend two conferences as described above.

3. 100% of students that are enrolled at LMS for the entire school year will be given the opportunity to participate in field trips that enhance critical thinking abilities relating to the curriculum as documented by parent newsletter and/or email group records.

**Outcome:** 100% of the students referenced above were given the opportunity to participate in field trips that enhance critical thinking abilities.

Examples include:

- Lowry Park Zoo
- Lighthouse Ministries
- Florida Aquarium
- Brown's seaplane base
- Viste Community Agency
- Lakeland Public Library
- Pottery by the Park
- Barnett Park
- Sculpture Exhibit of J. Seward Johnson
- Lakeland Fire Department
- Lakeland High School Reading Festival
- Jack Hartman Music Concert
- Historic Bok Tower Sanctuary

**Goal Seven: Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse will be recognized as a school in Polk County with desirability among parents for enrolling their children and as a program which emphasizes that excellence in education requires parental involvement and support of their child's learning needs and school environment.**

**Indicators of progress:**

1. As documented by parent newsletter and/or school email group records, 100% of LMS parents will be invited to participate in the Parent Action Committee (PAC), which provides opportunities for parental involvement and support of the school community and goals. Each parent has the option to be a member of the PAC and regular meetings will be held throughout the school year.

**Outcome:** 100% of LMS parents were invited to participate in monthly PAC meetings, held every third Thursday at 6:30 throughout the school year.

2. 100% of LMS parents with students attending the entire school year will be invited to participate in family events which are coordinated and implemented in order to encourage family participation in school events as documented by parent newsletter and/or school email group records.

**Outcome:** 100% of LMS parents referenced above were invited to participate in LMS family events such as the following:

- a. Annual Multi-Cultural Fest (featuring Asian culture for 2005-06)
  - b. Montessori Math Parent Education Night
  - c. Student Play presentation
  - d. Timeline of History Student presentation evening
  - e. Young Author student book presentation evening
  - f. Family Tea & Art Show
  - g. Annual Friendship Feast
  - h. Downtown Lakeland First Friday LMS Chorus Event
  - i. End of the Year Family Luau Festival
  - j. Open House
  - k. Montessori guest speaker
  - l. Volunteer Appreciation Night
3. 100% of LMS parents will be invited to participate in the school email group, which will be facilitated in order to encourage family and community understanding, support, and involvement, as documented by copy of email group invitation.

**Outcome:** 100% of LMS parents were invited to participate in the LMS school email group.

Other Academic Program Data requested by the Renewal Documentation Evaluation Form:

- Standardized testing disaggregated data: due to the small size (less than 10 students in each category) of the requested disaggregated data the Florida Department of Education does not provide the data as it is statistically insignificant.
- Promotion data: In 2004-05 only one student was retained. In 2005-06 two students were retained in Kindergarten in order to strengthen their skills for the next developmental stage, and two students were retained in second grade to provide extra time for skill development and mastery of the Sunshine State standards.

**1B. Has student performance significantly improved and/or been persistently strong on internal and external academic assessments?**

As the primary focus of the School Board's review committee is on academic assessments that come from individuals outside of our school's community, the data from our standardized test results are what we present as evidence of our student performance. Even though the progress of students educated with the Montessori Method is not measured by grades or classroom tests and we do not emphasize standardized testing, research has shown that Montessori students generally outperform their peers on standardized tests.

The following are indicators that our students continue to make improvements and/or remain consistently strong on internal and external academic assessments:

- For both grades 3 and 4 our 2006 FCAT Reading Mean Scale Scores were higher than any other Polk County School District school.
- Our grade 3 2006 FCAT Mathematics Mean Scale Score of 370 was higher than any other Polk County School District school. Our grade 4 2006 FCAT Mathematics Mean Scale Score of 350 was the second highest score among Polk County School District schools.
- 100% of our students passed the FCAT with a level 3 or higher in both Reading and Math last year compared with 60% the year before.
- Every student that took the FCAT in 2005 made Developmental Scale Score gains in 2006.
- In 2006, several of our students were awarded the FCAT Certificate of Achievement for demonstrating outstanding performance.

The charts below demonstrate our student performance:

<b>READING SSS FCAT: Grade 3</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Mean Developmental Scale Score</b>	<b>Mean Scale Score</b>	<b>% at Levels 3-5</b>
Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse	7	1646	357	100%
Polk County School District (all schools)	7,167	1337	306	71%
State of FL (all schools)	204,238	1382	313	75%

<b>MATH SSS FCAT: Grade 3</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Mean Developmental Scale Score</b>	<b>Mean Scale Score</b>	<b>% at Levels 3-5</b>
Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse	7	1626	370	100%
Polk County School District (all schools)	7,179	1360	313	66%
State of FL (all schools)	204,402	1409	324	72%

<b>READING SSS FCAT: Grade 4</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Mean Developmental Scale Score</b>	<b>Mean Scale Score</b>	<b>% at Levels 3-5</b>
Lakeland Montessori	6	1808	358	100%

Schoolhouse				
Polk County School District (all schools)	6,489	1492	304	59%
State of FL (all schools)	192,480	1547	314	66%

<b>MATH SSS FCAT: Grade 4</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Mean Developmental Scale Score</b>	<b>Mean Scale Score</b>	<b>% at Levels 3-5</b>
Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse	6	1675	350	100%
Polk County School District (all schools)	6,492	1480	306	60%
State of FL (all schools)	192,610	1534	318	67%

We would like to point out that as our population is so small it is important to look at each student individually as opposed to focusing only on the Standardized test levels that they accomplish. Even though this year 100% of our students passed the FCAT, it is important to note that as we have such a small population various situations with individual students can have a large effect on the overall picture as a result of having too few students to present a statistically significant sample. As a result, our progress may present a varied picture from year depending on the specific population for that school year.

We would also like to point out that enrollment during the developmental period from age three through six provides unmatched opportunities for both academic and personal development in the crucial areas such as language development, self-discipline, focus and concentration. It is during this period that the foundation of the Montessori educational environment is built, the setting in which curiosity is sparked and the love of learning is nurtured along with teaching the essential skills to succeed academically. As such, if a child is given the opportunity to begin their education here during this crucial period, the academic and psychological benefits of a Montessori education become increasingly measurable as the students are given the opportunity to adjust and grow within a Montessori environment.

**2. *Is the school a viable organization?***

**2A. Is the school financially solvent and stable?**

As evidenced by our financial statements and auditors' reports for both of our operating years Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is a viable organization that is financially solvent and stable. The audit reports have been completely clean for both years with no reportable findings. As noted in the Independent Auditors' management letter, there were no violation of laws, rules, regulations, contracts

and grant agreements discovered, there were no improper expenditures discovered, there were no internal control findings discovered, and Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is not in any financial emergency conditions.

As shown in the chart below, the majority of the Lakeland Montessori’s net assets (98%) are in current assets. Lakeland Montessori can use these assets to provide services; therefore, these assets are available for future spending. There are no plans at this time for future major expenditures.

An analysis of fiscal years 2005 and 2006 is as follows:

**Net Assets**

**GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

	2006	2005
Current and Other Assets	\$ 253,961	\$ 123,693
Capital Assets	<u>\$ 4,191</u>	<u>\$ 1,116</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 258,152</u>	<u>\$ 124,809</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>\$ 33,994</u>	<u>\$ 53,194</u>
<b>Net Assets:</b>		
Invested in Capital Assets	\$ 4,191	\$ 1,116
Invested in Other Assets		
Unrestricted	<u>\$ 219,967</u>	<u>\$ 70,499</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 224,158</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 71,615</u></u>

Lakeland Montessori has positive balances in both areas of net assets, both for the government as a whole, as well as for its separate governmental activities.

Results from our independent financial audits and our financial statements clearly show that Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is a viable organization that is financially solvent and stable.

**2B. Is enrollment stable and near capacity?**

The enrollment of Lakeland Montessori has remained stable and near capacity during the term of the charter.

**Enrollment History (data taken from FTE Survey Period 2 of each year)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Average class size</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>
2004-05 (K-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade)	18 (3 certified teachers, multi-age classrooms)	55
2005-06 (K-4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	18 (4 certified teachers, multi-age classrooms)	70

2006-07 (K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	18 (4 certified teachers, multi-age classrooms)	73
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In relation to demand for our program, even before we opened we had many more applicants than spaces. As shown from our submissions of monthly waitlist reports to the Office of Magnet, Choice & Charter Schools we consistently have had at least enough applicants to fill another school.

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has always maintained suitable racial balance percentages and has always had both black and non-black students on the waitlist. We encourage and respect diversity which is a key component of the Montessori educational philosophy.

**Racial Balance Table (data taken from FTE Survey Period 2 of each year)**

School Year	Percentage Black	Percentage Non-Black
2004-05	20%	80%
2005-06	20%	80%
2006-07	19.2%	80.8%

While the school has not experienced significantly high turnover there is some mobility of students. This has not been unexpected. The chart below includes students who left during the school year (after the first week of their enrollment).

Year	Black	Non-Black
2004-05	1	7
2005-06	2	6

**2C. Is the school governance sound and professional in performing the governance duties of the charter school?**

The Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse, Inc. Board of Directors maintains sound, professional governance of the school and conducts Board meetings every other month year-round, and minutes of those meetings are on file. These meetings provide policy guidance and stability for the school and ensure effective governance. During each meeting, the Board reviews the current financial statements, addresses business items to be completed, hears Board member matters, hears reports of school progress, and addresses any public comment.

Each member of the Board has attended the approved governance training sponsored by the Florida State University Charter School Accountability Center in order to be proactive in creating an effective charter school. The Board members serve staggered terms as prescribed in the By-Laws. We have had a total of five Board members since opening and four of those members have been on the Board during our entire charter. Our Board members come from a variety of backgrounds and include business men and women of the community, parents,

and Polk County School Board teachers. Board members understand their roles under the Florida Sunshine Law and abide by these.

We have hiring policies, personnel guidelines, employee evaluation systems and parent/staff grievances procedures in place. Any changes that are needed in these items are approved by the Board.

We have had no formal staff or parent complaints to the Board at any time during our charter period.

**2D. Are the professional staff of the charter school competent and resourceful?**

The professional staff members of our charter school are committed to maintaining a high quality Montessori educational option and to preserving an effective relationship with the Polk County School Board district offices. Our staff has been stable, effective, competent and resourceful as evidenced by the excellent academic achievement noted in the sections above and the smooth operations of Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse.

All of our current teachers (except for one which started last year when we added a classroom) have been here since our first year of operation and our founder has remained the Administrator of the school during the entire charter period. All of our teachers are certified by the State of Florida, are “in-field” and “highly qualified”. In order to ensure the highest quality of effective teachers trained in the Montessori educational method, each one of our teachers is required to attend an extensive accredited Montessori teacher certification program. The teacher training program offered through Seacoast Center for Education provides a Master’s Degree in Elementary Education from Plymouth State University once the program is completed along with three additional courses (see attached teacher training package example). The training program provides on-site supervisory visits by expert teacher trainers to observe and provide extensive performance evaluations of our teachers’ progress. We also employ an expert Montessori educational consultant to provide additional direction and support for our teachers and administration.

The School’s teaching philosophy is based on the premise that excellence in education requires:

- An extraordinary commitment on the part of the family, school, and community members. The central focus of this contract is the belief that families are ultimately responsible for their child’s growth and development.
- Teachers who keenly observe, diagnose, and prescribe a personalized education plan for each learner that is cooperatively developed and regularly evaluated by the teacher, parent, and child.

- A developmentally appropriate, experiential learning system that facilitates a sense of mastery and accomplishment.

Montessori teachers are trained to be acute observers who can “follow the child” to understand how best to tap their interests and talents. The teacher is, in fact, the link between the prepared environment and the child. This is because her primary function is not as much to lecture and correct, as it is to direct a natural energy of curiosity in the child. This different approach to teaching also requires a new kind of training. Through Montessori training the teacher acquires similar characteristics necessary for a scientist pursuing research such as:

- Humility and patience.
- A deeper sense of the dignity of the child as a human being.
- An awareness of the child as a teacher.
- A new appreciation of the significance of the child’s spontaneous activities.
- A wider and more thorough understanding of the needs and talents of each particular child.
- A quicker reverence for the child as the creator of the adult-to-be.

The Montessori teacher is a:

- Facilitator
- Observer
- Enthusiast in the subject he/she is ‘teaching’

The Montessori teacher interacts with the child in a way that is not authoritarian. This does not mean that the teacher gives up all authority, but that it is exercised in a different way. The Montessori teacher must find the golden mean between giving enough instruction to the child and giving too much. The art of working with students in the Montessori model is knowing when and how to intervene and when not to. Through the use of this teaching method combined with comprehensive Montessori materials and curriculum which support the Sunshine State Standards, children learn the basic foundations of reading, writing, and arithmetic at an early age.

The school currently has four teachers for our multi-age K-5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms and is proud of all that they have accomplished

### ***3. Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?***

#### **3A. Have the school’s program and operation been consistent with the terms of its charter?**

Each one of the quarterly site visit reports from the PCSB Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools shows that Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has

complied with all of the charter reporting requirements in a timely manner during the entire term of the charter. We have also provided each of the Contractual Report documents as required by our charter in a timely, professional manner.

As discussed in Section 1, Academic Program, Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has accomplished all of the measurable performance objectives set forth in the LMS Polk County School Board approved Accountability Plan. Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has succeeded in implementing a high quality, authentic elementary Montessori program. The following are examples of the unique major programmatic elements, as described by the American Montessori Society, that have been accomplished by Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse:

- Staff is trained to view the child holistically, valuing cognitive, psychological, social, and spiritual development
- The child is an active participant in learning, allowed to move about and respectfully explore the classroom environment; teacher is an instructional facilitator and guide
- A carefully prepared learning environment and method encourages development of internal self-discipline and intrinsic motivation
- Instruction, both individual and small group, adapts to students' learning styles and developmental levels
- Three-year span of age groupings and multi-year cycles allow teacher, students, and parents to develop supportive, collaborative and trusting relationships
- Grace, courtesy, and conflict resolution are integral parts of daily Montessori peace curriculum
- Concentration and depth of experience is valued; uninterrupted time is structured for focused work cycle to develop
- Child allowed to spot own errors through feedback from scientifically developed materials, errors are viewed as part of the learning process
- Learning is reinforced internally through the child's own repetition of an activity and internal feelings of success instead of external reinforcement from grades, test scores, competition and rewards
- Care of self and environment are emphasized as integral to the learning experience
- Child can work where he/she is comfortable and the child often has choices between working alone or with a group that is highly collaborative among older students
- Multi-disciplinary, interwoven curriculum
- Child learns to share leadership; egalitarian interaction is encouraged
- Progress is reported through multiple formats: conference reports, checklists and portfolio of student's work
- Children are encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help each other
- Child is provided opportunities to choose own work from interest and abilities, concepts taught within context of interest

- The ultimate goal is to foster a love of learning

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse continues to strive to bring understanding and knowledge of the incredible benefits of the Montessori educational method to Polk County parents, community members and potential teachers.

**3B. Is the school within the bounds of applicable statutory and regulatory requirements?**

- **Special Education**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse works with the guidance of the Polk County School District to identify and provide the required services for the special needs of our students and to meet all applicable federal, state and local policies and procedures. A review is conducted for new students currently receiving special education services, and if needed, a staffing is held to rewrite the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to reflect the needs of the students and our program. The school contracts with a speech therapist to provide related speech services. There is no full time ESE program at the school, and students who require services are staffed in an inclusion model. An ESE teacher provides related consultative services. As the Montessori educational model is specifically based on adapting classroom instruction, both individual and small group, to students’ learning styles and developmental levels – we avoid unnecessary labeling of students. If there is a service, such as speech therapy, that needs to be specifically provided outside of the classroom setting we seek to ensure that the student receives the necessary staffing to receive the services.

IEP’s and re-evaluations are done according to the district plan. Through the regular use of Genesis printouts and a review of student information, the school seeks to stay in compliance. Records are on file with the Office of Magnet, Choice & Charter Schools and are discussed at regular site visits. The ESE program is limited to space restrictions and is not expected to expand as we are a very small school.

There have been no audits of the program or complaints filed. The chart below documents the number of students that we have served since our opening.

**Students receiving ESE Services**

<b>Exceptionality</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Speech Impaired	3
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	1
Gifted	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

Since the school opened four ESE students have left the school as follows:

- Leaving for home schooling – 2
- Leaving for private school – 1

- Leaving to attend magnet school - 1
- **Limited English Proficiency**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse requires a home language survey to be completed upon enrollment for each student that does not transfer with a home language survey in their cumulative folder from another Polk County School district school. In 2004-05 two students were assessed and not found to be limited English proficient. In 2005-06 two students were assessed and not found to be limited English proficient. Copies of home language surveys are kept in student cumulative files.

- **Student Learning Time**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse follows the Polk County School Board traditional school calendar. Classrooms open at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal begins at 2:45 p.m.

LMS provides extra time with teachers for struggling students. As each family must volunteer at least twenty hours per year we also utilize our volunteers in the classroom to provide extra help for struggling students as well as enrichment programs for all students. Some of the examples of enrichment projects are scientific experiment projects, community service outreach field trips, chorus community outreach trips, art projects, gardening projects, water conservation projects, cooking projects.

- **State Testing Requirements**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse participates in all state standardized testing. The school administers the SAT10, SRUSS (now replaced with FLKRS), FCAT SSS Reading & Math, FCAT NRT Reading & Math, FCAT Writes and the DIBELS standardized testing instruments.

**Number of Students Tested-100% of students were tested for each standardized test**

<b>Fall 2004 SRUSS</b>
Kindergarten - Tested 27
<b>Fall 2005 SRUSS</b>
Kindergarten - Tested 16
<b>Fall 2006 FLKRS</b>
Kindergarten - Tested 16
<b>Spring 2005 SAT10 Reading and Math</b>
Grade 1 – Tested 11
Grade 2 – Tested 10
<b>Spring 2006 SAT 10 Reading and Math</b>

Grade 1 – Tested 21					
Grade 2 – Tested 11					
<b>Spring 2005 FCAT SSS - Reading Math Writing FCAT NRT - Reading Math</b>					
Grade 3	5	5	n/a	5	5
Grade 4 (no students)					
Grade 5 (no students)					
<b>Spring 2005 FCAT SSS - Reading Math Writing FCAT NRT - Reading Math</b>					
Grade 3	7	7	n/a	7	7
Grade 4	6	6	6	6	6
Grade 5 (no students)					

The school has no students that receive an alternative assessment. During 2004 there were no students that received testing accommodations, for the 2005-06 school year one student received testing accommodations of flexible setting, presentation, & setting on the administration of the second grade SAT10.

- **Student Discipline**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse is very proud to report that it has had no incidences of formal suspensions.

- **Health & Safety**

The school maintains a quarterly site visit binder for the Polk County School Board Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter representatives to review at each visit. The binder contains current inspection certificates for fire, health, safety and building inspections.

LMS has had no formal suspensions in regards to smoking or the use of tobacco products on campus, on account of violence, or students bringing weapons or illegal drugs to school. The school has received no complaints regarding allegations of harassment or discrimination.

- **Legal**

LMS has no pending or threatened legal actions.

- **Miscellaneous**

Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse utilizes technology throughout the school's operations, including but not limited to:

- Wireless high-speed internet access is available throughout the school building to our computers.

- A school website is maintained at [www.lakelandmontessori.com](http://www.lakelandmontessori.com).
- A school-wide Yahoo group is maintained for all parents, staff members and students with access to online newsletters, homework, databases, files, pictures, event calendars and quick, informative school and parent communications.
- Communications and paperwork are readily available between the school district and staff at our school via email, Adobe and scanners.
- Each staff member receives and maintains a school email address for communications between parents and staff.
- We currently have 22 computers and 20 of these computers are available for student use, which works out to an averaged ratio of 1 computer for every 3.65 students.
- The use of technology is encouraged as a tool to aid in the acquisition of broad areas of knowledge and educational improvement. As students move into the developmental stage of abstraction, the use of technology is greatly encouraged for research, classroom projects, presentations, and many other classroom applications.
- A Smart Board, projector, digital camera and laptops are available for classroom and staff use.
- Students in grades 3 & up utilize FCAT explorer as a tool to aid in the understanding of testing concepts.
- The web-based version of Accelerated Reader is available so that students may access reading comprehension assessments both at home and at school.
- LetterPals, an online family reading program for first and second graders, is set up as a reading comprehension tool for our students.
- The school is compliant with copyrighted material and software licenses.
- The school will continue to set aside funds to maintain our school's access to current technology.

The school maintains the confidentiality of student records at all times. We have lockable filing cabinets containing all student records which are accessible only to authorized personnel. To date we have not received any requests relating to subpoenas.

LMS has adopted the Polk County School Board Code of Conduct.

The school maintains an atmosphere free from discrimination for both students and staff and we have had no incidences of discrimination. Inherent in the Montessori educational program is the celebration and appreciation of the diversity of the world. At its very core the Montessori method of education embraces diversity and includes many grace and courtesy classroom lessons relating to the growth and cultivation of the spirit of each student regardless of their race, religion, or background. School celebrations and events such as the LMS Annual Multi-cultural festival are planned so that they can include everyone regardless of their religious, cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds. The entire staff is expected to model the respect of diversity.

Our non-discrimination policy is stated on our website as follows:

“The School’s program is designed to attract and benefit parents and students who have an interest in the Montessori educational design. Our enrollment and admissions policies will comply with the provisions of the Florida Charter School Statutes. LMS will not discriminate with regard to enrollment. The School will maintain racial and ethnic balance consistent and representative of the community. The balance will be maintained based on agreements reached between the school and the Polk County School Board during contract negotiations. LMS is aware of the racial balance requirements that are a result of the desegregation lawsuit (Mills v. School Board of Polk County) and is committed to maintaining the required racial balance set forth in the unitary status agreement which indicates no less than 15% and no more than 40% minority (black).”

***4. If the school’s charter is renewed, what are its plans for the five years of the next charter?***

**4A. Please describe how your founding charter has served the school during its initial contract term. What has the school learned during its first term about the strengths and weaknesses of its charter, and what changes in the charter does this experience suggest?**

As shown in the sections above Lakeland Montessori Schoolhouse has proven to be a successful charter school. There are a few changes based upon the experiences during our first charter term that we have found to be useful to providing a thriving educational environment.

The following are the items that the school would like to add or adjust:

Reference	Academic goal or practice	Rationale for change
Page 24-Application	Supplemental Reading Program-Harcourt Trophies instead of Reading Mastery	The Polk County School District is currently using Harcourt Trophies therefore students that transfer into our program have a smoother transition in the Reading & Language Arts program areas.
Page 39-Application	Two mandatory parent/teacher/student conference references	The school staff has found that a conference after the end of the first nine-week period gives the opportunity to set goals and review student progress after having a chance for the student to adjust to the new school year. Instead of requiring a second conference on a specific date the school staff has found that making sure that there is open communication between teachers & parents via email and conferences that are available whenever requested by either the parent or teacher is more effective.

Application & Charter	All references to academic & testing goals	As the Office of Magnet, Choice & Charter Schools has now fully implemented the Accountability Plan for Charter Schools all the academic and testing goals stated in the Application and Charter have been replaced by the Accountability Plan goals.
Page 40- Application	Narrative report	The conference notes form used during the parent/ teacher conference is used instead of a narrative report and is placed in the student cumulative folder.
Charter	Addition of Grade 6	The school would like have the option to add Grade 6. Sixth grade is already included in Elementary teacher certification and the Montessori elementary curriculum includes grade 6, therefore we would like to reserve the right to add or remove sixth grade subject to the discretion of the school's Board of Directors.
Charter	Size of charter school	In order to provide the prospect for future growth we would like to have the option to grow our student population up to 200 students, subject to the discretion of the school's Board of Directors.
Page 13- Charter	Clarification of ESE evaluation and re-evaluation roles	There has been some confusion between charter schools and the ESE district offices as to the roles and duties expected of each related to ESE students evaluations and re-evaluations. In order to make sure students receive accurate, timely evaluations and re-evaluations the school respectfully requests further clarification.
Charter Law	Charter School Authorizing	As Florida legislation has passed new laws related to Charter School authorizers the school would like to reserve the right to have the option to choose a different authorizer in the future.

**4B. Please attach an accountability plan that defines the school's student and school performance objectives for its next charter term. Describe how these objectives are aligned with the current state curriculum frameworks.**

The school has attached its Accountability Plan for the next charter term. The Plan contains goals for each of the state curriculum areas of Math, Reading, Science and Writing.

**4C. How will the school evaluate and disseminate effective elements of the school's structure or program?**

The yearly annual report and audit required by the Florida Department of Education provide an opportunity to evaluate and disseminate the effective elements of our school's structure and program. In addition, one of the sub-committees of the school's Parent Action Committee (PAC), Community Awareness & Middle School, is specifically organized to evaluate and

disseminate effective elements of our school's structure and program to the community. As the Montessori Method is a non-traditional type of education there are many challenges in bringing accurate information to the community and dispelling misunderstandings concerning what an authentic Montessori educational model looks like. The Committee, along with the school staff, plays a large part in promoting this awareness.

**4D. What facility or facilities do you plan to use during the term of the next charter? Please submit written documentation that the school remains in compliance with all building, health, safety, and insurance requirements as described in Florida Statutes, and that all related inspections and approvals are current.**

The school has been actively looking for a larger facility to facilitate growth for over a year. Due to the fact that we do not receive the same share of funding for school facilities that other public schools receive (such as ½ cent sales tax increases, impact fees, capital outlay dollars, etc.) we have not been able to find an adequate affordable space in order to continue the growth of our program. At the present time the school will remain at its current location, however we will continue to search for opportunities within our community to locate our school to a larger facility. All documentation that the school is in compliance with building, health, safety, and insurance requirements is on file with the Office of Magnet, Choice & Charter Schools. The school will continue to provide a safe environment for students and staff.

5. N/A