

Charter School Annual Review Form

Charter School: Soldotna Montessori Charter School Year: 2024-2025

Purpose of this Form: Pursuant to the State of Alaska Charter School law (AS 14.03.255(b) (4)), the Academic Policy Committee shall meet with administration at least six times annually to monitor progress in achieving the committee's policies and goals in accordance with Kenai Peninsula Borough School District AR 6187. Pursuant to Kenai Peninsula School Board Policy 6187: this report will include information on the attainment of student performance expectations, meetings of the governing bodies of the charter school, descriptions of charter school activities, and other information of interest to the local School Board.

Use of this Form: This form should be filled out first by the Charter School's Academic Policy Committee during their annual review meeting. This form will then be signed by the APC chair and the administrator and sent to the KPBSD Board President, the Superintendent and the KPBSD Charter School Committee Chair.

Once signed by the KPBSD Charter School Committee Chair, a copy will be provided to the Charter School Administrator, Board President, and Superintendent. All Charter School Annual Review Forms submitted by KPBSD Charter Schools will be provided to the Board as a general information packet item.

Section 1: Breach of Contract

Examples of breach of contract include but are not limited to:

- failure to meet or make reasonable progress toward achievement of the content standards or pupil performance standards identified in the contract,
- failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management
- violating any provision of law from which the charter school was not specifically exempted.

Describe any possible Breach of Contract Concerns that have been brought forward this school year:

No Breach of Contract concerns were raised in the 2024-2025 school year.

Remedies for the possible Breach of Contracts described above:

None.

Section 2: Charter School Review by APC

Meeting Dates

APC Meeting Dates this school year:

- August 29, 2024
- September 19, 2024 (Gen. Membership)
- September 26, 2024 (APC Training @ Kenai Library 9:30-3:15)
- October 17, 2024
- November 14, 2024
- December 12, 2024
- January 23, 2025
- April 24, 2025
- May 15, 2025

Policies and Goals:

Reflections on the committee's policies and goals:

Current Goal: *By May 2025, the APC will have completed oversight of the SMCS Charter Renewal effort resulting in a final draft ready for presentation to the school board for approval in the fall.*

Reflection – The APC was apprised of the SMCS charter renewal application progress at the November 14, January 23 and April 24 APC Meetings. The final draft proposal of the Charter application renewal was presented at the May 15 APC meeting for bringing forward to the KPBSD Charter School Oversight Committee for final review in the fall prior to submission to the KPBSD Board. The APC met the goal of ensuring the charter renewal application was completed in time for the fall 2025 deadline.

APC Role & Responsibilities:

- *The APC conducted an annual review of the administrator in coordination with the KPBSD Superintendent evaluation of the administrator, and voted to retain the administrator.*
- *Reviewed APC goal and determined APC successful achievement of goal by hearing statements from APC members at May 15, 2025 meeting.*
- *An ongoing practice of the APC is to financially support staff in Montessori certification. The APC has authorized use of school funds to pay for two staff members to gain their Montessori certification in the past three years. The APC is pleased to note that April Dixon completed her Montessori certification through the Center For Guided Montessori Studies, achieving a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) accreditation recognized by the American Montessori Society. She completed both the Elementary I (Ages 6-9) and Elementary II (Ages 9-12) programs; This is a course length of 26 months and also required time traveling and training outside of Alaska. Currently, Rachel DeRaeve, is completing her Montessori certification also through the Center For Guided Montessori Studies.*

Recommendations for next year:

The APC will be using the May APC meeting to discuss possible future APC goals. Some options for considerations are:

- *SMCS Policy Review*
- *Develop an APC New Member Orientation*
- *Develop an APC Annual Training Schedule*
- *Improve principal annual review process to include a measurable goal.*

Budget: KPBSD Charter school budgets are developed using the Average Daily Membership (ADM) of the school entered into the State of Alaska foundation formula to

determine that amount of funding. The Finance department reviews all finance transactions. The Charter schools budgets are developed during the preliminary budget process based on projected enrollment and then adjusted after the 20 day student count that takes place in the Fall of each year.

Any Budget Concerns from APC:

There were no budgetary concerns raised by APC or by members of the public in APC meetings. The APC would like a BSA increase to occur at the state level, which would benefit all schools including SMCS.

Enrollment:

Enrollment this Year: 164 maintaining 100% capacity over multiple years

Enrollment Concerns: Our waitlist is larger than our enrollment capacity. We continue to be concerned that we are turning families away from a school of choice that serves district families. Our waitlist increased again this year from 218 to 235. It is possible that we could double our school size and have waitlist numbers persist, but we lack space to grow.

Curricula:

Curriculum Concerns: Aware that the Alaska Reads Act will continue to be impactful in delivering reading instruction and satisfied that DEED has approved the SMCS Core reading program, through the MTSS process (which includes Montessori materials), SMCS is still developing complimentary programming that is not inherent in the Montessori materials. Teachers will pilot complimentary supporting materials in subsequent school years. The APC will be reviewing program recommendations from SMCS staff and will choose to adopt or not adopt developing Montessori language arts complementary components.

Activities:

Co-Curricular Activities:

- *International Day of Peace Night*
- *School Garden & Farmers Market*
- *Craft Night*
- *Winter Program Concert*
- *Concert Band & Choir Concert*
- *Community Service Outreach*
 - *4th Grade Kindness Brigade - Positive Community Messages*
 - *5th Grade Visits to the Food Bank*
 - *6th Grade Heritage Place Visits*
- *Food Pantry*
- *Lego Robotics*
- *Battle of the Books*
- *Scripps Spelling Bee*
- *KPBSD Forensics Competition*
- *Modern Band Concert*
- *School Family Field Day/Picnic*
- *Art Night*

Reflections on Activities: The school held its annual International Day of Peace night, which provided an opportunity for students, together with their parents, to choose the flag of a country, color it, and write a message of peace for display in our hallway. We also shared a meal and sang our traditional "One Voice" song together.

The school participated in Lego Robotics. Approximately 30 students attended the after school robotics club. SMCS had a school winning team compete at the Kenai Qualifier. The team was recognized for the Motivate Award, "a team that embraces the culture of the First LEGO League through team building, team spirit, and enthusiasm."

SMCS held Battle of the Books sessions for students in grades 1-6. We had 40 students participate. Our grades 3-4 team and grade 5-6 team participated in the district Battle of the Books competition. Liam Toews won the school spelling bee, and qualified for the state spelling bee competition by making it through the regional qualifier.

SMCS had 10 students place in our school-level Forensics competition due to the canceled district competition, we were only able to hold a school level event students who were place winners at the competition: 1st: Simon Williams, Brooklynn Bott, Liam Toews, and Nathan Nelson; 2nd: Libby Toews, Dylan Duffy, and Alyson Evans; 3rd: Isabella Munoz, and Escher Nash.

The SMCS garden was maintained over the summer and resulted in a harvest that provided for the school Farmers' Market, which is open to the public. The market was carried out by students in Mrs. Dixon's class in October. The garden was prepped and planted again in May 2025 for harvest in fall of the 2025-2026 school year.

SMCS Intermediate students carried out their annual 3rd quarter community outreach efforts. This year the 4th grade students continued as a "Kindness Brigade" providing positive/encouraging messages in the community by decorating and sharing positive messages; this year they continued this effort on insulated coffee sleeves that were supplied to area coffee vendors. The 5th grade students visited and volunteered at the Food Bank in support for lunch service or stocking food. The 6th grade students visited Heritage Place and spent time with residents there.

The SMCS food pantry continues to operate, and is filled daily by SMCS students. The students have placed 1413.7 lbs. of food in the food pantry to feed community members in need this school year from August 27 to May 6.

The SMCS Quest students participated in the Mind-a-mazes competition, the Film Festival, and TriMathlon. A SMCS team took 2nd place at the MAM competition.

This was our first year having a Student Leadership Committee. The committee was made up of one 3, 4, 5, and 6th grader from each class for a total of 12 students. The committee met monthly. The SLC organized school spirit days, two whole-school movie viewing events, assisted with the kindergarten balloon parade, and developed an "Idea Box" for getting student input. The SLC also made progress in: developing and posting school 4-square rules, gaining placement of a water bottle filler closer to classrooms, and securing authentic flags for capture the flag.

Academic Performance:

Review of Academic Performance: SMCS staff reviewed our 23-24 STAR, MAPS, and mClass academic data and Hanover SEL data during the August 19, 2024 in-service. Staff consider the following questions during the review:

- *Data may provide obvious focus area(s)*
- *What observed needs might be goals that can be simply addressed, monitored, and measured?*
- *Can we target goals to mesh with school direction? (Conscious/Positive Discipline, Montessori Growth, Community Outreach, Science of Reading, Etc.)*

The results of this data review led the staff to develop a School Development Plan goal for math: By May 2025, All students in grades 3-6 will meet or exceed their Spring projected Math growth RIT score as measured by the Winter or Spring MAP Math assessment.

Staff engaged in review of student benchmark and academic performance during the following Data Days, September 10, 2024 and January 14, 2025. Staff reviewed mClass (reading), AimsWeb (math) and MAPS (reading, language arts, and math) data and student performance to establish instructional decisions for Quest, Intervention and Special Services. Students received updated instructional plans because of this review.

Staff also reviewed student performance data for in-class work at monthly team collaboration days, weekly during PLC meeting times.

The APC reviewed school academic performance data at the May 2024 and October 2024 APC meetings. They also reviewed principal survey data at the December 2024 APC meeting. Additionally, they will review Spring Benchmark Academic Performance Data and Hanover SEL data at the May 2025 APC meeting.

Attached to this document is a summary of the school data for the year for academics as well as the data provided by the 23-24 Hanover survey. The data was reviewed and shared with the APC at the May 2025 APC meeting.

List Academic Performance Concerns: Based on the data, our academic concerns are in various areas. We have relative strengths and weaknesses among every grade. Noteworthy is that Grade 3 is the first time students take the MAPS benchmark battery and the assessment format is novel, lengthy, and rigorous resulting in the lowest scores in all subject areas among grades 3-6 on the MAPS assessment.

Reading is an overall strength with an average of an 86% proficiency rate among K-3 grade students on the mClass reading assessment with 25%+ being considered proficient, and an average of a 96% proficiency rate among 4-6 grade students on the MAPS reading assessment with 25%+ being considered proficient. However, student reading growth data is the lowest among subject areas in MAPS Fall 24/25 to Spring 24/25 (42% growth) and Spring 23/24 to Spring 24/25 (63% growth). PERFORMANCE CONCERN - Low Reading Growth Scores

Math is also an overall strength with an average of an 80% proficiency rate among K-2 grade students on the AimsWeb math assessment with 25%+ being considered proficient (also the overall average proficiency rates went from 72% proficient in 23/24 to 80% proficient in 24/25), and an average of an 87% proficiency rate among 4-6 grade students on the MAPS math assessment with 25%+ being considered proficient. Additionally, student math growth data is the highest among subject areas in MAPS Fall 24/25 to Spring 24/25 (83% growth) and Spring 23/24 to Spring 24/25 (76% growth). Grade 3 was the lowest performing grade at 63% proficient on the spring MAPS math assessment. PERFORMANCE CONCERN - Grade 3 Math Achievement Scores on MAPS Math Assessment

Language Arts is only measured in grades 3-6 is an overall weakness with the lowest achievement scores with an average of an 83% proficiency rate among 4-6 grade students on the MAPS language arts assessment with 25%+ being considered proficient. Grade 3 was the lowest performing grade at 54% proficient on the spring MAPS language arts assessment. Additionally, language arts growth scores were only marginally better than the reading growth scores with language arts growth scores Fall 24/25 to Spring 24/25 (49% growth) and Spring 23/24 to Spring 24/25 (66% growth). PERFORMANCE CONCERN - Lowest Achievement Scores for Grade 3-6 and Low Growth Scores

Overall - Language Arts is the largest performance concern for grades 3-6. It is notable that grade 3 performance is the lowest, but must take into account that it is the first time students take the MAPS benchmark battery and the assessment format is novel, lengthy, and rigorous resulting in the lowest scores in all subject areas among grades 3-6 on the MAPS assessment. The school will likely focus on Language arts performance in the 25-26 school year. For Reading and possibly Math, the school will also increase the proficiency standard from 25%+ to 40%+ for reading and math. The proficiency standard will be supported by tiered intervention support for students in the 1%-40% range (1%-25% - Tier 3 & 26-40% - Tier 2).

Stakeholder Feedback:

Review of Feedback:

Feedback was gained through three sources. The principal evaluation survey prepared and evaluated by the APC using a Google form; a school survey prepared and shared by the principal using a Google form, and the 2023-24 Hanover student survey (grade 3-6), prepared by the district and delivered by teachers. Additionally, a separate special school survey was prepared and delivered to SMCS parents regarding a possible school facility move and consideration for school expansion to include Pre-K, Middle School (Grades 7 & 8) and additional K-6 grades.

The APC reviewed the Principal Evaluation survey at the December 2024 APC meeting. The APC reviewed the special school survey data at the April 2025 APC meeting, The School Survey data and 23-24 Hanover data is reviewed at the May 2025 APC meeting.

Principal Evaluation Review:

The data reviewed by the APC in December resulted in issuing a contract to the principal. Survey results regarding the principal performance were positive.

Special Survey Review:

The data reviewed by the APC in April resulted in continuing to include a middle school option in the Charter School Renewal Application, in agreement with the survey results.

School Survey Review:

Community - 0 Responses

Comments: The school received zero submissions from the community on this survey. Informal communications from community members are positive and express a favorable view of the school.

Parents - 32 Responses

Comments: When asked how often they participate/communicate with the school each month 69% reported 1-5 times, 22% reported 6-10 times, 3% reported 11-15 times, 3% reported 16-20 times, and 3% reported 21+ times. Of those reporters, 100% stated they are greeted, 97% stated staff listens to their concerns, and 100% indicated that their student has had a positive learning experience. 91% stated that communication from the school is "Great," 6% said it was "Okay," and 3% said "Could be better."

The bulk of open ended comments expresses that parents like the family feel, friendly staff, the kindness that exists among all members, Learning outside school walls, a positive climate, the Montessori approach, the staff's passion for students, the class sizes, differentiated instruction, communication, community mindedness, welcoming environment,

and positive communication between students. Other comments included an appreciation for the location, multi-age, and engaged parents.

Open ended recommendations for improvement by the state & district were: Increased funding for schools (BSA), Facilities improvements (New facilities needed), and healthier school meals had the most comments, other improvements were increased student support for ADHD students, A new school board, holding admin accountable for failing classrooms, holde teachers students accountable for poor testing, 4 day school week, increase teacher pay, more PE/Recess, support for Art/Music, don't lower standards, increased science theory and reasoning instruction, and let Montessori school be a model for district.

Open ended recommendations for improvement specific to the school were: New/bigger building not tied to SOEL, more space for school/classrooms, adding pre-K, middle school, and high school to SMCS, keep high standards for students, emphasize healthy food options and physical activity, and communicate beginning of the year events or hold open house in addition to stop-by-say-hi and Peace Night.

Hanover Student Survey Review:

The 2023-24 Hanover data reviewed by the APC in May resulted in noting areas of school strength and areas for possible focus for improvement.

Other Areas of Discussion:

The school was recognized as a 2025 U.S. News & World Report Best Elementary Schools Public & Charter, demonstrating that the school continues to thrive and performs at a high level, garnering recognition from entities that monitor school performance. This is the second year in a row for this recognition.

As noted in the APC Policies & Goals section, April Dixon completed her Montessori certification through the Center For Guided Montessori Studies, achieving a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) accreditation recognized by the American Montessori Society. She completed both the Elementary I (Ages 6-9) and Elementary II (Ages 9-12) programs. In addition, Dara Friday, and Jan Marquis completed their Montessori Assistance training and received a certification from the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Currently, all classified staff have their Montessori assistant's certification. Rachel DeRaeve is completing her Montessori Certification with a MACTE accredited institution and will be completed in 2026. SMCS has two classroom teachers who are not Montessori certified and are not currently enrolled in a Montessori certification program. The school has two additional certified staff, who provide intervention and physical education instruction and are not prioritized to gain a Montessori certification.

The school community is very concerned about facility placement stability as two factors now cause concern for our families. Recently the KPBSD board considered closing and consolidating schools, which had the possibility of displacing our school from its current location. This was a huge concern for our current families. Additionally, the school community continues to be discouraged by the extensive delay in gaining a new facility location as part of the 2022 bond initiative that was passed by voters. There is limited transparency about why this process is so delayed and gives the appearance that the bond, and more specifically Soldotna Montessori Charter School is not a priority, despite a steering committee development. It is hoped that definitive direction and action is confirmed and shared publicly so that future facility placement is established and secure.

SMCS continues to enjoy high demand from the community as evident by the growing waitlist. We have grown from a waitlist of 178 in 2023 to a waitlist of 244 in 2025, while maintaining our current enrollment of 165 students. The SMCS APC continues to urge the KPBSD school board and leadership to consider options for allowing the school to expand due to demand. The APC is disappointed that many families are turned away from a school of choice due to limitation of space allocated to the school. Additionally, the school is looking into the feasibility of adding middle school grades (7th & 8th grades). We are including an option to develop this level in our charter renewal application, which will be put forward in the fall of 2025.



APC Chair Signature:

Date: May 15, 2025



Charter School Administrator Signature

Date: 5/15/2025

KPBSD Charter School Committee Chair Signature:

Date: _____