



January 1, 2015

Dear Oregon State Board of Education Directors:

On behalf of the Ivy School, a public Montessori charter school, I respectfully request a renewal of our charter agreement with the Oregon State Board of Education. The Ivy School has been successfully sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education for the past 5 years, and we are requesting our third renewal. In order to improve lottery outcomes with regards to racial diversity and low income students, the Ivy School also respectfully requests the addition of a Kindergarten and 40 students to its charter agreement.

The Ivy School opened its doors in the Fall of 2009 with 60 students, and has since grown to its current capacity of 260 students. Continued interest in the Ivy School is evident in a solid waiting list for each enrollment period. The Ivy middle school program, which started in 2012 with nearly twenty students, has grown into a thriving program in its own regard, with current enrollment at 60 students. As students “age out” from the Ivy community, and the existing cohort of students at Ivy matriculates into the vacated spaces, the middle school program will be expanded and stretched to its capacity.

The Ivy School provides students in the community with free and equal access to a Montessori education that includes Spanish-language study. The mission of the Ivy School is to inspire children of diverse backgrounds to be lifelong, independent learners who value responsibility and embody peace. The Ivy School has a vision of students engaged in a dynamic Montessori curriculum which allows for exploration of the world around them. This vision incorporates creative and challenging multi-sensorial instruction to ensure that students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to be global citizens. Ivy educators reflect this vision by implementing best practices through Montessori philosophy and materials, state standards, authentic assessment, and student interest. The last piece of the Ivy vision is the partnership between Ivy, parents, and the community at large, to make sure the Ivy School is always a safe place where all students can thrive.

The dedicated and committed staff of the Ivy School prepare their classrooms, with the school mission and vision statements as their guide, to actively engage children and improve student achievement. An authentic Montessori classroom includes multi-age groupings that foster peer learning, offers uninterrupted blocks of work time, and provides guided choice of work activity. Multi-age groupings within Ivy classrooms are a hallmark of the Montessori Method: younger children learn from older children and older children reinforce their own learning by teaching the concepts they have already mastered. This arrangement also mirrors the real world, where individuals work and socialize with people of all ages, dispositions, and experiences. Learning also extends well beyond the walls of the Ivy School, as students and their families establish many community partnerships where they live and participate in community service projects both locally and globally. Montessori students at Ivy strive to function as independent, self-directed learners, who are invested members of a shared school community. Constantly working toward independence, responsibility for learning, and shared peaceful membership in a school community is a gradual process for each student, as they each come to Ivy at their own individual starting point.



The Ivy School continues to be a shared initiative involving all stakeholders, including students, parents, the local community, the Ivy Board of Directors, and the Ivy professional staff. Ivy students are clearly invested in their school community, as seen through student behavior, community service, and school activities. The suspension rate at Ivy for the past two years has been under 1%, compared to the district average of 4-5%. The suspension rate for African American students at Ivy has been 0% for the past two years, compared to the district average of 17%. Ivy students are guided on how to handle conflict through mediation and Restorative Justice practices. All Ivy staff have engaged in cultural training and utilize a shared language to engage in consistent, open dialogue regarding the Achievement gap in Oregon. Parents provide ongoing and daily support to the Ivy School through volunteerism, fundraising, and coordinating school events. The Ivy School has a strong community presence, in both of the neighborhoods where our campuses are and the Portland community at large, which has become cemented over the past five years through local contributions and community partnerships. Ivy is continuing the process of forging solid and long-term relationships with stakeholders in the community. The Ivy Board of Directors provides ongoing support to the Ivy Leadership Team, which has evolved into a shared leadership model including a Student Services support staff member at each campus as well as an Administrative Assistant available to parents daily.

In order to have consistency in curriculum and to ensure student academic achievement, the professional community of highly qualified teachers at the Ivy School participates weekly in shared collaborative planning time. In 2012-2013, the Ivy staff facilitated a self-study of Ivy's reading practices. Based on the outcomes of this study, the staff made recommendations and implemented best practices in reading which, after one year, resulted in an incredible yield in reading performance. Evidence of this can be seen in the 2013-2014 Reading Scores:

- Reading Academic Achievement rose to a Level 4.
- Reading Academic Growth improved to a Level 4.
- Subgroup growth for Underserved Races/Ethnicities doubled in progress, from a 2 to a 4.
- 2013 Reading Scores: 68% Meets and Exceeds in Grades 3-6.
- 2014 Reading Scores: 77.5% Meets and Exceeds in Grades 3-6.

Additional Ivy Highlights Include:

- The Overall Academic Achievement at Ivy is a Level 4 which above the state average
- Math test scores raised 10 percentage points in one year.
 - 2013 Math Scores: 50% Meets and Exceeds in Grades 3-6.
 - 2014 Math Scores: 60% Meets and Exceeds in Grades 3-6.
- In 2014, the Ivy School was granted permanent accreditation through NWEA/AdvEd.
- Ivy purchased the Prescott Campus, a \$1.25 million dollar, dedicated facility.
- Ivy secured funding for the purchase of the Prescott campus with the Ivy Capital Campaign, and Ivy continues to supplement the financial needs of the school with ongoing fundraising.
- Based on the results of the last two audits, the Ivy School is a financially solvent nonprofit organization.
- The Ivy School grew from 160 students to 260 in one year with a waiting list of 125 students at the beginning of 2014 (a 48% wait list).
- Ivy has a strong Montessori community where staff have participated in the International Montessori Congress and where staff receive continued Montessori training.



- The Ivy School has developed a school-wide plan for addressing individual education needs of students; utilizing RTI (Response to Intervention), Ivy implemented this initiative to ensure student success and to identify students in need of special education services in a timely manner.
- Special education students at Ivy are woven seamlessly into the academic and social fabric of the school, and are successfully maintaining a strong presence.

The Ivy School continues to work to improve in many different areas, including improving student outcomes in math. This is a top priority for Ivy. In 2014-2015, Ivy staff are identifying and 'targeting for support' students who are not on grade level in math. Identified students are provided with further opportunities to work on Montessori math materials during the day, and are offered free extended instruction in math after school. In the most recent set of test results for Ivy students grades 3-6, Ivy students made noticeable gains of 10 percentage points in math, and Math Academic Achievement at the Ivy School is a Level 3. Even though the Median Growth Percentile has doubled at Ivy, Academic Growth continues to be an area in need of development and all Ivy stakeholders are committed to demonstrating student growth in math.

The story of the Ivy School is a very simple one: a shared commitment to provide a public Montessori education to students, a shared commitment to the achievement of all students, a shared commitment to a place where students are members of a thriving community, and a shared commitment to a vision that all stakeholders are dedicated to educating children.

Thank you for partnering with our community stakeholders to offer an enriching educational environment for all children. Your continued support and consideration is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Karilyn Wax
Chair,
The Ivy School Board of Directors