

## Year Three Site Visit Report

**Hill View Montessori Charter School**  
*Haverhill, Massachusetts*

March 2007

Hill View Montessori Charter School (HVMCS) opened in August 2004 with 122 students in kindergarten through grade 3. Now in its third year of operation, the school currently enrolls 189 students in grades kindergarten through 5, and plans to add one grade level each year until it reaches a kindergarten through grade 8 configuration with 266 students.

The school's mission is "to provide a grade k-8 public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy. In partnership with teachers and parents, children will attain high levels of academic, personal and social achievement and so prepared, become constructive contributors to our community."

Data provided for the school indicates the 2006-07 student body demographics to be 78.8 percent white, 13.3 percent Hispanic, 5.8 percent black, 1.6 percent Asian, and .5 percent American Indian. Twenty three percent live at or below the Federal poverty guidelines. Seventeen percent receive special education services. One percent are limited English proficient.

The following participants conducted the site visit on March 6, 2007:

- Barry Barnett, MA DOE Charter School Office
- Emily Lichtenstein, MA DOE Charter School Office
- Lori McCreaven, River Valley Charter School
- Jessica Spohn, MA DOE Charter School Office
- Charlie Toomajian, Williams College

Before the visit, the team reviewed HVMCPS's 2005-2006 Annual Report, student assessment data, Accountability Plan, board minutes and materials, and the Summary of Review produced for the school's second charter renewal in 2005. On site, the team reviewed curricular information, a teacher roster, and other information provided by the school. The team observed classrooms and conducted group and individual interviews with trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and students.

The purpose of this visit was to corroborate and augment the information contained in the school's Annual Report, to investigate the school's progress relative to its Accountability Plan goals, and to collect information that will eventually help the Commissioner and Board of Education make a renewal recommendation for the school's charter. The focus of the visit is on three central areas of inquiry:

- Faithfulness to the terms of the school's charter;
- Academic program success;
- Organizational viability.

The team's findings in each of these areas are presented below.

## 1. Faithfulness to the Terms of the Charter

***Are the school's mission, vision, and educational philosophy clear and understood by the school community?***

*Finding: The school community shares a clear and common understanding of the HVMCPS mission, vision, and educational philosophy.*

All stakeholders interviewed clearly described the school's mission, vision and educational philosophy. Although each group used different language and placed an emphasis on different aspects of the school's mission, they all communicated the basic tenets of using a Montessori approach to education and creating and maintaining a partnership between teachers, parents, and children to help students attain high academic achievement and become constructive members of the community. The site visit team observed evidence that the school is implementing this mission through a review of the school's curriculum that aligns Montessori lessons to the state-standards and by observing classrooms that demonstrate the use of Montessori materials pedagogy.

***Has the school met the faithfulness to charter goals set out in its Accountability Plan?***

*Finding: HVMCPS is making substantial progress towards meeting the faithfulness to charter goals set out in its Accountability Plan.*

Based on information provided in the school's 2005-2006 Annual Report and corroborated through interviews conducted at the site visit, the school is meeting or making progress towards meeting their faithfulness to charter goals.

- Goal C1: HVM parents will demonstrate involvement in supporting student achievement. The school met or exceeded all objectives for this goal.
- Goal C2: HVM will provide instruction and assessment focused on developing high levels of personal growth and social responsibility.

Administrators reported that the benchmarks to assess student's personal and social development were completed and will be piloted next year.

- Goal C3: The student population will reflect the diverse socio-economic and ethnic character of the community.

HVMCPS has increased the diversity of their student population. Board members interviewed discussed specific strategies to further increase the socio-economic and ethnic character of the school to better reflect the Haverhill community. They have increased outreach to different parent populations and will analyze this year's applicant pool to see if that strategy was successful.

### **Academic Program Success**

***Does the school's instructional program, as documented and implemented in the classroom:***

- 1. address the skills and concepts that students must know and be able to do to meet state standards?***
- 2. articulate school developed or identified internal standards for student performance?***
- 3. establish and implement accommodation plans that address the needs of diverse learners?***

*Finding: The Hill View curriculum is based on the Montessori philosophy and curriculum for grades K-8 and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF). The school has completed the process of aligning the English language arts and Math Curriculum for the Kindergarten, Lower and Upper Elementary levels.*

The administration reported that based on findings from the year two site visit, they made the alignment between the school's Montessori curriculum and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks a priority. The administration described the curriculum alignment process as helping all instructional staff to get on the same page; many of Hill View's teachers come from private Montessori schools and are not familiar with the MCF. They have completed the process of aligning the school's ELA and Mathematics curriculum with the MCF for all levels, up to grade 6. The Kindergarten curriculum is also aligned with state standards in science.

The site visit team reviewed the school's curriculum maps that show state-standards and Montessori lessons in a side-by-side format. The administration reported that where they could not directly connect a Montessori lesson with a state standard, supplemental materials are identified and are provided to teachers. The school's Manager of Teaching and Learning led the process with input from staff. The school is working with a consultant to support the process. All teachers have copies of the maps in their pre-existing Montessori albums. The consultant and the Manager of Teaching and Learning are working with all instructional staff to make sure that state-standards are covered through Montessori activities in the classroom.

The administration and teachers described the challenge involved in connecting the Montessori model to the state standards and in making sure that students were prepared to take the MCAS test. They reported that they are working on successfully providing children with the tools needed to perform well on state-mandated tests and on attaining high levels of social and emotional achievement. The administration stated that it would become increasingly difficult to create an alignment between the Montessori curriculum and with the state Social Studies and Science standards at the upper elementary and middle school levels. HVMPCS upper elementary and middle school curriculum will be more dependent on supplemental rather than on Montessori materials.

*Finding: The Montessori model of education was evident in all of Hill View's classrooms. Students displayed an understanding of the classroom routines, and demonstrated consistently high levels of engagement in activities.*

Hill View's classrooms are thoroughly equipped with Montessori materials. The classrooms are designed to allow students to move freely in order to work individually, in small groups, and in pairs. The site visit team observed students that were aware of the classroom routines and demonstrated consistently high levels of independent activity, with the majority of students working with a minimum of teacher direction. Students consistently displayed high levels of engagement in classroom activities, were purposeful and motivated in their work, and made smooth transitions from small group to individual work. Site visitors observed students asking other students for help before approaching the teacher.

All classrooms have a lead and assistant teacher. In contrast to findings in the year two-site visit, teachers observed appeared highly skilled in the implementation of the Montessori model and had strong classroom management skills. The site visit team observed students working

collaboratively, interacting with each other with respect and support. Classrooms have a quiet hum of activity and are conducive to learning with teachers using positive affirmations to guide student behavior. Most interactions between students and teachers were focused on learning.

*Finding: The design of the Montessori method supports the needs of diverse learners. Students with educational plans are effectively integrated into the regular education program.*

Based on interviews with administrators and corroborated through classroom observations, HVMCPS has implemented accommodations and instructional practices that meet the needs of diverse learners. Instruction is highly individualized with daily assessment of student progress. Students are placed in small group instruction based on skill levels. The lead and assistant teachers support the multi-age and multi-skill level classes. Special Education students are included in the general education classroom with the assistance of 1:1 aides and support services staff such as Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, and counseling services delivered in the regular class. The resource room setting is an integrated special education/regular education environment.

***Are students reaching Proficiency on state standards, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)?***

*Finding: The majority of students at HVMPCPS are not reaching proficiency, as measured by the MCAS.*

MCAS results from the last two years are presented below in Table I.

**Table I: Hill View Montessori Charter Public School MCAS Results by Performance Category**

ELA	Students Included	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improv.	% Warning/Failed	CPI
<b>Grade 3</b>						
2005	23	0	61	30	9	82.6
2006	30	17	30	37	17	73.3
<b>Grade 4</b>						
2006	24	0	25	63	13	63.5
Math	Students Included	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improv.	% Warning/Failed	CPI
<b>Grade 3</b>						
2006	30	0	27	33	40	55.8
<b>Grade 4</b>						
2006	24	4	4	63	29	53.1

Table I shows that in grade 3 Reading, 47 percent of students tested scored in the advanced and proficient performance category, a 13 percent decline from 2005, 37 percent, scoring in the needs improvement performance category, and 17 percent, an 8 percent increase, from 2005, scored in the warning/failing performance category. This is the first year MCAS was administered in grade 4 ELA. No HVMCPS students scored in the advanced and proficient performance category; 63 percent, a majority of the grade scored in needs improvement and thirteen percent in the warning/failing performance category.

In grade 3 math, 27 percent of students tested scored in the advanced and proficient performance category, 33 percent scored in needs improvement and 40 percent scored in the warning/failing performance category. In grade 4, eight percent of students scored in the advanced and proficient performance category, 63 percent scored in needs improvement and 29 percent scored in the warning/failing performance category. This is the first year MCAS was administered in grades 3 and 4 Math.

Administrators reported that in the first two years of the school existence they focused on having students become Montessori learners not on directly preparing students for the MCAS. They acknowledged disappointment at the school’s performance on MCAS and have developed and implemented the Hill View Montessori 2006-2007 Plan for Continuous Growth on MCAS Achievement. The team reviewed the plan at the site visit. Future site visit teams should examine the impact of the school’s Plan for Continuous Growth on the school’s MCAS results.

*Finding: HVMPCS failed to make AYP in the Aggregate in ELA and Math.*

**Table II: 2006 AYP determination for Hill View Montessori Charter Public School**

		Adequate Yearly Progress History								Accountability Status
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
ELA	Aggregate	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	No	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MATH	Aggregate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table II shows the 2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for HVMCPS and its statistically significant demographic subgroups. HVMCPS failed to make AYP in the Aggregate in ELA and Math. If the school fails to make AYP in ELA and Math in the next cycle, they will be placed in the Needs Improvement Accountability Status.

**Has student performance been strong, or improved over time on other external assessment?**

*Finding: Student achievement as measured by the Terra Nova assessment has shown mixed results over two years of data.*

Table III shows the results of the 2006 Terra Nova assessment for grades 3, 4, and 5. The table shows how HVMCPS students compare to children across the country. The Grade Mean Equivalent (GME) indicates the year and month for which the performance is typical. The scores show that students at HVMCPS are at or above grade level with significant increases in Reading and Language scores in grades 4 and 5.

**Table III: 2006 Terra Nova Test Results**

Grade	Month Given	GME Reading	GME Language	GME Math	Total Score
3	3.1	4.5	3.2	3.4	3.7
4	4.1	5.7	6.9	5.0	5.6

5	5.1	7.7	7.6	5.7	6.8
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Table IV shows the percent of students performing at or above the national average on the 2006 Terra Nova who have attended HVMCPS for at least two years in comparison to those students attending less than two years. Students who attend HVM for two or more years consistently outperform those attending less than two years in all grades. However, comparisons between 2005 and 2006 Terra Nova results of students attending two or more years show that scores are variable: grades 3 and 4 math results declined. In 2005, 83 percent of grade 3 scored at or above the national average as compared to 62 percent in 2006. In grade 4 math, scores declined from 90 percent to 84 percent. It is important to note that in 2006, grade 5 scores show an increase in all HVMCPS students scoring at or above the national average. All of these groups have small numbers of students.

**Table IV: 2006 Terra Nova Comparative Results**

Third Years			
% of all students at or above grade level	69%	63%	51%
% of all students attending 2 of more years at or above grade level	<b>79.5</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Fourth Years			
% of all students at or above grade level	59%	62%	72%
% of all students attending 2 of more years at or above grade level	<b>68%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Fifth Years			
% of all students at or above grade level	78%	74%	70%
% of all students attending 2 of more years at or above grade level	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>

***Has student performance been strong, or improved over time on internal assessments?***

*Finding: Hill View has recently completed and implemented a system for gauging student progress and determining promotion for the lower elementary level, grades 1 through 3. The school did not have sufficient data that would allow it to assess whether this measure demonstrates that students are making adequate progress over time.*

The school has completed the development and is implementing the HVM Learning Benchmarks for the Lower Elementary Level, grades 1 through 3. The HVM Benchmarks are subject area, personal, and social benchmarks that define what student performance looks like at Emerging, Proficient, and Advancing levels. The benchmarks are designed to assess student readiness to progress from each of the Montessori Levels, lower elementary to upper elementary, and upper elementary to middle School. The HVM Benchmarks are aligned with Montessori Lessons and the MCF Standards. The administration reported that they recently completed the HVM Learning Benchmarks for grade three; they have developed alignments for all three years of the lower elementary cycle. This was corroborated by a review of the benchmarks during the site visit.

The school administered the HVM Math Assessment to all students in grade three in January 2007 and will administer the assessment to all grades in the spring of 2007. The first HVM Writing Continuum was administered to determine grade levels for students in grades K-3. Results from both assessments will serve as baseline information and will be used to track the

annual progress of each child. This year each student in the Lower Elementary Level has a binder that contains the child's progress towards achieving the benchmarks. There is a timetable for the completion of the HVM Learning Benchmarks for the Upper Elementary and Exit Benchmarks for promotion to high school. Future site visit teams should examine if progress is being made on the development and completion of these Benchmarks.

*Finding: Hill View is using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as an internal diagnostic tool.*

The school is using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as an assessment instrument to determine students' independent reading level. The DRA is the HVM Learning Benchmarks' assessment tool for reading in grades 1, and 2. The school's Accountability Plan states that 85 percent or more of students in grades 1, and 2 will demonstrate an annual growth of growth of one or more years on the DRA. Based on data reported in the school's 2005-2006 Annual Report, 76 percent of grade 1 students achieved growth of one or more years, an increase of 13.5 percent from 2004-2005. Ninety percent of grade 2 students achieved growth of one or more years, an increase of 21 percent from 2005-2005.

*Finding: Teachers use Individualized Learning Agreements (ILAs) to document student progress.*

The administration and teachers described the process of revising school's ILAs based on feedback from parents. The ILAs are developed in the beginning of the school year with parents to set specific academic, personal, and social goals for each child. The revised ILA has a rubric with descriptors of student's level of mastery. Parents, students, and teachers meet twice a year to discuss student progress.

### **Have students met the academic performance goals set out in the school's Accountability Plan?**

*Finding: HVMCPS is making some progress in meeting performance goals set out in the school's Accountability Plan.*

HVMPCS approved Accountability Plan includes three academic goals for reading, writing, and mathematics:

**Goal A1:** HVM students will demonstrate high levels of achievement in **reading** and **writing**.

**Goal A2:** HVM students will demonstrate high levels of achievement in **mathematics** and **science**.

**Goal A3:** HVM students will demonstrate high levels of achievement on the HVM academic benchmarks.

Progress towards reaching these goals is measured using four different types of assessments, the MCAS, Terra Nova, Developmental Reading assessments (DRA) and the HVM academic benchmarks. Student performance on the 2006 grade 3 Reading MCAS declined in most performance categories; the school does not have enough years of data to evaluate additional MCAS performance objectives. Student achievement as measured by the DRA and the Terra Nova was variable but overall shows progress towards meeting performance objectives. This is the first year the school is formally collecting student performance data through the HVM academic benchmarks.

## 2. Organizational Viability

### **Does the school have an effective leadership and governance structure for carrying out the mission, vision, and educational philosophy of the school?**

*Finding: The Board has a committee structure and multiple task forces.*

The Board is composed of eight members; four of the eight members are parents. The Board meets monthly and has four committees: Trustees, Development and Public Relations, Finance, and Accountability. In addition there is a taskforce dedicated to securing a permanent facility and a taskforce that formally evaluates the school's Executive Director. There were four members present at the interview. The board is not yet fully staffed at nine.

*Finding: The team observed a breakdown in communication between the Board and the Administration.*

The Executive Director attends all Board meetings and serves on committees. She provides monthly updates on school management, and on progress towards meeting the school's Accountability Plan goals. However, the Executive Director expressed frustrations at what she described as a lack of responsiveness from the Board towards her ongoing attempts at communication between meetings.

*Finding: There is a lack of consensus between the Board of Trustees and the school's administration on the boundaries between management and governance.*

Difficult issues have come up around the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the Board and the administration. Board members present at the interview reported tensions over the pace of development of the school's internal benchmarks. They described the internal benchmarks as deliverables that must be developed to meet the goals set forth in the school's Accountability Plan. Members present stated that they were cognizant of the line between the Board and the administration. Administrators interviewed reported that the line between governance and administration had been crossed over the process of developing the school's internal benchmarks.

*Finding: The Board has taken some steps to initiate a strategic planning process that includes multiple stakeholders.*

Board Members interviewed reported that they conducted a retreat in June that was attended by parents and staff. Four areas of priorities were set for this year: communication, facilities and fundraising, academic achievement, and staff retention. Board members present described increasing outreach to parents and including parents in the process of making decisions on school policy by soliciting more stakeholder input prior to Board votes and by holding a semi-annual town meeting. Board members described several challenges: finding a permanent facility is extremely important. Plans to add modular space to their current location fell through and the school has identified a second building. They will have a split campus for two years as they work on a development plan, fundraise, and identify a permanent location that meets the school's needs. Another challenge is the balance of maintaining the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy while adding grades and meeting state-standards. The Board stated that the most pressing challenge is hiring a new Executive Director. The current Executive Director has resigned and will not return in the fall.

*Finding: The Board is committed to an inclusive process to find a new Executive Director.*

The Board has drafted a plan for the process of hiring a new Executive Director. They will form an eight-person search committee composed of staff, founders, Board members, and parents. They will conduct surveys of stakeholders to determine criteria for the position. The Board plans to interview between three and five finalists. The board spoke of the importance of including all stakeholders in a thoughtful and deliberative process.

*Finding: There is a clear and common understanding among teachers and administrators about the roles and responsibilities of the school leadership team. The current configuration of school leadership is designed to provide teachers supervision and support.*

Teachers, and administrators reported having a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the administrative team. The current administrative team at HVMCPS consists of the Executive Director, the Manager of Teacher and Learning, the Manager of Assessment and Learning Differences, the Manager of Business and Finance and Manager of Development. The administration reported that they are fully staffed; the new Manager of Teacher and Learning has many years of experience and has had a strong and positive impact on the teaching staff. Teachers reported that the Manager of Teaching and Learning is very knowledgeable, supports them in the classroom, and has led the development and revision of the curriculum, the Individual Learning Agreements, and the HVM Learning Benchmarks.

***Does the school have systems and structures in place to guide improvement?***

*Finding: The school has established systems and structures to support improvement in teaching and learning in the lower elementary level.*

HVMCPS has developed and implemented systems for guiding instructional practice. Teachers meet twice a week, once with the Manager of Teaching and Learning to discuss curriculum and instruction, the other meeting is dedicated to common planning time. There is a full staff meeting once a month. The administration acknowledged the need to develop a mechanism to support the vertical alignment of the curriculum; at the moment, there are not many opportunities for inter-level discussions. Administrators stated that as the school grows, and continues to add grades, they need to develop a system to ensure that the curriculum is vertically aligned between all levels. The curriculum maps provide the written alignment, it is important that instructional practice reflects that document.

The Year Two site visit identified a lack of formal classroom observations to determine the efficacy of common planning time. This year the administration and teachers described a formal and informal system of classroom observations to provide formative and summative evaluation to teachers. The Manager of Teaching and Learning conducts periodic informal observations and provides teachers with immediate written feedback. The formal evaluation includes an initial and year-end meeting for goal setting, teacher self-evaluation, and a rubric to assess different areas developed from assessment tools in the “Whole Montessori Handbook”. In addition, the school hired a consultant to work in the classroom with teachers. She observes classes assessing if teachers are covering state standards through Montessori lessons. Lead teachers with the Manager of Teacher and Learning formally evaluate assistant teachers. The Executive Director formally evaluates the administrative team.

*Finding: The school has started to use data to inform curriculum revision and instructional practice.*

Board members, teachers and administrators interviewed reported disappointment with the 2006 MCAS results. In response, the school led by the Manager of Teacher and Learning, has developed the Hill View Montessori 2006-2007 Plan for Continuous Growth on MCAS. To develop the plan the school did an item analysis of the MCAS test results and identified specific areas for improvement. The Manager of Teacher and Learning, in collaboration with teachers, reviewed the curriculum maps and identified the Montessori lessons that addressed the content and skills needed to improve student's performance on MCAS. To address areas of need, a stronger emphasis is placed on the Montessori lessons that directly correspond to those areas. In addition, in grades 3 through 5, students receive regular lessons targeting test-taking skills. All third graders took the HVM Math Assessment in January. Students that scored below 80 percent were given further instruction and were retested in February. This year they are placing a major emphasis on open response questions and math.

**Is the school safe and are the physical facilities adequate for the program of the school?**

*Finding: The school is both physically and emotionally safe. The facility is adequate for the current program but is not handicap accessible.*

Parents and students interviewed described the school as extremely safe. Teachers and administrators know all of the students by name. Students reported that there was very little fighting or bullying and when problems come up they are immediately addressed. The facility is adequate for the current enrollment but is not accessible to persons with disabilities. The school will have a split campus for the next two years to accommodate the addition of grades 6 through 8.

**Is the school operating in a manner consistent with legal and regulatory requirements?**

*Finding: Significant program modifications have been made in response to the school's Coordinated Program Review activity conducted in May 2006.*

Teacher Assistance Team meeting frequency has been changed, and modified team procedures have resulted in 18 new referrals for special education evaluations. Professional development in the area of special education has been expanded, and inclusion supports for special education students in the regular education classroom has been increased.

The school's Corrective Action Plan submitted in response to the program review report was approved by the Department on January 15, 2007. The school is currently submitting their first progress report.

***Finding: The school's special education program evaluation does not contain an analysis of student outcomes data.***

The self-evaluation process must be expanded to include measurement of the special education program's success based on student local and statewide assessment results, and success in accessing the general education curriculum.

***Finding: The school does not have a program of Sheltered English Immersion.***

Two students have been identified as being Limited English Proficient. The school has established a system of administering home language surveys and assessing and identifying limited English proficient students, but has not trained staff on how to provide Sheltered English Immersion.

***Are professional staff members qualified by training and/or experience in the areas to which they are assigned?***

*Finding: professional staff members are qualified by training and experience in the areas to which they are assigned?*

Table V shows the number of years of HVMPCS staff’s teaching experiences in the field and at the school.

**Table V: Years of Teaching Experience for Faculty 2006-2007**

	1-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years
Teachers with this number of years teaching	9	3	6	1	2
Teachers with this number of years teaching at HVMPCS	16	5			

The Executive Director acknowledged the large turnover in staff but stated that now HVMPCS has a very knowledgeable teaching staff and the school is very strong academically. Although the majority of teachers are new to the school, half of the school’s lead teachers have many years of experience in Montessori teaching. Teachers that did not have prior Montessori experience took a month-long basic training course in Montessori methods and are mentored by the Manager of Teaching and Learning. The administration encourages teachers to continue their Montessori training by identifying professional development opportunities and providing stipends for training. All teachers participated in three days of professional development in August to review school procedures and the school had a full day of professional development on MCAS improvement.

Many teachers interviewed discussed the inherent difficulty in creating a bridge between their Montessori philosophy and the increased emphasis placed on preparing students for the MCAS. However, they clearly stated their commitment to the process of building a public Montessori school that develops and supports that bridge.

***Are school community members satisfied with the performance of the school?***

*Finding: Community members are generally satisfied with the performance of the school.*

Parents interviewed expressed their general satisfaction with the school reporting that the school has increased and improved communication between teachers and parents but that communication was not uniform and standardized with varying levels of responsiveness from different teachers. Parents interviewed were not completely satisfied with the school’s ability to communicate student progress stating that the revised Individual Learning Agreements were still

confusing and did not clearly communicate student achievement and performance. Parents communicated concerns regarding the varying level of instructional skill in the classroom but were very satisfied with the school's overall climate and culture. Parents described seeing an increased emphasis on preparing students to meet state standards.

***Has the school met the organizational viability goals set out in its Accountability Plan?***

*Finding: HVMPCS is making some progress towards meeting the organizational goals out in its accountability plan.*

The schools approved Accountability Plan Goals are:

**Goal B1:** HVM will maintain fiscally sound practices.

**Goal B2:** HVM will enjoy full enrollment and a robust pool of student applicants.

**Goal B3:** HVM will retain and develop high quality professional staff.

**Goal B4:** The HVM Board of Trustees (BOT) will demonstrate effective governance of the school.

Based on interviews conducted at the site visit and corroborated by information submitted to the Charter School Office, HVMCPS has met or is making progress towards meeting some of these goals. The school received an unqualified audit opinion for the 2005-2006 school year and the Board reported that the school is in a healthy financial position. HVMCPS School has maintained steady enrollment with minimal student attrition and has a wait list of an average of 30 percent of the total number of slots in the remaining grades. The school experienced a large staff turnover; many teachers are new to the school this year. The school is committed to developing and retaining highly qualified staff and has budgeted 10,000 dollars to support on going Montessori professional development. The Board has developed a committee structure, all members serve on minimum of one committee or task force. All Board members made financial contributions to the school.

**Conclusion**

***Is the school becoming the school it promised to be in its charter?***

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School continues to show a strong commitment to providing a public Montessori education and has made progress in addressing several of the challenges identified in the year two site visit report. The school has formalized expectations for teacher quality and is providing additional support to instructional staff. HVMCPS has completed curriculum alignment for Kindergarten through grade 6 connecting the Montessori approach to education and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to ensure that school is covering state standards. Progress has been made on completing the school's internal benchmarks for promotion and the school has started to use data to revise curriculum and inform instruction. Although the school has worked to create an alignment between Montessori pedagogy and state-standards, performance on MCAS has not been strong or shown improvement. It will be important that the school evaluate the systems in place to improve students' future MCAS performance.

For the next two years, the school will have a split campus to accommodate the addition of the upper elementary and middle school. The Board has started the process of strategic planning and has made securing a permanent facility a priority.

However, the Board continues to struggle with defining the lines between governance and management. The school is facing a major challenge with the upcoming resignation of the Executive Director. It will be important that the next Executive Director work with the Board to establish effective roles and responsibilities to guide the school through its ongoing expansion.