

Applications: Sankofa Montessori

Implementation Budget Requested

\$1,250,000.00

Planning Budget Requested

\$0.00

Total Budget Requested

\$1,250,000.00

Planning Reimbursements

\$0.00

Implementation Reimbursements

\$87,115.30

Total Reimbursements

\$87,115.30

Remaining Budget

\$1,162,884.70

Profile

Sankofa Montessori

Changes Requested

Eligibility for CSP Subgrant

New School

New School: Are you requesting an implementation grant?

Yes

New School: Are you requesting a pre-opening supplement?

No

Are you requesting a supplement?

Yes

New School: Are you requesting the rural/priority community supplement?

Yes

New School: Are you requesting the high school supplement?

No

Narrative

Provide responses in the text boxes provided. Attachments will not be accepted for this part of the application.

Please describe how the autonomy and flexibility granted to a charter school is consistent with the definition of a charter school in ESEA § 4310 (2).

At Sankofa Montessori, our unique features and flexibilities are embedded in our use of the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy. When implemented with high fidelity, the Montessori method has been shown to close the opportunity gap (Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006) by yielding positive academic and developmental outcomes (Ansari, 2014). Below are our unique academic features and flexibilities:

ACADEMIC

Montessori-Trained Instructional Staff: Our guides are content experts and masters of Montessori teaching and learning practices. Our guides also engage in ongoing professional development to ensure we are incorporating new methods to help our students thrive.

Multi-Age Groupings for Growth: Our students are grouped into three-year age ranges in the learning environment. Multi-age groupings encourage each student's natural pace of development, provides opportunities for leadership, creates a diverse environment, and promotes a growth mindset. Each guide stays with the same group of students for all three years to understand each student on a deeper level.

A Student-Centered Environment: Each classroom is designed according to the following Montessori principles to maximize learning for each child:

- o Freedom of choice in learning
- o A structured and orderly learning environment
- o Beauty in the learning environment
- o Learning environment designed to bring in nature
- o Community building
- o Learning materials across ages and stages of development

Continuous Progress Monitoring: Our guides rely on formative assessments, observing each student and using in-the-moment information to determine when the child should move on to a new lesson or spend more time on a current lesson. Formative assessment is not different. What IS different is the Montessori pacing and nearly daily differentiation based on continuous progress monitoring. Our record-keeping practices and one-on-one conferences with each child to ensure continuous progress.

Montessori / Constructivist Instructional Resources: The Montessori methodology is heavily grounded in constructing meaning through use of specialized materials that are leveraged across lessons and grade levels. While Sankofa does choose some traditional materials to ensure all areas of the standard are addressed, we value the privilege of selecting Montessori resources aligned with our model to employ it with fidelity.

Meaningful Family Engagement: We engage families with the understanding that all families care about their children's education and honor the many different ways in which our families like to be engaged. For example, we have started a boys mentorship program, where our "Dads of Sankofa" group, a parent group comprised of the fathers of our school, serve as mentors to some of our key children. Our Director of Student Support and Services created a mentorship plan in conjunction with our Dads to implement.

Culturally Responsive Practices: We recognize that our students' cultures and backgrounds are an essential part of the learning experience. Our guides make a conscious practice of finding opportunities to incorporate students' backgrounds and cultures into their teachings. As a charter school, we exercise our flexibility by partnering with individuals (ie, Dr. Erica Dotson at Clayton State University) and organizations (ie, Georgia State University Child Welfare) to support our staff in understanding what it means to theoretically and practically be a culturally responsive educator.

FINANCIAL: We exercise full authority over financial decisions and priorities that best align with the school's mission and design. For instance, we spend a significant portion of our budget on Montessori materials. We do this because our model of instruction is Montessori, so it is important that our spending reflects our school design.

ORGANIZATIONAL - The organizational structure is very different. For example, each classroom has a Co-Educator, which in a traditional school typically is only found in kindergarten and Special Education. Our qualifications differ, as formal Montessori training and experience are highly preferable. Our organizational structure differs with a board, executive director, and administrative team. Our Professional development topics and vendors differ and are tied directly to our unique model (ie, culturally responsive PD, a food vendor that provides meals that are minimally processed). We also utilize flexibility with our calendars and scheduling (seat time). For example, we have early release on Wednesdays for professional development, and our instructional day is divided into two work sessions, which form the backbone of the day. We employ marketing strategies to recruit a diverse group of students across our attendance zone to ensure equity of access.

Please briefly describe how the applicant school/network will utilize CSP Subgrant funds and why these funds are necessary to meet the school's goals. Separate activities by Planning and Implementation subgrant periods.

Sankofa Montessori will utilize CSP subgrant funds to support us in meeting our school's goals, which have been created to ensure that we meet our vision to design more purposeful futures for all of our students. Currently, our school-wide goals are as follows:

By the end of six weeks all classroom will be normalized and be ready to learn

60% of students will score proficient or higher in ELA by the end of this school year as measured by NWEA MAP administered in May

85% of students will move two reading levels as measured by the Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway

100% special education legal compliance of all IEP's, 504's, and special education-related requirements as measured by student records, state and federal systems

85% of students meeting or exceeding IEP goals as measured by students IEP

60% of students will score proficient or higher in Math by the end of this school year as measured by NWEA MAP administered in May

85% of teachers will follow school-wide behavior expectations and procedures for discipline as measured by school discipline reports and records

85% of students will show one level of growth between the beginning and end of the year Executive Function assessment

85% of Sankofa Montessori families will recommend Sankofa Montessori to another family as measured by an end-of-year parent satisfaction survey

85% of Sankofa Montessori families will indicate a positive family experience as measured by family engagement survey

As we are a school that is currently operating in its first year, we are requesting the subgrant funds to help us in the following areas to help us meet the goals outlined above:

INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

Computers—so that we have one on one computers for each child

Montessori Professional Development—to support our teachers with professional development so they can hone in on their craft

Montessori Materials—to provide children with the necessary Montessori materials so they can do their work

Assessments—to ensure that we are measuring student learning and adjusting our practices to support student academic achievement

CULTURE & WHOLE CHILD

Playground equipment—to provide nature-inspired playground equipment to accommodate our growth

Consulting—to bring in experts to support our staff so they can provide a quality experience for each child

Cafeteria Furniture—to create an environment that ensures that our children get the sustenance they need

Security cameras—to provide security needed for our children and staff

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & RECRUITMENT

Website Design—to create a website that is easily accessible and easy to navigate for our families

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Teacher/staff furniture—to create a comfortable learning environment for staff to effectively do their work

Teacher/staff equipment—to provide teachers with the necessary tools to effectively do their work

Please describe how the applicant school/network is responding to community need and will use effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies. Include information on the needs analysis the school completed and the results. Also, include a description of how the school is soliciting and considering input from parents and members of the community and how the school will use effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies.

Part of the work we did to determine the need for a public Montessori school in our community involved doing a needs analysis. We chose to locate in Clayton County for two reasons.

The first reason was that there was an expressed need from our community for a high-quality model of education. Although Sankofa has a Statewide attendance zone, what the data has shown us from our first year is that most of our families are coming no farther than 20 miles from the school. This means that the bulk of our families are from Clayton County. In our targeted communities, where 34% of children are classified as economically disadvantaged, and in Clayton County, where 37% of children live below the poverty line, the option for Montessori education is out of reach for many families. There are no tuition-free Montessori Elementary School options in all the areas where we have engaged families. Secondly, Clayton County is also an underserved area in terms of charter options for families, and there are currently only two elementary charter schools, 7 Pillars and Utopian Academy, physically located in Clayton County, both of which have models that are very different from that of Sankofa Montessori.

Sankofa Montessori has always positioned itself to be a school that responds to the needs of our community. Our families are truly integral to our work, and we center them in all that we do. In fact, being family-centered is a key component of our mission. Since opening our doors in August of 2023, we have completed 21 events that engage our children, family, and community. A few of these events include family school tours, monthly snacks with the school leader, a garden day, a Fall Festival, a curriculum night, a day of community service, a Forest Park parade walk, and a winter concert. With our small but mighty staff, we are only capable of doing so much, and there is no way we would have been able to have 21 events over the course of the first five months of our brand-new school without our very active parent community. Our parent volunteer group, the Sankofa Parent Volunteers (SPV), is comprised of our families who consistently show up to support our school community to ensure that we are able to create great experiences for our children. Our SPVs have also been empowered to lead our parents and will often host their own events to bring the parent community together.

We continue to solicit input from our families by giving out parent surveys and close the feedback loop by sharing results and creating action plans to address concerns. By having an open door policy for our families to share any and all feedback they have and by actively ensuring that our families are showing up to our Board meetings. To keep our parents and community abreast of everything going on at Sankofa and to solicit their feedback, we send out a weekly Sankofa Montessori community newsletter which highlights all that is happening at the school on a weekly basis and also asks for input from our community.

As we move into the second semester of our first year, we are excited to continue our work of soliciting family and community input. During the month of January, through our work with one of our funders, we will be providing a survey administered by TNTP (The New Teacher Project) to all of our families so we can gain further insights into the work we have been doing to ensure that the voices of our community are helping to shape our work. We are also really excited to solicit community input as we put together our master plan for the design of our school site. We are working with our architect to ensure that time is carved out for the community (families and other stakeholders) to give their input in the design process. After completing our first semester, we have also realized that we need to better engage additional stakeholders in our community, like other non-profit organizations who are doing work to support children and families, essential personnel like firefighters, police department, and council members. These stakeholders have really been instrumental in our work thus far and should be a part of our engagement work.

What we have learned during the charter writing process, the planning year, and the first semester of our inaugural year is that our community is such an important part of the work that we do, and we look forward to continuing to identify more innovative ways to do this work alongside them.

Please explain how the applicant school/network will demonstrate a growth mindset throughout the subgrant term.

One of our core values at Sankofa Montessori is reflection. We define reflection and growth mindset as making time to reflect on what we do and why we do it. At Sankofa, the critical evaluation of the “how” we do what we do and the reflection on the outcomes produced ensure that we are continuously improving.

As the entity who is leading the school and will be leading the work related to this grant, I will seek feedback from the team supporting us, listen deeply, and implement that feedback in decision-making. When there are challenges during the grant terms and even beyond, as I know there will be, I know that I can overcome them. Our school was selected to receive the GEERS II grant award, and having gone through the process of navigating and meeting the requirements and objectives of a federal grant, I am aware of what it takes to ensure that we are dotting our I's and crossing our T's to be in compliance. My growth mindset was evident during the time I worked with the team at the State Charter Schools Foundation to submit paperwork. There were challenges, but each time I reached out for help, reflected on what I could have done differently, made changes, and ultimately was able to successfully close out the reporting of the grant and leverage the funds to meet our goals. While I lacked the initial skills in managing and reporting on a federal grant, I never once thought that I could not complete them. I was dedicated, open to feedback, and reflective, and I know that I will bring and model for my team that same mindset throughout this subgrant term if our school is awarded a CSP subgrant.

Please explain how the applicant school/network will commit to the CSP subgrant agreement and meet the requirements and objectives of the CSP subgrant. Identify the person(s) or position(s) who will be responsible for CSP subgrant activities, including reporting, procurement/purchasing, bookkeeping, accounting, and recordkeeping of expenditures.

Sankofa Montessori will commit to the CSP subgrant agreement and meet the requirements and objectives of the CSP subgrant by ensuring that we are appropriately staffed, properly trained, and have systems in place to do the work required. While I, as the leader of the school, am applying for the grant on behalf of the school, I know that I cannot complete all the work by myself. I learned this lesson when our school was awarded our first federal grant. I have structured a team to share the load.

Our CFO and Finance consultant will manage the bookkeeping and accounting aspects of the grant, with our Board Treasurer supervising their work.

As Executive Director, with support from my Associate Director of Operations, I will handle the reporting. The Director of Student Support and Services will also be looped in and be prepared to support as well. Three people, including myself, to handle the reporting to ensure that we do not miss any deadlines in the event I am unavailable for whatever reason.

Our Associate Director of Operations will handle all procurement/purchasing with support from me and our Finance Committee. The Executive Director will oversee the work of the Associate Director of Operations.

Record keeping will be managed by our Associate Director of Operations with support from our operations teammates.

As Executive Director, I will monitor and track compliance and achievement of grant goals and ensure communication with our board on progress against grant metrics.

Please explain the applicant school/network's readiness for opening, replicating, or expanding. Briefly describe how the applicant school/network is assembling a team and ensuring the school is prepared.

Sankofa Montessori opened its doors on the last day of July 2023 and has been operational for five months. In our first year, we have assembled a team and continue to make adjustments to meet the needs of our evolving school. We are staffed to ensure that we are able to live out our vision to nurture lives of purpose.

First, our Board, comprised of eight members with varied experience and expertise, ensures that we have the appropriate policies, budget, and personnel to grow and implement our plans.

With support from the Associate Director of Academics, who is a Montessori expert, the Executive Director serves as the instructional co-lead and develops the school's instructional vision, provides internal professional development and coaching for instructional staff, and manages relationships between the school and families. The Governance Board also has an academic committee that provides board-level guidance and support on the academic needs of the school. As the Executive Director, I also participate in the SCSC Leadership Advisory Program and have a mentor who supports all aspects of my work to ensure that we have a thriving school.

The CFO/back-office provider and a finance consultant focus on budget management and are responsible for preparing checks and invoices and completing financial reporting every month to share with the Executive Director and Board Treasurer for approval and feedback.

With support from the Office Assistant, Daily Porter, and full-time Nurse, our Associate Director of Operations manages and is responsible for all data and reporting tasks and the day-to-day operations issues in the building. The Associate Director of Operations manages the business operations for the school and has developed procedures and processes to ensure organizational efficacy.

Our Director of Student Support and Services manages and coordinates service and compliance related to English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities and manages all things related to student culture and discipline with support from our Coordinator of Student Discipline and Culture. Our Manager of student Culture and Family Engagement manages student recruitment and enrolled family engagement. The Executive Director manages federal program implementation, school culture, hiring and onboarding, reporting, authorizer, board relations, implements the academic program, and has overall oversight of the charter goals and growth plan.

As we look ahead into the upcoming academic years and increase our number of students, we are thinking through how to best modify our staffing to ensure that we are able to effectively do all that is required to successfully serve our students and community. We are currently workshopping how to:

Continue our established school culture, which requires thoughtful planning around onboarding students, staff, and parents

Continue with effective recruitment of staff, which involves improving upon our staff recruitment plan, and continue with our commitment to finding Montessori-trained or Constructivist experienced educators.

Continue with our focus on diversifying our staff and especially ensuring that we bring in some more experienced staff to balance our current staff demographic to help mentor our newer teachers.

Staff as our special education population continues to grow and figure out logistics like schedules, supervision, and increased loads related to SWD, ELL, remedial, and behavior.

Please describe how the applicant school/network will establish and maintain a racially and socio-economically diverse student population and endeavor to recruit faculty and staff who are similarly diverse.

While we are a Statewide attendance zone charter school, we are located in Clayton County, and the majority of our students live within Clayton County; therefore, we aim to have a student and faculty that are representative of the community we serve. Our commitment to having a school that reflects our community ensures that our recruitment plans and recruitment actions for both staff and students have racial and socio-economic representation as a priority. Clayton County, which is where our school is located, has the following racial demographics: 73.6% of residents identify as Black or African American, 8% as White, 13.6% as Hispanic, .6% as Native Hawaiian or other pacific islander, and 2.5% as two or more races. According to data from Clayton County Services Authority, there are approximately 37.2% of children live in poverty in Clayton County.

Racially, 80% of Sankofa Montessori students identify as Black or African American, .6% identify as Hispanic, .2% identify as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 11% identify as two or more races, and .5% identify as White. Socio-economically, 77% of our students have been identified as receiving free reduced lunch through direct cert.

Of our teaching staff, 82% identify as Black or African American, 11% identify as two or more races, and 7% identify as White.

Based on these numbers, Sankofa Montessori's student and staff population is fairly reflective of our community. We recognize that we have to make further gains in ensuring that we are engaging better with our Hispanic and White constituents. Our engagement efforts thus far for student recruitment involve us visiting places of worship with more diverse congregations to share about our school, attending more community fairs that attract a diverse pool of residents, and expanding our reach to daycare centers that serve more diverse populations. For staff, in addition to the work we have been doing to reach our current numbers, we will target our recruiting efforts to Hispanic-based organizations that support teacher recruitment to recruit staff that are more representative of our student body. We also recognize the need to improve our website and social media presence and have plans to focus on that as well.

Provide details about how the applicant school/network will maintain financial sustainability after the end of the subgrant period.

At the end of the subgrant period, Sankofa Montessori will continue to engage in several activities that will help deliver long-term financial sustainability:

- Ensuring school scheduling and staffing maximize the QBE funding formula provisions
- Developing plans to meet annual enrollment targets to meet the projected per pupil funding
- Maintain budget scenarios for different enrollment thresholds to quickly pivot with any enrollment variances
- Monthly forecasting to monitor expenditures vs approved budgets
- Long-term forecasting to ensure near-term decisions align with long-term strategic priorities
- Aligning staffing to enrollment needs and ramp up
- Tracking of financial KPIs to measure the health of the school financials
- Through diligent data tracking, budgeting, and forecasting, focus on cash management and thoughtful partnerships with service providers, the school will continue to position itself to be financially sustainable to support of scholars for many years to come.

Other Information - Uploads

Please provide the following documents/information by uploading them here.

Please upload the applicant school/network's recruitment and enrollment policy and procedures. If the school is proposing use of a weighted lottery, please include the weighted lottery policy. All weighted lottery policies must be approved by the SCSF and the U.S. Department of Education as a condition of any CSP Subgrant.

Enrollment Policy.pdf

If necessary, please upload a second document.

Retention Policy.pdf

Please upload the applicant school's retention and discipline policy.

23-24 Student Code of Conduct.docx (1).pdf

Please upload how the applicant school has/will meet the educational needs of all students, including children with disabilities and English learners. For replication and expansion applicants, upload the percentage of students with disabilities and English learners who have been served over the last three (3) years by the applicant school.

Meeting Educational Needs.pdf

Please upload the charter contract with the authorizer and/or other document that includes the performance measures agreed to by the authorizer and school.

Sankofa Montessori_Signed Charter Contract.pdf

Please upload the applicant school's transportation plan.

Transportation Plan.pdf

Relationship with CMO/EMO

Does the school have a relationship with CMO/EMO?

No

Priorities

Priorities Claimed

Location

Provide details of the location or proposed location of the applicant school.

Sankofa Montessori is located at 5881 Phillips Drive, Forest Park, GA 30297.

There are no free Elementary Montessori Schools within a 17-mile radius of our school. Census tracts also designate our area as a low-income community. In addition, our school community is located in a community with low-performing public schools, according to CCRPI.

Please upload a map showing proximity to other charter schools, evidence of a rural designation, and/or other evidence to meet the definition of a priority community as described in Definitions.

Elementary Montessori Schools - Google Maps.pdf

Assurances

The applicant charter school/network must agree to assurances related to the CSP SE Grant program and requirements set forth by the State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia. The board chair must sign this document, and it should be uploaded below.

[Link to the Georgia CSP Subgrant Assurances](<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MMz7OJ1UbTqfE6giNove2JBtWAdDqjD-/view?usp=sharing>)

File Upload: CSP Subgrant Assurances

CSP SE Subgrant Information & Application - signed.pdf

Submission Date

01/04/2024

Applications: File Attachments

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Elementary Montessori Schools - Google Maps.pdf

File Upload: CSP Subgrant Assurances

CSP SE Subgrant Information & Application - signed.pdf

Enrollment/Lottery Policy
Last reviewed/approved 11/29/2023

Policy Statement

Sankofa Montessori shall abide by the provisions stated in Federal and State law regarding enrollment and shall forbid discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. As such, Sankofa Montessori will adhere to the following enrollment provisions:

Official Attendance Zone

The official attendance zone of Sankofa Montessori is any residence within the State of Georgia.

Enrollment Eligibility/Criteria

1. PROOF OF GEORGIA RESIDENCE - Any student who resides with a parent/legal guardian in the State of Georgia and provides a timely and valid evidence of proof of residency in the State of Georgia shall be considered eligible for enrollment except as set forth herein. Valid evidence of proof of residency shall be defined as:
 - a. a current lease or rental agreement
 - b. property tax notice
 - c. homeowner's insurance bill
 - d. mortgage statement (no more than 30 days old)
 - e. current vehicle registration form
 - f. utility bill (water, power, gas) listing your residence as the service address (no more than 30 days old)
 - g. a letter from a shelter
 - h. a letter from your employer, if your employer provides housing.
 - i. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not the property owner/lessee, but parent(s)/guardian(s) and student reside with another person who is a property owner/lessee, an **Affidavit of Residency form** must be completed as required, notarized, and submitted with the application and all other supporting documentation.
2. PROOF OF AGE - Evidence that a student will turn five by September 1 of the year they are enrolling for students enrolling in Kindergarten and evidence that a student will turn six by September 1 of the year they are enrolling for students enrolling in 1st grade. Valid evidence of proof of age are as follows:
 - a. Birth certificate
 - b. certified medical records
 - c. Certified school records
 - d. Passport
 - e. Adoption record
 - f. Religious record

The enrollment criteria above notwithstanding, Sankofa Montessori *may restrict a student from enrolling* under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2 when Sankofa Montessori determines that:

1. The student is currently subject to a disciplinary order in another school or school district, including a long-term suspension or expulsion; OR

2. The action which led to the suspension or expulsion in the other school or school district was an offense for which suspension or expulsion could be imposed pursuant to Sankofa Montessori Discipline Policies; OR
3. The student has been convicted of or has been adjudicated to have committed an offense which is a designated felony act under Code Section 15-11-63.

In such cases, families will have a meeting with the Executive Director and/or his/her designee to holistically review the circumstances and determine whether the student can enroll.

Sankofa Montessori shall not have any other enrollment criteria.

Enrollment Priority

As allowed by law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)) Sankofa Montessori may give enrollment priority to applicants in either of the following categories, as prioritized in the Charter:

1. A sibling of a student enrolled in the Charter School; and
2. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the Charter School or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee of the Charter School
 - a. To clarify the above general terms set out in the Charter, and to fairly and consistently provide for priorities, which are statutorily authorized exceptions to the lottery's uniform and fair method of assigning enrollment placements, the Governing Board finds that the following definitions are in the best interests of Sankofa Montessori and shall control in the interpretation of the Charter's specified enrollment priorities.
 - b. Siblings are defined in Georgia Department of Education in SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.04: a child who shares at least one common biological or legal parent whether through natural or adoptive means, including:
 - i. biological siblings that share parents
 - ii. half siblings that share a single parent
 - iii. step siblings that share a parent or parents through marriage even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution
 - iv. children who share a parent or parents through adoption or guardianship
 - v. foster children awaiting permanent placement
 - c. Same-grade siblings will be treated as one single applicant unit, rather than as multiple applicants. When that one applicant unit is drawn in the lottery, the same-grade siblings will be numerically ordered on the waiting list or conditionally accepted, dependent upon where in the lottery that applicant unit was drawn. Siblings of current students must submit an application to the school during the open enrollment period to be considered for admission.
 - d. Member of the governing board of the charter school or employee of Sankofa Montessori will be defined as follows:
 - i. An appointed member of the Sankofa Montessori, Inc. Governing Board;
 - ii. Any full or part-time employee
 - e. The following do *not* qualify for enrollment priority:
 - i. members of committees of the board who are not also members of the Sankofa Montessori governing board
 - ii. Contractors or subcontractors;
 - iii. Volunteers;
 - iv. Other vendors or service providers

- f. Upon the parent or guardian's separation of employment with Sankofa Montessori or conclusion of membership on the governing board, the established enrollment policies will govern the enrollment of future students but shall not impact the enrollment status of any current student.

Applications

1. Applications for each school year run from **October - March**
2. Applications can be completed online. Parents/Guardians who need access to other alternative means of completing the application should contact the school at enroll@[sankofamontessori.org](mailto:enroll@sankofamontessori.org)

Lottery

1. As defined in the Sankofa Montessori charter, a random lottery process will be implemented to fill student vacancies in such cases where the numbers of pre-enrollment applications exceed the capacity of any Sankofa Montessori program, class, grade level, or building in accordance with SCSC Rule 691-2-.03.
2. To participate in the lottery, a student's application must be received by 11:59PM before the application deadline of First Friday in March of the enrollment year.
3. Sankofa Montessori Charter School conducts the lottery in a fair and transparent method in a public setting open to the public. There is no requirement for applicants and/or their representatives to be present for the lottery to receive an enrollment offer. Sankofa Montessori Charter School uses computer-generated randomization as it is often more mathematically random than human randomization methods.
4. The lottery will be held virtually on the Monday following the application deadline **at 10 AM**.

Waitlists

Continue the Drawing Process

Sankofa Montessori Charter School continues the lottery's drawing process after the lottery slots are filled to determine the order of students on the waitlist. Each family is made aware of the position of its student(s) on the waitlist within 3 business days of the lottery.

Update the Wait List and Maintain Accurate Records

1. Sankofa Montessori Charter School will maintain accurate records related to the order of the waitlist.
2. Students who are not offered seats for the academic school year for which the lottery was held will remain on the waiting list until the end of that academic school year unless otherwise requested by the parent/guardian to be removed. The waiting list shall be cleared at the end of the academic year for which the lottery was drawn and shall not carry over from one year to the next; students who remain on the waiting list at the end of the academic year will be required to submit an application again for the next school year.

Notification

1. Sankofa Montessori Charter School offers of enrollment to families selected by lottery are made in writing by email within 24 hours **of posted lottery**.

2. All applicable deadlines will be communicated to parents throughout the entire enrollment/lottery process.
3. If a parent or guardian fails to accept or decline an enrollment offer within the 5 calendar day window, this will be considered as a declination of enrollment.

Acceptance of Applications post Annual Lottery

1. Sankofa Montessori Charter School will continue to accept applications from prospective students throughout the school year even after the school reaches capacity.
2. Applications received after the lottery will be placed at the end of the waiting list, in the order in which they were received. If a grade is not at capacity at the end of the lottery, additional students will be added as qualified applications are received, in the order they are received.
3. If additional seats become available after the Lottery, they will be filled from the applicants, in order, on the waiting list. Sibling preference will be applied to the waiting list.

Forfeiture of Seat

1. Families forfeit their seat within 30 calendar days of the student's start date if they have not submitted all documents in [enrollment checklist](#):

Re-Enrollment

1. Students who have been attending the charter school and have not withdrawn from the school at any point in the school year do not need to reapply and participate in the lottery.
2. Families will complete a mid-year survey to collect data regarding the affirmation of re-enrollment for the next school year to help the administration estimate the number of seats available per grade level.

Enrollment Checklist

All Required Documents
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Residency documents (<i>please see below - varies by household</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current/Complete Ear, Eye, and Dental Form 3300 (<i>please note - many doctors/dentists can complete via email if your child has had a recent enough appointment</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current Immunization Certificate or Waiver</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><i>All children attending K-12 programs must have a Certificate of Immunization (DPH Form 3231). The Certificate of Immunization must be on file within 30 days of the start of the student's program.</i></p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Exemptions: <i>All students, regardless of grade and including foreign exchange students, must have the Certificate of Immunization (DPH Form 3231) on file unless any of the following situations exist:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Medical exemption authorized by a medical doctor. This must be indicated on Form 3231, a letter is not sufficient. Medical exemptions must be kept on file,</i>

are valid for one year, and may be reissued from year to year until a physician determines immunizations can be completed.

- Conflict with religious beliefs verified by parents'/legal guardians' sworn affidavit. The only affidavit that may be used to register a religious objection to required vaccinations is DPH Form 2208. The affidavit does not expire.

- Proof of Age Documentation
- Social Security Card (application will ask you to enter number only - must verify with original during registration)
- Signed acknowledgement of Community Handbook

If applicable:

- Current IEP or 504 Plan (if applicable)
- Report Card (required for grades 1 & 2 only)
- Test Scores (required for grades 1 & 2 only)
- Grandparents Power of Attorney (if applicable)
- Kinship Caregiver Affidavit (if applicable)
- Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations (If applicable)

Required Proof of Residency

What documents are required to prove residency?

The person with whom the student(s) lives must attach proof of residency, dated within the last thirty (30) days and must show parent/guardian legal name and street address. Please note that a P.O. Box is not acceptable as a residence address. Please carefully read the scenarios listed below and provide the documentation that applies to your student's living situation.

<p><u>Possible Living Situation #1</u> - If you own and live in the resident property, you will need to provide:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> One document in your name showing the residence property address. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Deed or a Mortgage Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Utility bill (power, water, gas) for the current month <input type="checkbox"/> If none of these are available, the family can complete a <u>Notarized Affidavit of Residency</u> (top portion only)
<p><u>Possible Living Situation #2</u> - If you rent and live in the rental property, you will need to provide:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> One document in your name showing the residence property address. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the lease/rental agreement (or current HUD Certificate of Compliance/Annual Renew Notice) <input type="checkbox"/> Utility bill (power, water, gas) for the current month <input type="checkbox"/> If none of these are available, the family can complete a <u>Notarized Affidavit of Residency</u> (top portion only)
<p><u>Possible Living Situation #3</u> - If you are living at a property with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> One document in the owner or primary renter's name showing the residence property address. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Deed, Mortgage Statement, Lease/Rental Agreement, or current HUD Certificate of Compliance/Annual Renewal Notice)

<p>owner or being rented by another person, you will need to provide:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Current utility bill (power, water, gas) <input type="checkbox"/> One supporting document in your name showing the residence property address. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Notarized Affidavit of Residency</u> (<i>*both* top and bottom portions</i>)
<p>What can I bring in as supporting documents?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bank statement, loan documents, credit card statement, voided check ● Health Insurance. Previously issued W-2 or Form 1099, pay stub ● Voters Registration Documentation ● A current motor vehicle registration (tag receipt) ● Cable Bill, telephone or cell phone bill, gas bill ● Receipt to have utilities connected ● Mail delivered by the United States Postal Service 	



Open Record & Records Retention Policy

Last reviewed/approved 8/14/22

The Governing Board is subject to and shall comply with the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq., and any subsequent amendment thereof. As a public body, documents created by the board of a charter school are considered public records. “Public records” are broadly defined to include the following: documents; papers; letters; books; tapes; photographs; computer-based or generated information; and similar material prepared and maintained or received in the course of the operation of a public office or agency. Public records also include records received or maintained by a private person, firm, corporation or other private entity in the performance of a service or function for or on behalf of a public office or agency, unless the records are otherwise protected by specific statute or court order from disclosure. Records prepared or maintained by a private entity in cooperation with public officials, or contemplating the use of public resources and funds are considered public records and are subject to the Open Records Law.

The Governing Board shall maintain its adopted policies, budgets, meeting agendas, and minutes, and shall make such documents available for public inspection. The Charter School shall make the minutes of all Governing Board meetings available on its website within ten (10) business days after Governing Board approval and for the duration of the Charter.

It is the policy of the School to retain and destroy records according to the current retention schedule according to the [Georgia Archives](#). For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise specified, no distinction shall be made as to the physical form of records, be they original paper documents, photocopies, electronic documents, or any other format. Nothing in this policy shall preclude records from being retained longer than the retention period specified.



Code of Conduct

2023-24 School Year

Last reviewed/approved 10/26/ 2022

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The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote a safe and respectful environment for all children, guides, and staff members of Sankofa Montessori. The Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for student behavior, consequences for breaches, and procedures for resolving conflicts. All Sankofa Montessori students are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct and are responsible for their behavior at school, on school grounds, and during school-sponsored activities.

The emotional development of each child is extremely important to us at Sankofa Montessori. We believe that each child has an innate goodness that thrives with consistency and clarity. Our basic goal is to help the development of self-discipline, responsibility, and courtesy within the child as s/he matures. To discipline is to teach. Discipline is based on love and logical, natural consequences.

Discipline Philosophy and Equity Statement

- Right to a High-Quality Education: All students have a right to a high-quality education. As such, school disciplinary measures should not be used to exclude students from school or otherwise deprive them of such an education, unless it is necessary to preserve the safety of students and staff.
- General Principles: The goal of student discipline is to teach students to behave in ways that contribute to our school's community and success. Successful school discipline is guided by the following principles:



- Effective and engaging instruction and well-established routines within a classroom community are the foundation for effective discipline.
- School discipline is best accomplished before a community infraction occurs, and using effective interventions after they occur.
- Our school community's success and safety are formed and strengthened when all school personnel build positive relationships with students and families.
- School personnel should promote high standards of behavior that supports our community by teaching, modeling, and monitoring behavior that is consistent.
- School discipline that is paired with meaningful instruction and guidance, offers students opportunities to learn from their mistakes and to contribute to the school community, and is more likely to result in the student re-engaging with the learning community.
- Effective discipline maximizes the amount of time students spend learning and minimizes the amount of time students are removed from their classroom.
- **Reasonable Consequences:** The School will make every reasonable effort to teach student community-affirming behavior and repair community infractions through school-based responses at the lowest possible level, and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid negative behavior. In all instances, school discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's misbehavior.
- **Use of Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions Should be Minimized:** Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions should be reserved for infractions that cannot be appropriately addressed through other interventions and disciplinary responses. Absent rare exceptions, expulsions will only occur in cases of state or federal mandates involving weapons and illegal substances.
- **Limited Role of Law Enforcement:** involvement should be limited to situations when it is necessary to protect the physical safety of students and staff or appropriate to address criminal behavior of persons other than students. Police involvement should not be requested in a situation that can be safely and appropriately handled by the School's internal disciplinary procedures.
- **Addressing Racial Disparities in School Discipline:** While overly harsh school discipline policies can affect all students, they have disproportionately impacted students of color. Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American students, in particular, are far more likely to be suspended, expelled, and arrested than their White peers, even for the same behavior. Students of color also tend to receive harsher punishments than their peers receive for the same offenses. School staff is responsible for implementing this Policy and eliminating disparities for students from racial and ethnic groups or other protected classes that have historically been over-represented among those students who are suspended or expelled.



- Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities have too often had their education needlessly interrupted by inappropriate out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, referrals to alternative schools, and referrals to law enforcement. This is especially concerning when the behavior resulting in the punitive response was a manifestation of the student's disability. School staff is responsible for implementing this Policy and eliminating the over-punishment of students with disabilities, along with ensuring that any disciplinary consequences are in accordance with students' individualized education plans (IEPs), behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and 504 plans (as applicable).
- Non-Discrimination: School staff is responsible for implementing this Policy without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.
- Due Process: Sankofa Montessori will ensure due process for any students facing long-term suspension or expulsion (see due process section). For students with IEP or 504 plans, Sankofa Montessori will hold Manifestation Hearings (see Manifestation Hearing section).
- Staff Training: All Sankofa Montessori staff will receive specific training on our positive discipline approach, the Nautilus Approach, and our approach to the Code of Conduct.
- Community Involvement: Meaningful parent, student, and community involvement in the creation and application of school policy is essential for building effective schools with positive and inclusive learning environments.

Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct when:

- On school property;
- In a motor vehicle being used for a school related purpose;
- At a school-related activity, function or event;
- At any time or place when the student's behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order, safety, health, and discipline in the school;

School Administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct that occurs at a school activity or event, on a school computer or platform, at a non-school activity, function or event where the misconduct leads to a potential danger or disruption of the school. The school has authority to take disciplinary action for such misconduct at any time of the year provided that such conduct has a direct, or immediate impact on school discipline, the educational operation or function of the school, or the welfare of students or staff of the school. Such misconduct could include, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be a felony if committed by an adult, an assault upon another student, a violation of the laws prohibiting controlled substances, or sexual misconduct and which makes the



student’s continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process (OCGA 20-2-751.5).

Please note: if a parent/guardian or other affiliated adult is consistently unsafe or does not follow school expectations during school events, procedures or processes, the affiliated student is at risk of automatic withdrawal.

The Nautilus Approach

Sankofa Montessori’s discipline plan, the Nautilus Approach, is founded on varied positive, pro-social strategies and interventions, expectation-setting, and accountability.

Nautilus Phases, Behaviors Observed, and Response Procedures

	What does the adult see?	What does the adult do?
Phases 1-4 <i>A Moment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signs of anxiety ● Big feelings, disruption, conflict, raised voices... ● Can be resolved with proactive strategies in a reasonable amount of time by adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guide, other classroom adults manage. ● Guide/other classroom adults manage <p>Ask Yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Am I present and self-aware as I engage the child? ● Am I mindful of my presentation of self (tone, body language, volume, cadence)? ● Are there potential activators, stressors, or needs I am aware of? <p>No documentation needed.</p>
Phase 5 <i>Learning Environment Slightly Disrupted</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Escalation ● Frustration levels up ● Blame begins in word or gesture ● Class begins to cease work ● Defensive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Temporary separation from classmates (working alone, observing in another class, buddy class, temporary loss of in-class freedom of choice). ● Limit Setting <p>No documentation needed the first time a child reaches Phase 5.</p>
Phase 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Escalation to disruptive yelling ● Persistent lack of engagement in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Call in Nautilus Support. ● If multiple instances occur, refer to Child



<p><i>Learning Environment Disrupted</i></p>	<p>learning that disturbs the learning environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflict that creates significant interruption in learning process or school ● Threat of physical aggression ● Other children are being interrupted by the nature of the outburst 	<p>Study.</p> <p>No documentation needed if the child successfully returns to work.</p>
<p>Phase 7</p> <p><i>Safety and Security of People and/or Environment are Violated</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If unresolved in Phase 6 <p>Or Immediately to Phase 7 if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dangerous: Intentional physical aggression; throwing objects that can hurt others (furniture, large/sharp objects) or: ● Destructive: Damage school property (breaking/destroying materials or larger items) ● Demeaning: Harassment/bullying (when repeated and targeted toward one/particular group of students); verbally abusive/threatening language (more serious threats of aggression) ● Extreme intentional physical aggression* ● Weapons possession* ● Suicidal threat or ideation* ● Homicidal threat or ideation* ● Running out of school building* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child leaves the classroom ● Call to child’s family ● Possible family/Guide/administrator conference ● For repeated times child should be referred to Child Study ● Circle led by Nautilus Support <p>Write Referral Report.</p> <p>* Real/Imminent Threat to Students and Staff. Crisis Team Called.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family called within 1 hour and a meeting scheduled within 24 hours. ● Alternate location chosen for student to be for a period of time or until the end of the day. ● Plan made for learners to successfully re-enter the class when appropriate. Guide, administrators, Nautilus Support, make a plan to support other students if needed.
<p>Phase 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child reenters the classroom and makes a repair with those involved. ● Child is reattached to the community, guide, and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reconnect the child to the community upon return. ● Support them in engaging with material. ● Circle led by Nautilus Support

Progressive Discipline

When a student’s choices falls under our 3 D’s (dangerous, destructive, demeaning) and they are unable to return to their work, we utilize our progressive discipline policy detailed below.



The breaches to our Code of Conduct have been organized into three levels of prohibited behaviors: Level 1 discipline (minor) offenses, Level 2 discipline (moderate) offenses, and Level 3 discipline (serious) offenses. Behaviors that implicate Title IX regulations (as implemented) will be managed as discussed in our Title IX policy.

- Level 1 offenses are generally **minor** offenses and may represent a failure to demonstrate universally defined expectations or social skills. Following appropriate teacher intervention, students may be referred to an administrator.
- Level 2 discipline is used for **moderate** acts of misconduct. These include acts directed against people or property that do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others and serious disruptions of school order. Unique, serious, or multiple offenses may result in the offense being considered a Level 3 offense.
- Level 3 Discipline offenses are **serious** acts of misconduct that place students or staff at risk of emotional or physical harm which may include threats to the health, safety, and/or property of others, and other acts of serious and repeated misconduct. Consequences may include in or out-of-school suspension and a disciplinary hearing referral. Behaviors that implicate Title IX regulations will be managed by our Title IX policy.

Behavior Level Consequences

Level	Breaches of Code of Conduct
Minor Incidents 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repetitive acts of defiance or insubordination towards staff members ● Verbal assault ● Use of profanity or obscene language or the possession of obscene materials ● Possession of devices or objects which cause distractions including, but not limited to, toys, radios, and phones during learning experiences or school events that are not authorized by staff members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical or verbal threats, including but not limited to, the staging or reporting of dangerous or hazardous situations that do not exist ● Fighting, physical assault and/or battery on another person ● Hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, or any other behavior that causes harm to another student or staff member



<p>Moderate Incidents 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Committing an act which inflicts great bodily harm upon another person, even though accidental or a result of poor judgment ● Inappropriate or disrespectful language toward teachers or staff members ● Inappropriate, abusive, threatening, or demeaning actions based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation. ● Bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment ● Defacement/Damage of property or theft/possession of stolen property ● Possession of look-a-like weapons ● Sexual abuse or harassment ● The dissemination of profane, obscene, lewd, or pornographic images, url links, or websites.
<p>Serious Incidents 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extreme acts of defiance and/or threats towards teachers/staff members/fellow students ● Elopement from the school building ● Chronic disciplinary problems that interfere with the learning process of other students and shows a disregard for school rules ● Possession of fireworks, explosives, and or chemical substances ● Criminal sexual conduct ● Possession of dangerous weapons ● Arson

The acts of misconduct listed above are not to be construed as an all-inclusive list or as a limitation on the school leadership to deal appropriately with other types of conduct which interfere with the order of the school, the educational process, and the safety of students.

A student violating any of the acts of misconduct listed in the Student Code of Conduct shall be held accountable in a manner that is logical and developmentally appropriate. Additionally, a student who engages in an act of misconduct that violates the law may be referred to law enforcement.

Consequence Matrix



Number of Incidents	Level 1 (Minor)	Level 2 (Moderate)	Level 3 (Serious)
1	Verbal Warning Parent Contact (written or phone call)	Parent Contact (written or phone call) and/or Family Meeting	Parent Contact (written or phone call), Family Meeting Behavior Contract, and/or Suspension
2	Family Meeting	Family Meeting/Behavior Support Plan	2 days of out of school suspension/Behavior Support Plan
3	Behavior Support Plan (Tier 2 Intervention) with risk of suspension	1 day of in school suspension	3 - 5 days of out of school suspension/Behavior Support Plan
4	1 day of in school suspension	1 day of out of school suspension	
5	1 day of out of school suspension	2 days of out of school suspension	
6	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting
7	Expulsion	Expulsion	Expulsion

Reporting Incidents

Any staff member who becomes aware of a misconduct incident, including theft, damaging property, or other actions that break trust, should immediately report it to the designated leadership team member.

The reporting staff member should provide relevant details, including the date, time, location, and any available evidence or witnesses related to the incident.

Investigation

The designated leadership team member will initiate a thorough investigation into the reported misconduct incident promptly and with confidentiality.



The investigation may involve interviewing involved parties, reviewing any available evidence, such as surveillance footage or witness statements, and consulting with other relevant staff members as necessary. Parents will only be made aware of their individual student's involvement in an incident.

Restoration Process

If the investigation establishes that a student has engaged in misconduct, including theft, damaging property, or actions that break trust or cause harm, the student will be subject to the restoration process.

The student and their parents or guardians will be informed about the incident, the investigation findings, and the consequences outlined in the restoration policy.

The purpose of restoration is to hold the student accountable for their actions, facilitate their understanding of the impact of their misconduct, and support their personal growth and responsibility.

Restoration may include one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity of the incident and the student's age:

1. Apology
2. Restitution of damaged property
3. Educational intervention
4. Parental involvement
5. Community service
6. Restorative circles

Documentation

The leadership team at Sankofa Montessori will maintain a confidential record of the incident, investigation process, and restorative measures undertaken. Documentation will include relevant details, actions taken, any agreed-upon plans for monitoring the student's progress, and efforts made to prevent future incidents.

Incident Review Process

After a major incident is reported, the administrative team will complete the following steps to confirm a consequence and communicate with the families of all involved students.



1. Gather information: Talk to all involved parties and try to get a clear understanding of what happened. Do a pulse check on how the involved parties are processing what happened and what support they may need to restore and rebuild a relationship, property or privilege. The goal will be to get all the facts before deciding on a consequence.
2. Reinforce expectations: Remind all involved parties of expectations for behavior and explain the impact of the decisions made. Based on the severity of the decision, there may be a loss of privilege immediately or a warning about consequences for not following expectations.
3. Determine a consequence: The consequence will be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the Code of Conduct. Depending on the severity of the behavior and the school's policies, a consequence could include a warning, a loss of privilege, a phone call or note home to the parent, or a plan. For more severe incidents, suspension or expulsion may be the consequence. Families are notified of all incident referrals.
4. Follow up: Check in with involved parties again later to see how they all are feeling and whether the behavior has improved. Reinforce positive behavior and continue to provide guidance and support as needed.

Pursuant to OCGA Section 20-2-735, discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline. The prior disciplinary history of the student during the current school year and other relevant factors will be taken into account and due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. However, it is important for all students and parents to note that the circumstances of particular violations may warrant more severe consequences even on the first violation. The School reserves the right, in school administration's sole and exclusive discretion, to take any and all actions necessary to protect its students, provide a safe and secure learning environment, and to ensure the orderly operation of the educational process including providing more severe consequences for certain violations.

Determination of the severity of an infraction is at the discretion of the Sankofa Administration. In cases of severe infractions, local, state, or federal legal authorities may be contacted.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying and sexual harassment) of any student on school property or at a school sponsored event. Bullying is defined as any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when



accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so or any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. It can be non-verbal, verbal, emotional or physical.

Our definition of bullying is any repeated or intentional act or behavior, whether verbal, physical, or written, that targets an individual or group with the intent to harm, threaten, or cause fear. Examples of bullying include but are not limited to name-calling, physical aggression, social exclusion, cyberbullying, and intimidation.

Cyberbullying/Electronic Bullying: Bullying can occur on school property or through school technology resources but can also occur through the use of electronic communications. Whether or not that communication originated on school property with school technology resources, if the electronic communication is directed specifically at students or school personnel, maliciously intended for the purpose threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose it is considered a form of cyberbullying.

We have put in place the following procedures to prevent and address bullying in our school:

1. **Reporting:** Students, staff, volunteers and parents are encouraged to report bullying behavior to the school administration immediately. The school will take all reports of bullying seriously, and we will investigate each incident thoroughly. No person who reports bullying will be retaliated against by any Sankofa Montessori employee.
2. **Investigation and response:** Once a report of bullying is received, the school administration will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation. This will include speaking with the victim, the alleged bully, and any witnesses. If the investigation reveals that bullying has occurred, the school will take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with our school's code of conduct.
3. **Consequences:** Consequences for bullying may include, but are not limited to, counseling, suspension, expulsion, or involvement of law enforcement. The severity and frequency of the bullying, the age of the students involved, and any other relevant factors will be considered when determining appropriate consequences.
4. **Support for targeted students:** We are committed to providing support for students who



have been targeted by bullying. This may include check ins, referrals for outside counseling, academic support, and other interventions to promote their well-being.

5. Prevention and education: We believe that prevention and education are key to promoting a culture of respect and preventing bullying. We will provide ongoing education and training to students, staff, and parents on bullying prevention, positive communication, and conflict resolution.

Students on Section 504 Plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) qualify for the protections of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If a student with a disability is targeted by bullying, Sankofa Montessori will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If the school's investigation reveals that bullying based on disability created a hostile environment, Sankofa will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent it from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

If the student is caught in another bullying incident, then he/she will be suspended. In order for the student to return to school the parent must meet with the leadership of Sankofa Montessori to develop a plan for the bullying to stop.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders should report incidents of bullying to an administrator or teacher using Sankofa's procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

Disciplinary Hearings

Student Questioning by Officials

School Administrators have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. Though it is important to inform parents about issues of concern, parental consent or presence is not required prior to the questioning of students.

- **Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS):** DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of



children. Notice to parents is neither required nor desirable when the object of that investigation may be the parents. If the investigation involves suspected child abuse by individuals other than those residing in the child's household, parents will be informed that such interviews are being requested, if prior notification is possible.

- **Guardian Ad Litem:** The Guardian Ad Litem is a trained professional appointed by the court to represent the best interests of minor children in court cases. Any request to interview a student or to inspect the student's school record should be submitted, in writing, along with court documentation establishing the Guardian Ad Litem relationship with the child.

Disciplinary Process for Students with Disabilities

Students who are served under IDEA (Special Education) or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are entitled to certain additional rights in the area of discipline based upon their qualification for services under these federal laws.

Students for whom an IEP includes specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with those guidelines. If the disciplinary guidelines appear not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health or safety of the student or others, the matter will be immediately referred to the Special Education Team.

Students for whom an IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with standard school policy relating to each infraction if it is determined by the IEP Team that the behavior is not a manifestation of his or her IEP.

Parents/ guardians may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination and the child shall remain in his or her current educational placement while the hearing is pending.

A student suspected of having a disability shall be referred to the IEP Team for evaluation.

Uniforms and Dress Code

Our policy is intentionally written to minimize the risk of students missing instructional time as a result of dress code. It is also written to minimize the time spent by teachers in addressing dress code.

Dress Code Philosophy and Equity Statement

Our values are:



- All students should be able to dress comfortably for school and engage in the educational environment without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline or body shaming.
- Student dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- School staff should be trained and able to use student/body-positive language to explain the code and to address code violations.
- Teachers should focus on teaching without the additional and often uncomfortable burden of dress code enforcement.

Our uniform policy is designed to accomplish several goals:

- Relieve social pressure to wear certain brands or styles that might not be viable or sustainable options financially for all families
- Provide students and families with a predictable option of clothing choices for school each day
- Maintain a safe learning environment in classes where protective or supportive clothing is needed, such as science lab (eye or body protection), dance (bare feet, tights/leotards), or PE (athletic attire/shoes).
- Allow students to choose from a variety of uniform options.
- Allow students to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, and pornography.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that denote, suggest, display or reference alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia or other illegal conduct or activities.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that will interfere with the operation of the school, disrupt the educational process, invade the rights of others, or create a reasonably foreseeable risk of such interference or invasion of rights.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that reasonably can be construed as being or including content that is racist, lewd, vulgar or obscene, or that reasonably can be construed as containing fighting words, speech that incites others to imminent lawless action, defamatory speech, or threats to others
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

Uniform Policy



All uniforms are required to be purchased from our exclusive vendor due to contractual obligations, therefore families are not permitted to create their own uniform items or any additional items with our logo.

We are not able to license or lend our logo for unofficial school use as per our policy approved by the Governing Board.

Sankofa Montessori students are required to wear a uniform daily. We will provide assistance to any families who are unable to afford the cost of the uniform.

The school is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size.

- **Basic principle: certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.** Clothes must be worn in a way such that undergarments, buttocks, upper thighs, and chests are fully covered with opaque fabric.
- **Students must wear**, while following the basic principle above:

Sankofa Montessori Shirt /Top/Dress:

- Approved school shirt or dress **with Sankofa Montessori logo** (Sankofa Montessori polo shirt, Sankofa Montessori t-shirt, etc.)
- Long or loose-fitting shirts must be **tucked-in**.
- All new children receive **one free** uniform shirt. You may purchase additional from our uniform vendor.
- Coats are not to be worn inside the classroom. If needed for comfort, children **may wear a solid-colored jacket**, sweatshirt, sweater, fleece, pullover, or cardigan with no logo or adornment (other than Sankofa Montessori outerwear).

Pants / Skirts / Bottoms:

- **Solid-colored slacks, khakis, shorts, or skirts.** Shorts/skirts should be at least **knee-length**.
- Leggings or tights are permitted in solid colors, provided that they be worn underneath skirts or shorts (except that Kindergarten students do not need the layer over leggings).
- Must be **plain** – **no** markings, logos, patterns, textures (including no “distressed” garments, etc.)
- No sweatpants, athletic gear, jeggings, or jeans.
- Pants must be worn at the waist; **no sagging** of pants will be permitted.



Footwear:

- Shoes should be **easy for children to put on and remove** independently.
- **Shoes must be worn at all times**, both indoors and outdoors.
- For safety, no heels, “heelies,” flip flops, or anything dangling.
- Socks or tights must be plain and solid colored.
- **Students cannot wear:**
 - Violent language or images
 - Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity)
 - Hate speech, profanity, pornography
 - Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups
 - Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments
 - Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice)
 - Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon
 - Hats, scarves, or other accessories that are not core to the students’ outfit and could become easily lost

Other:

- **Jewelry:** One pair of stud earrings only. No other jewelry may be visible (e.g. necklaces must be under one’s shirt, etc). For safety, no rings or bracelets may be worn to school by students.
- Change of clothes: Kindergarten children are required to have **one emergency change of pants and underwear** kept at school.
- **Physical education shirts:** There is no gym uniform and students may not change clothes for P.E. or recess.
- **Uniforms on field lessons:** Due to safety reasons, students must wear their uniform on field lessons. In the event of an emergency, wearing the uniform will allow staff to quickly identify a student.

Dress Code Enforcement

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School leadership and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.

- To ensure consistent implementation of the dress code policy, the Manager of Family Engagement and Student Culture and designated Leadership Team staff members will be responsible for completing an informal uniform check as a part of Morning Arrival. If a student is wearing an item that is not in compliance with the uniform policy, the student will be provided with a temporary uniform (that will be returned at the end of the day for laundering).



- If a student repeatedly needs a temporary uniform, the school will conference with the family to understand and resolve any hindrances to consistent uniform use.
- If a teacher notices a student is not in compliance with the uniform during instructional time, s/he will notify the Main Office to provide a temporary uniform for the student.
- If necessary, students' parent(s)/guardian(s) may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- School staff shall not enforce the school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.
- Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parent(s)/guardian(s), or staff) in school. "shaming" includes, but is not limited to:
 - kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
 - measuring straps or skirt length;
 - asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
 - calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others; in particular, directing students to correct sagged pants that do not expose the entire undergarment, or confronting students about visible bra straps, since visible waistbands and straps on undergarments are permitted; and, accusing students of "distracting" other students with their clothing.

Consequence Definition

- **In-school Suspension** refers to a decision to temporarily remove a student from the classroom and to place the student in an environment within the school building that allows the student to continue to progress in their coursework but denies them access to regular classroom instruction and social interaction with their peers. The student will be supervised during the day of suspension. If the student does not properly engage during in school suspension, they may be required to have a day of out of school suspension.



- **Out-of-school Suspension** refers to a decision to temporarily remove a student’s right to attend school or any school-related activity not to exceed ten (10) school days. A meeting with the parents may be convened to discuss the incident that led to the suspension and to develop a Behavior Contract for the future.

The determination of in school vs out of school suspension will be based on the severity of the incident and frequency. The decision to keep a student in school vs out of school is at the discretion of the leadership team.

- **Behavior Contract** is a written document that outlines the expected behavior and disciplinary action for a student. It is signed by the parents, student, and appropriate staff members.
- **Behavior Support Plan (BSP)** is a written document that identifies the cause of repeated misconduct and what steps will be taken in order to help a student overcome inappropriate behavior. It is signed by the parents, the student, and appropriate staff members.
- **Long Term Suspension** is defined as a decision to remove a student from school due to extreme non-compliance with school rules or state law for more than ten (10) school days but less than a semester. The student and his/her parent(s) shall be notified in writing of the hearing date before the board designee and the student’s right to due process. The decision, made by the Board of Directors’ designee, can be appealed to the Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled meeting. All other decisions by the Board’s designee are final.

Recommendation for Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the permanent exclusion from the school. Expulsion is only an appropriate consequence when a student engages in an alarming disregard to the safety of others, and/or where it is necessary to safeguard the well-being of other students.

O.C.G.A 20-2-751.1 requires that Sankofa Montessori expel students that are in possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon at school for no less than one calendar year.



Please upload how the applicant school has/will meet the educational needs of all students, including children with disabilities and English learners. For replication and expansion applicants, upload the percentage of students with disabilities and English learners who have been served over the last three (3) years by the applicant school. *

Sankofa Montessori currently has 88 students enrolled. Out of the 88 students, 15% are identified as being students with disabilities, which are students receiving special education services and have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). 2% of Sankofa's student population are students identified as being English Language Learners (ELL) and 5% are students receiving accommodations under Section 504. In addition to the 15% of students receiving direct services through a special education teacher, 17% of students are currently receiving speech services, and 3% of students are receiving occupational therapy services through contracted related service providers weekly.

Due to a number of students currently receiving interventions through the MTSS process and undergoing initial evaluations, by the end of the 23 -24 school year, Sankofa anticipates that 18-20% of its student population will have IEP's and will be in need of direct services daily. Our board and staff are actively preparing for this increase in terms of staffing, budgeting, and programming.

Our Director of Student Support and Services has over 5+ years of experience as a Special Education and 5 years as Special Education Director and has served in a public charter school in Georgia for over a decade. Her wealth of experience ensures that she is able to effectively manage our staff of three in our Special Education Department and support oversight of our contracted agencies to support the school's current needs. We are currently at 100% compliance with IEP's and 504 plans.

We also contract with a speech-language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a psychologist, and a translator to support us in meeting the educational needs of our Students with Disabilities and our English Language Learners. We are currently working to bring on an additional Special Education paraprofessional and a Registered Behavior Technician as we recently had an uptick of students enrolling who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Families who have students with special needs continue to seek us out; a prospective parent shared, "Word on the street is you all do really well with supporting students with special needs."

CHARTER FOR SANKOFA MONTESSORI

This charter for Sankofa Montessori (“Charter”) is entered into by and between Sankofa Montessori, Inc. (“Petitioner”) and the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia (“SCSC”) (collectively referred to as “the parties”).

WHEREAS, the Petitioner submitted a petition proposing to establish a state charter school pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2060 *et seq.*, the Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“Charter Schools Act”) and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084;

WHEREAS, the SCSC finds that the petition complies with the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, and the rules, regulations, policies and procedures promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084 and further finds that the petition is in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article 31 and Article 31A of Chapter 2 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the SCSC grants this Charter to permit Petitioner to operate Sankofa Montessori (“the Charter School”) in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Charter.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, mutual agreements, and covenants contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Definitions.** The terms below will be interpreted in accordance with the following definitions, unless and until federal or state law, or the state accountability system, is amended otherwise:
 - a. Education Service Provider means a nonprofit or for-profit organization that contracts with charter schools to provide multiple educational, operational, or comprehensive management services, including, but not limited to, curriculum design, instructional resources, professional development, financial and operational management, facilities management, or any combination thereof.
 - b. Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE or Department) means the state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K – 12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education.
 - c. Governing Board means the governing board of the nonprofit organization for a state charter school and which is the same as the governing board of the state charter school which is involved in school-level governance of the state charter school.
 - d. Local Educational Agency (LEA) means a public authority legally constituted with Georgia for administrative control or direction of public elementary or secondary schools. The Charter School shall act as its own LEA pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2090 and SBOE Rule 160-4-9.04, including but not limited to data reporting, student enrollment counting procedures, student achievement reporting, and funding allocations.
 - e. School Leader means the individual with the highest authority in school administration regardless of title.
 - f. State Board of Education (SBOE or State Board) means the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K – 12 education agencies in Georgia.
2. **Charter Term.** The SCSC grants this Charter to Petitioner to operate the Charter School for a five-year term beginning on July 1, 2023 and expiring on June 30, 2028.

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3. Grade Range. The Charter School shall serve grades K-8. The Charter School's total enrollment shall be at least 142 students but shall not exceed 504 students (Enrollment Limit) at any point during the charter term.
4. Mission Statement. The mission of the charter school is to provide families with a culturally responsive, child- and family-centered Montessori education to develop children's knowledge, skills, and agency to lead purposeful lives.
5. Essential or Innovative Features. The Charter School shall present an academic program rooted in the Montessori curriculum and methodology, using teachers with extensive training in the Montessori method. Core innovations include multi-age groupings, a child-centered environment with periods of uninterrupted work time and freedom of choice in learning within a highly structured range of options, freedom of movement, and continuous observation of students.
6. Open Enrollment and Admissions. The Charter School shall comply with the open enrollment and admissions provisions set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066. Enrollment shall be open to any student in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. Attendance Zone. Enrollment shall be open to any grade level eligible student who resides in the State of Georgia.
 - b. Application. Prospective students must submit an application to the Charter School by the deadline set by the Charter School to be eligible for enrollment. The Charter School shall require proof of residency in the Attendance Zone at the time of application or enrollment.

The application process must comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066 and SCSC Rule 691-2-.05. The application shall only request information to identify the student and determine the grade to which the student will be enrolled, including the student's name and grade as well as basic contact information for the parent, such as a telephone number and email address. The Charter School may not use admissions criteria or applications that would not otherwise be used at a traditional public school, including requests for letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, or information regarding a student's school or community activities, grades, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history. The Charter School may gather other relevant information from students in compliance with applicable law after enrollment is determined.
 - c. Random Lottery. If the number of timely applicants received by the Charter School exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, the Charter School shall ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A) and SCSC Rule 691-2-.05. The Charter School shall not conduct more than one lottery per grade per admissions cycle.
 - d. Statutory Enrollment Priorities. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A) and SCSC Rule 691-2-.05, the Charter School may give enrollment priority to the following categories of applicants and in the following priority:
 - i. A sibling of a student enrolled in the Charter School; and

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- ii. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the Charter School or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the Charter School.
 - e. Outreach and Marketing. The Charter School shall utilize reasonable outreach and marketing measures to make all potential applicants aware of opportunities for enrollment at the Charter School, including, but not limited to, seeking the enrollment of a cross section of the school-age population throughout the attendance zone, consistent with the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066. The SCSC, upon a finding that the outreach and marketing measures taken by the Charter School are inconsistent with applicable law or the representations made by the Charter School in the Application and/or other representations or submissions to the SCSC, may require the Charter School to take further action, including but not limited to, requiring the Charter School to extend its enrollment period, delay or void its random lottery, and/or conduct further specified outreach and marketing steps.
 - f. Use of Parental Agreements for Withdrawal or Reenrollment. The Charter School may adopt policies setting forth parental volunteer or service expectations and may require parent to sign an acknowledgement of those expectations. The Charter School may not withdraw, decline to reenroll, or otherwise discipline a student for a parent's failure to meet such expectations. The Charter School may not communicate to a student or parent that it has the authority to withdraw, decline to reenroll, or otherwise discipline a student for a parent's failure to meet volunteer or service expectations.
 - g. Enrollment Opportunity. The Charter School shall also ensure open enrollment for each grade served for which space is available and shall not adopt any policy or practice that restricts enrollment to specific grade levels within the grade span served by the school or to a particular class of students served by the school. The Charter School must offer at least one annual enrollment opportunity for each grade served for which space is available.
7. Maximum Flexibility Allowed by Law. In exchange for the Charter School's agreement to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and measurable objectives set forth in Section 9 below, the SCSC grants the maximum flexibility allowed by law to the Charter School. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a), the Charter School shall be entitled to the maximum flexibility allowed by law from the provisions of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and from any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure established by a local board of education, the SBOE, or the GaDOE. Notwithstanding this maximum flexibility, the Charter School shall comply with the terms of this Charter, the Charter Schools Act, including the provisions set forth in Section 16 below, and any rules, regulations, policies, or procedures established by the SCSC consistent with the Charter Schools Act.
8. Accreditation. [If serving grades 8-12] The Charter School shall seek accreditation from an approved accrediting agency identified in O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519(6.1)(A) within the first three years of the initial charter term or prior to a student's graduation and shall retain accredited status thereafter. The Charter School understands that the loss of accreditation from an agency identified in O.C.G.A. § 20-3-519(6.1)(A) constitutes grounds for termination of this charter contract.
9. Comprehensive Performance Framework and Performance Expectations.

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- a. Incorporation Into Charter Contract. The Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) adopted by the SCSC shall be incorporated into the Charter as Exhibit A. The CPF shall supersede and replace any and all assessment measures, educational goals and objectives, financial operations metrics, and organizational performance metrics set forth in the Application and not explicitly incorporated into the CPF or this charter contract. The specific terms, forms and requirements of the CPF, including any required indicators, measures, metrics, and targets, are maintained and disseminated by the SCSC and will be binding on the Charter School. Material amendments to the CPF shall require approval by the SCSC and shall be automatically incorporated into this Charter Contract upon SCSC approval without further amendment to the Charter Contract. If such modifications or amendments are required, including modifications to address amended laws, the SCSC will use best efforts to apply expectations for school performance in a manner consistent with those set forth in the CPF.

The CPF for the School is hereby amended to state that if the School elects to serve only K-2 its initial year, then it must meet academic standards all three years for which data is available to receive a standard five-year renewal.

- b. Monitoring and Reporting. In accordance with SCSC Rule 691-2-.03, the SCSC shall monitor the Charter School's progress in relation to the indicators, measures, metrics and targets set out in the CPF, as well as other applicable rules and laws. The SCSC shall publicly report the Charter School's achievement and compliance at least annually following the completion of the Charter School's first year of operation.
- c. Performance Expectations. **The Charter School's performance in relation to the indicators, measures, metrics and targets set forth in the CPF shall provide the basis upon which the SCSC will decide whether to renew the Charter School's Charter Contract at the end of the charter term. This section shall not preclude the SCSC from considering other relevant factors in making renewal decisions.**
- d. Mission-Specific Goals. The operational portion of the CPF incorporated as Exhibit A, holds the Charter School accountable for the following mission-specific goals:
 - i. 85% of Sankofa Montessori families will recommend Sankofa Montessori to another family as measured by an end of year parent satisfaction survey.
 - ii. 85% of students will show one level of growth between beginning and end of year Executive Function assessment.
- e. Performance Review Presentations. In the event that the Charter School fails to meet standards in accordance with the CPF, the Charter School may be required to make an annual, in-person report to the Commission ("Performance Review Presentation"). At least one Board member and one staff member must attend the Annual Performance Review Presentation. Presentations shall be in the form and manner requested by the SCSC.

10. Assessment and Accountability. Notwithstanding Sections 7 and 9 above, the Charter School is subject to all accountability and assessment requirements set forth within Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and any corresponding State Board Rules, including but not limited to the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-14-30 through 41. The Charter School is further subject to all federal accountability

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requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including its reauthorization as the Every Student Succeeds Act and any subsequent amendment thereto and provisions of state law or regulation that implement the federal law.

11. Annual Report. The Charter School shall submit an annual report by the deadline established by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1(c) of each year to the GaDOE and to the SCSC that complies with all requirements established by the GaDOE or applicable law.

12. Withdrawal Without Penalty. The Charter School shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(d) for withdrawing students. The Charter School agrees that a student may withdraw without penalty from the Charter School at any time and enroll in another public school in the local school system in which such student resides.

13. State and Federally Mandated Educational Services.

- a. Students with Disabilities. The Charter School shall comply with all federal education laws and regulations applicable to students with disabilities, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- b. English Language Learners. The Charter School shall comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations relating to the provision of education services to English Language Learners.
- c. Supplemental Education. The Charter School shall provide supplemental education services in required cases pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including its reauthorization as the Every Student Succeeds Act and any subsequent amendment thereto and provisions of state law or regulation that implement federal law.
- d. Remediation. The Charter School shall provide remediation in required cases pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including its reauthorization as the Every Student Succeeds Act and provisions of state law or regulation that implement federal law.

14. Governance Structure.

- a. Governing Board. The Charter School shall utilize an autonomous governing body in the form of a governing board (Governing Board), which shall operate in accordance with its bylaws and which shall be responsible for complying with and carrying out the provisions of this Charter, including compliance with all applicable law. The Governing Board shall exercise substantive control over such areas as personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations, which are listed by way of example and not by limitation. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(e), all members of the Governing Board shall be United States citizens, residents of Georgia, and shall not be employees of the Charter School.

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- b. Function. It shall be the function of the Governing Board to uphold the Charter School's mission and vision, to set policy for the Charter School, to work collaboratively with school officials to ensure the Charter School complies with the performance goals enumerated in Section 9 above, to ensure effective organizational planning, and to ensure financial stability of the Charter School.
- c. Public Meetings.
- i. Open Meetings Act. The Governing Board is subject to and shall comply with the Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq., and any subsequent amendment thereof.
 - ii. Regular Meetings. The Governing Board shall conduct regular meetings consistent with principles of transparency and avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the governance of the Charter School. The Governing Board shall conduct no less than ten (10) regular meetings each state fiscal year.
 - iii. Called Meetings with Less than 24 Hours' Notice. In addition to adhering to the specific notice requirements in the Open Meetings Act, if the Governing Board schedules a called meeting (i.e., a meeting that is not regularly scheduled) with less than twenty-four (24) hours' notice, the Governing Board shall also notify the SCSC Executive Director or his or her designee of the meeting via electronic mail or phone immediately after scheduling the called meeting.
 - iv. The Governing Board shall not vote on any official business, policy or public matter by e-mail.
- d. Public Records and Transparency. The Governing Board is subject to and shall comply with the Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq., and any subsequent amendment thereof. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70(b)(2) the Governing Board shall ensure that all public records that are maintained or received by a private person or entity in the performance of a service or function for or on behalf of the Charter School are available to the public in the same manner and extent as records collected or maintained by the Charter School. The Governing Board shall maintain its adopted policies, budgets, meeting agendas and minutes, financial audits, and annual reports, and shall make such documents available for public inspection. Additionally, to promote transparency, the Charter School shall ensure that the following information, at a minimum, is easily accessible on the Charter School's website:
- i. Governing Board membership;
 - ii. Governing Board meeting calendar;
 - iii. Meeting agendas for upcoming Governing Board meetings;
 - iv. Meeting minutes for past Governing Board meetings unless the Georgia Open Meetings Act limits their publication;

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- v. Procedure for contacting School Leader;
 - vi. Procedure for contacting the Governing Board;
 - vii. Any admissions application utilized by the school;
 - viii. Notification of enrollment and admission procedures required by SCSC Rule 691-2-.05, including the date, time, and location of any upcoming enrollment lottery;
 - ix. Annual operating budget or summary thereof as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167.1; and
 - x. The Charter School's charter contract.
- e. Communication with Stakeholders. The Charter School, including the Governing Board, and School Leader, must communicate in a timely manner with stakeholders, including, but not limited to: the SCSC, families, students, and other government agencies. The Governing Board or School Leader must use all reasonable efforts to promptly and expeditiously respond to and address stakeholder communications, complaints, and requests for information received via the procedures listed in Paragraph 14(d).
- f. Conflicts of Interest. The Governing Board shall establish a formal policy to prevent and disclose conflicts of interest and compliance with the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(e). Members of the Governing Board and all individuals employed at the Charter School shall abide by such conflicts of interest policy. Upon request, the Charter School shall provide conflict of interest forms to the SCSC demonstrating that governing board members are in compliance with the conflicts of interest policy.
- g. Public Status. Petitioner assures that the Charter School shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, nonprofit school organized and operated under the laws of the State of Georgia. Petitioner further assures that the Charter School shall not be home-based; however, this does not preclude the Charter School from using virtual-based instruction in a remote setting.
- h. Director Compensation. No member of the Governing Board shall receive compensation for his or her service on the Governing Board in excess of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with actual attendance at board meetings or with performance of duties associated therewith.
- i. Contractual Interference. No party to this Charter may interfere with the legal right(s) and/or obligation(s) of another party to execute the provisions of this Charter.

15. Fiscal Control.

- a. Financial Reporting Requirements. The Charter School shall follow the financial requirements of the GaDOE's Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration Manual, for all funds received by the Charter School. This expressly includes, but is not limited to, developing and adhering to financial policies, preparing and adhering to operating budgets, accounting

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procedures, managing cash and investments, and segregation of duties and internal controls. The Charter School shall submit all information required by the State Accounting Office for inclusion in the State of Georgia Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

- b. Annual Audit. The Charter School shall have an annual financial audit conducted by an independent certified public accountant licensed in the State of Georgia. The Charter School will submit their annual financial audit to the SCSC by November 1 each year or as otherwise required by applicable law. If the Charter School does not meet standards on the financial or operational sections of the CPF in the previous year, the SCSC may require the Charter School to utilize an independent certified public accountant selected by the SCSC to perform the subsequent year's annual audit.
- c. Financially At-Risk Schools. If the Charter School does not meet standards on the financial section of the CPF and/or demonstrates negligence which may lead to material financial misstatements of the Charter School's fiscal performance, the Charter School may be designated as financially at-risk and require more frequent financial monitoring. The nature of the additional financial monitoring will be determined by the SCSC Executive Director.
- d. Chief Financial Officer. The Charter School shall designate a Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer may be a contractor rather than a school employee; however, the SCSC will hold the Charter School accountable for all financial operations of the Charter School. The Chief Financial Officer shall possess the following minimum qualifications:
 - i. A baccalaureate or higher degree in business, accounting, or finance from an accredited college or university and a minimum of four (4) years' experience in a field related to business or finance; or
 - ii. Documented experience of ten (10) or more years in the field of business and financial management.
- e. Federal Monitoring Requirements. The Charter School shall comply with all federal monitoring requirements related to the receipt of federal funds.
- f. Charter School Program Eligibility. In the event the Charter School seeks grant funds under the Federal Charter School Program, the Charter School must satisfy all federal eligibility requirements as a prerequisite to applying for and receiving such funds.
- g. Insurance. Prior to opening, the Charter School shall secure adequate insurance coverage and the Charter School shall maintain such coverage throughout the charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.

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- h. Surplus Funds. Under no circumstances shall any surplus be distributed to the Charter School's board member(s), educational service provider or educational management organization. This subsection shall be construed consistent with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167(a)(5).
 - i. Responsibility for Debts. The Charter School is solely responsible for all debts incurred by the Charter School and its Governing Board. Except as agreed hereto, the SCSC shall not be contractually bound to the Charter School or to any third party with whom the Charter School has a contract or from whom the Charter School has purchased goods or services.
 - j. Distribution of Funds and Assets. If the SCSC terminates the Charter or the Charter expires, the Governing Board shall conclude the business and affairs of the Charter School and cooperate with the SCSC to the extent necessary to provide an orderly return of the students to their local school. The Charter School shall remit any surplus or unencumbered funds derived from state or federal grants existing as of the effective date of termination or expiration ("closure date"), and any furniture, equipment or other assets purchased with state or federal grant funds, to the SCSC in the manner specified by SCSC within sixty (60) days of the closure date. All other assets of the Charter School shall revert to the SCSC after the Charter School's liabilities are satisfied. The SCSC is not responsible for the Charter School's unpaid debts in the event the Charter School does not have sufficient funds to pay all of its debts as of the closure date.
 - k. Preference in Contracting. The Charter school shall give preference in contracting and purchasing of services and materials to businesses identified in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(d)(2).
 - l. Acquiring Debt. The Charter School shall inform the SCSC Executive Director before acquiring debt with a repayment schedule that exceeds the length of the current charter term, including but not limited to: monies derived from loans from financial institutions or through the sale of bonds.
 - m. Deficit Reduction. If at any time during the charter term the SCSC determines that the Charter School has a negative cash balance or an unrestricted days cash of less than fifteen (15) days, the Charter School may be required to submit a financial risk-avoidance plan, monthly SCSC Fiscal Compliance Template reports and monthly bank statements from all banks utilized by the Charter School. Submission shall be in the form and manner specified by the SCSC Executive Director. This subsection shall not be construed to limit any other SCSC authority to require the Charter School to submit additional financial reports unrelated to deficit reduction.
16. Compliance with Other Laws, Rules, and Regulations. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with the United States Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws that may not be waived pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065, including, but not limited to, the following provisions:

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- a. Civil Rights, Insurance, Health, Safety, and Conflicting Interests. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions and the prevention of unlawful conduct.
- b. Asbestos Remediation. The Charter School shall comply with the terms of any applicable asbestos remediation plan.
- c. Unlawful Conduct. The Charter School shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school.
- d. Student Conduct and Discipline. The Charter School shall maintain and implement a written policy regarding student discipline, which policy shall be consistent with due process.
- e. State Board of Education Rules. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with all SBOE Rules promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240 during the term herein that are not subject to any waiver granted in Section 7 above.
- f. Prohibition on Discrimination. The Charter School shall not discriminate against students on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, academic ability, the need for special educational services, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.
- g. Reporting Requirements. The Charter School shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-160, 20-2-161(e), 20-2-320, and 20-2-740.
- h. Tuition. The Charter School shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized for local boards pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133.
- i. Brief Period of Quiet Reflection. The Charter School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050, which requires a brief period of quiet reflection.
- j. Individual Graduation Plans. The Charter school shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 related to Individual Graduation Plans.
- k. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The Charter School is subject to all provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. In the event the Charter School closes, it shall transmit all official student records in the manner prescribed by the State Board.

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substantial contact with students prior to beginning work at the Charter School or having contact with students.

- b. Clearance Certificates. The Charter School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 which requires all teachers, school administrators, and other education personnel employed by a local unit of administration to hold a valid clearance certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC).
- c. Teachers' Retirement System. All qualified teachers at the Charter School shall be members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia ("TRS") and subject to its requirements. The Charter School is responsible for making arrangements with TRS and making monthly contributions for its teachers in accordance with state requirements. For the purposes of this subsection, the term "teacher" shall have the definition provided in O.C.G.A. § 47-3-1.
- d. Employment Preference. The Charter School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(d)(1) regarding employment preference. The Charter School shall maintain and provide the SCSC, upon request, documentation to support the Charter School's compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(d)(1), including but not limited to: all advertisements for open positions, resumes received by the Charter School and records of interviews conducted by the Charter School. The Charter School shall not use third-party contractors to circumvent the requirements of this subsection.
- e. Performance Evaluation System. The Charter School shall utilize the performance evaluation system adopted by the State Board pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-210 for all personnel for which it is required by rule or law, including personnel employed by an educational management organization or other educational service provider. At least two individuals employed by the Charter School shall be credentialed to administer the teacher evaluation system. At least two (2) individuals employed by the Charter School or on the Charter School Governing Board shall be credentialed to administer the leader evaluation system. The Charter School may not delegate the evaluation of its School Leader to any individual or entity who is not a member of the Charter School Governing Board.
- f. School Personnel. Teachers and other instructional staff and faculty must be employees of the Governing Board and may not be employed by an Educational Service Provider or other entity affiliated with an Educational Service Provider. The School Leader may be employed by an Educational Service Provider only if the Governing Board retains the authority to select and dismiss that individual from service at the Charter School. Non-instructional staff, such as the Chief Financial Officer, business manager, bookkeeper, maintenance personnel, may be employed by entities other than the Governing Board; however, the Governing Board shall remain responsible and accountable for all operations, compliance, and performance of any and all selected contractors. The Governing Board shall ensure that the School Leader establishes a regular and ongoing physical presence in the school that allows the individual to oversee daily operations.

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21. Record Inspection. Subject to state and federal laws, the SBOE, the GaDOE and their agents, the SCSC and their agents and the State Auditor's office shall have the right to examine and copy all records, reports, documents, and files relating to any activity, program, or student of the Charter School. Any records maintained by a vendor for the services it performs on behalf of the Charter School that relate to school-level operations (such as personnel and financial records) shall be available for immediate access by the school as well as the State Board, Department, SCSC, and State Auditor in accordance with this section.
22. Record Retention. In the event of closure, the Charter School shall ensure the maintenance and retention of appropriate records and shall provide for such maintenance and retention at the school's expense. The Charter School shall adopt a records retention policy that aligns with the requirements of SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.14 "Transfer of Student Records" and accompanying Guidance. Neither the GaDOE nor the SCSC shall be required to assume possession of school-level records. Failure to comply with or appropriately delegate this duty may be considered a breach of contract. Upon exhaustion of applicable retention schedules and upon request from the Charter School or its authorized representative, the SCSC may facilitate coordination for the transfer of remaining permanent records to the Georgia Archives.
23. Facilities.
 - a. Approval of Site and/or Facility. The Charter School shall obtain proper approval in accordance with SCSC Rule 691-2-.06 for all sites and/or facilities prior to committing to any certificate of lease or ownership, prior to commencing any construction and prior to student occupation. If the Charter School contracts with an architect, construction manager, or other construction professional to manage the site or facility selection and development process, the SCSC will continue to hold the Charter School accountable for adhering to the requirements for site and facility approval. The Charter School shall not add or change facilities without approval from both the SCSC Executive Director and GaDOE's Facilities Services Division ("Facilities Service Division"). The Charter School shall contact the Facilities Services Division regarding the following:
 - i. Site Approval. The Charter School shall contact the Facilities Services Division to obtain site approval as soon as practicable. Failure to provide at least a six (6) months' notice to the Facilities Services Division prior to the proposed site's occupation may delay the Charter School's opening date. Once site approval has been granted, the Charter School will be issued a site code. The Charter School shall not commit to any certificate of lease or ownership, commence any construction, nor allow student occupation prior to site approval.
 - ii. Architectural Review. The Charter School shall submit and have approved by the Facilities Services Division all architectural plans for any facility that will house the Charter School during the charter term. The Charter School shall not commit to any certificate of lease or

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ownership, commence any construction, nor allow student occupation prior to architectural review and Facilities Services Division approval.

- iii. School Code Approval. After securing both site approval and architectural review approval a school code shall be obtained. The Charter School shall contact the GaDOE and make a request for a school code. The Charter School shall properly obtain a school code prior to occupancy of the site and/or facility.
- b. Prior to opening the Charter School and prior to students occupying any proposed facility, including new facilities to be occupied during the charter term, the Charter School shall obtain and submit the following documents to the SCSC:
 - i. Documentation of Ownership or Lease Agreement. The Charter School shall obtain documentation of ownership or the lease agreement for the facility that will house the Charter School.
 - ii. Certificate of Occupancy. The Charter School shall obtain a Certificate of Occupancy for the facility in which the Charter School shall be located.
 - iii. Emergency Safety Plan. The Charter School shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, which plan shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency that oversees the area in which the school is located.
24. Transportation. To the extent the Charter School offers a transportation program for its students, the Charter School shall ensure that the program complies with all applicable laws governing transportation of students.
25. Food Services. To the extent the Charter School offers a food service program, the Charter School shall ensure that the program complies with all applicable laws governing food service for students.
26. Projected Enrollment. For the purpose of funding students enrolled in the Charter School each year the Charter School offers a new grade level, the Charter School may be required to provide the SCSC a projected student enrollment count that includes prospective student names, Georgia Testing Identifier (GTID), if available, and any other information as requested by the SCSC. The Charter School shall provide this information by the deadline established by the SCSC and in the form and manner as requested by the SCSC. The information provided by the Charter School pursuant to this section may be verified by the SCSC through an onsite visit or by other means.
27. Data Collections. The Charter School assumes sole responsibility for accurate and timely collection and transmission of required data submissions to the SCSC and other government agencies, including but not

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limited to: the GaDOE, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, and the United States Department of Education. The Charter School shall utilize a Student Information System that is compatible with the system utilized by the GaDOE. Upon signature of the charter contract, the Charter School affirms its understanding that inaccurate or untimely data may have an adverse impact to the academic, financial and operational standing of the school and further affirms its understanding that the SCSC does not guarantee any opportunity or ability to correct any data reporting errors made by the Charter School.

28. Required Trainings.

- a. Data Collections Conference. The Charter School shall send at least one representative to the annual Data Collections Conference held by the GaDOE each year of the Charter School's charter term.
- b. Federal Programs Conference. In each year the Charter School accepts federal funds from the United States Department of Education, the Charter School shall send at least one representative to the annual Federal Programs Conference held by the GaDOE.
- c. Governance Training. Each member of the Governing Board shall fulfill all training requirements required by rule and law, including the annual governance training obligation required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(f) and SCSC Rule 691-2-.03(4).

29. Termination of Charter.

- a. Termination Procedures. The parties acknowledge and agree that this Charter may be terminated following the procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068, any applicable rule of the State Board, or SCSC Rule 691-2-.04.
- b. Grounds for Termination. The Charter School acknowledges that this Charter may be terminated for any reason set forth in law or any applicable rule of the State Board or SCSC, including, but not limited to:
 - i. The Charter School's failure to comply with any material provision set forth in this Charter, provided that they shall be notified by certified mail and be given thirty (30) days from receipt of notice to cure the breach. The nature and outcome of the breach shall be memorialized and maintained by the SCSC in accordance with applicable record retention schedules;
 - ii. The Charter School's failure to comply with any recommendation or direction of the State Board with respect to O.C.G.A. § 20-14-41;

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- iii. The Charter School's failure to adhere to any material term of this Charter, including but not limited to the performance goals set forth in Section 9 above:
- iv. The Charter School's failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
- v. The Charter School's violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws, or court orders:
- vi. The existence of competent substantial evidence that the continued operation of the Charter School would be contrary to the best interests of the students or the community:
- vii. The Charter School's failure to comply with any provision of the Charter Schools Act; or
- viii. The existence of conditions that place the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff of the Charter School in danger.

30. School Closure. In the event the school ceases operations, either through non-renewal, early termination, voluntary closure, or other means, the school must, at minimum, take the following actions:

- a. Student Transition Plan. The Charter School shall create a transition plan to facilitate its students' transition to other educational institutions. The transition plan shall outline a variety of educational options available to students including traditional public schools, locally approved charter schools, state charter schools, and private educational options. The transition plan shall include protocols to ensure the appropriate transfer of student records. The Charter School shall provide the transition plan to the SCSC and parents of enrolled students within fourteen (14) calendar days of its decision to cease operations or the SCSC's decision to terminate or non-renew the Charter School's charter contract;
- b. School Records. The Petitioner shall retain ownership, including all incumbent responsibilities of an operational state charter school, of all records for a period of one year from the later of the date the charter contract expired, the date the charter contract was terminated, or the date the state charter school ceased operations. Incumbent responsibilities include, but are not limited to, transferring student records to public or private schools, schools operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the local school system or schools from which the records are requested. After the one-year period, the Petitioner shall transfer all records, including student records, to the SCSC in the format and manner specified by the SCSC.
- c. School Website. The Charter School shall maintain the website of the Charter School for a minimum of six (6) months from the date education operations cease. For the purposes of this section, education operations mean any period during which instruction is provided by the Charter School to enrolled students. At minimum, the website shall include contact information and instructions regarding requests for student and employee records;

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- d. Notification. The Charter School shall make reasonable efforts to inform stakeholders of the school's closure, including the staff and parents, general public, appropriate local districts, and creditors;
- e. Closure Monitor. The SCSC Executive Director will appoint an individual to monitor the closure activities of Charter School ("Closure Monitor") within fourteen (14) calendar days of its decision to cease operations or the SCSC's decision to terminate or non-renew the school's charter contract. The SCSC shall be responsible for all costs and expenses of the Closure Monitor;
- f. Duties of Closure Monitor. The Charter School shall remain responsible for fulfilling all legal and contractual duties, including those arising from this Charter. The role of the Closure Monitor shall be to review the Charter School's actions to conclude its financial affairs, settlement of accounts, disposition of assets, return of surplus to the SCSC, and provision for maintaining student, employee, and school records in accordance with applicable retention schedules beyond the operation of the Charter School. The Closure Monitor shall notify the SCSC of any action taken by the Charter School that is inconsistent with the its legal or contractual obligations. The Charter School shall allow the Closure Monitor access to all records, reports, documents, and files pertaining to any activity or program of the Charter School;
- g. Closure Process. The Charter School shall align closure activities to the SCSC Closure Guide in a form and manner as requested by the SCSC to ensure orderly closure of the Charter School; and
- h. Surety. The Charter School shall maintain a surety bond throughout the entirety of its charter term and six months following the conclusion of the charter term to assure the faithful performance of the duties of the school and its employees, including the fulfillment of Charter School's obligations in closing the financial affairs in the event the school ceases operation. The bond shall be in an amount no less than \$100,000.00 to be payable to the State of Georgia through the State Charter Schools Commission. The bond shall be furnished by a company authorized to do business in Georgia. The provisions of this subsection shall not be interpreted to preclude Charter School from obtaining liability insurance coverage or surety or fidelity bonds in addition to or in excess of the requirements of this subsection.

31. Renewal, Non-Renewal, and Probationary Term.

- a. Renewal. The Charter may be renewed by agreement of the parties following the procedures set forth in the Charter Schools Act and accompanying SCSC Rule. The parties recognize that the renewal process will commence prior to the conclusion of the final year of the charter term and, as a result, the SCSC renewal decision will likely not include student achievement and school operational data from the final year of the charter term.

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- b. Non-Renewal. Any grounds for termination stated in Section 25b above also may be grounds for non-renewal. In addition, the SCSC may elect not to renew the Charter if the petition for renewal does not comply with the Charter Schools Act and the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures promulgated in accordance with the Charter Schools Act or if the SCSC deems that the Charter School has not sufficiently increased student achievement or is no longer in the public interest notwithstanding the Charter School's performance on the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework.
 - c. Probationary Term. In the event the SCSC determines that the Charter School has failed to comply with any provision of this Charter, the SCSC may elect to grant a renewal for a probationary term, within which term the Charter School must come into compliance satisfactory to the SCSC.
32. Temporary Extension. At the discretion of the SCSC, this Charter may be extended for a grace period not exceeding sixty (60) days.
33. Amendments to the Charter. Any material term of this Charter, to be determined by the SCSC, may be amended in writing upon the approval of the SCSC and a majority of the Governing Board of the Charter School. Any proposed amendment shall be made in accordance with SCSC Rule.
34. Administrative Clarifications. Any clarification to a non-material term of this Charter, as determined by the SCSC, shall be submitted in writing to the SCSC for review. Any non-material term of this Charter may be clarified upon in writing by SCSC staff.
35. Indemnification.
- a. The Charter School agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the GaDOE, the SCSC, and the State Board, their officials, officers, employees, agents, volunteers, and assigns (all of whom hereinafter may collectively be referred to as "Indemnitees"), from any and all claims, demands, suits, actions, legal or administrative proceedings, losses, liabilities, costs, interest, and damages of every kind and description, including any attorneys' fees and/or litigation and investigative expenses, for bodily injury, personal injury, (including but not limited to the Charter School's employees), patent, copyright, or infringement on any intellectual property rights, or loss or destruction of property (including loss of use, damage or destruction of Indemnitee owned property) to the extent that any such claim or suit was caused by, arose out of, or contributed to, in whole or in part, by reason of any act, omission, professional error, fault, mistake, or negligence whether active, passive or imputed, of the Charter School, their employees, agents, representatives, or subcontractors, their employees, agents, or representatives in connection with or incidental to their performance of this Charter regardless of whether such liability, claim, damage, loss, cost or expense is caused in part by an Indemnitee.

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- b. The Charter School shall be excused from their indemnification obligations above: (a) If the claims, demands, suits, actions, proceedings, losses, liabilities arise solely and exclusively out of the negligence of the Indemnitee seeking indemnification; or (b) If the Indemnitee fails to (i) provide written notice of the third party claim or suit within a reasonable time, (ii) cooperate with reasonable requests of the Charter School related to the indemnification; or (iii) assist the Charter School with the defense of such claim or suit.
 - c. The Charter School's obligations to indemnify any Indemnitee shall survive the completion, expiration, or termination of this Agreement for any reason.
36. Non-Agency. The parties expressly acknowledge and agree that the Charter School is not acting as the agent of the State Board, Department, or SCSC except as required by law or this Charter. The Charter School acknowledges that it is without authority to, and will not, extend the faith and credit of the State Board, Department or SCSC to any third party.
37. Delegation. The Charter School acknowledges and agrees that the functions and powers provided for in this charter may be exercised only by the Charter School and may not be delegated to a third party without written agreement by the parties.
38. Assignment. This Charter shall not be assigned or transferred by the Charter School unless consented to in writing by the SCSC.
39. Third-Party Beneficiaries. There are no third-party beneficiaries to this Charter. The Charter School's staff, students, parents, or related organizations are not beneficiaries to this Charter.
40. Application of Amended Law. This Charter is subject to applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and shall be deemed amended to reflect applicable changes to those laws upon the effective date of any such change.
41. Non-Waiver. No waiver of any breach of this Charter shall be held as waiver of any other or subsequent breach.
42. Severability. If any provision of this Charter is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the Charter shall remain in full force and effect.
43. Contradicting or Conflicting Provisions. If any provision of the Charter is determined to contradict or conflict with any other provision of the Charter, the contradiction or conflict shall be resolved in favor of the broad flexibility guaranteed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065 *et seq.*

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- 44. Governing Law and Venue. This Charter shall be governed by, subject to, and construed under the laws of the State of Georgia. This Charter shall be interpreted in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2060 *et seq.* and §§ 20-2-2080 *et seq.*, as amended within the term of this Charter. Any action brought by one party to this Charter against another party shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County.

- 45. Entire Agreement. This Charter sets forth the entire agreement between the Petitioner, and the SCSC with respect to the subject matter of this Charter. All prior contracts, representations, statements, negotiations, understandings, and undertakings between the Petitioner and the SCSC are superseded by this Charter. The Charter shall not preclude the Charter School from entering into or maintaining any agreement with the Local Board provided no such agreement supersedes, overrides or conflicts with any provision of this Charter. The petition submitted to the SCSC serves only as the formal application for the Charter School and does not constitute a contract between the SCSC and the Petitioner. This Charter supersedes and overrides any provisions contained in the petition that conflict with this Charter.

 3/31/22
Buzz Brockway, Chairperson (Date)
STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

Kimberly D. Karacalidis Aug 19, 2022
Kimberly D. Karacalidis, Governing Board President (Date)
SANKOFA MONTESSORI, INC.

Signature: 
Email: 

Sankofa Montessori Signed Charter Contract

Final Audit Report

2022-08-19

Created:	2022-08-18
By:	Sarah Harvey ([REDACTED])
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAGRY5-k35w7MVBma6bVXrJtoAxWaUEdci

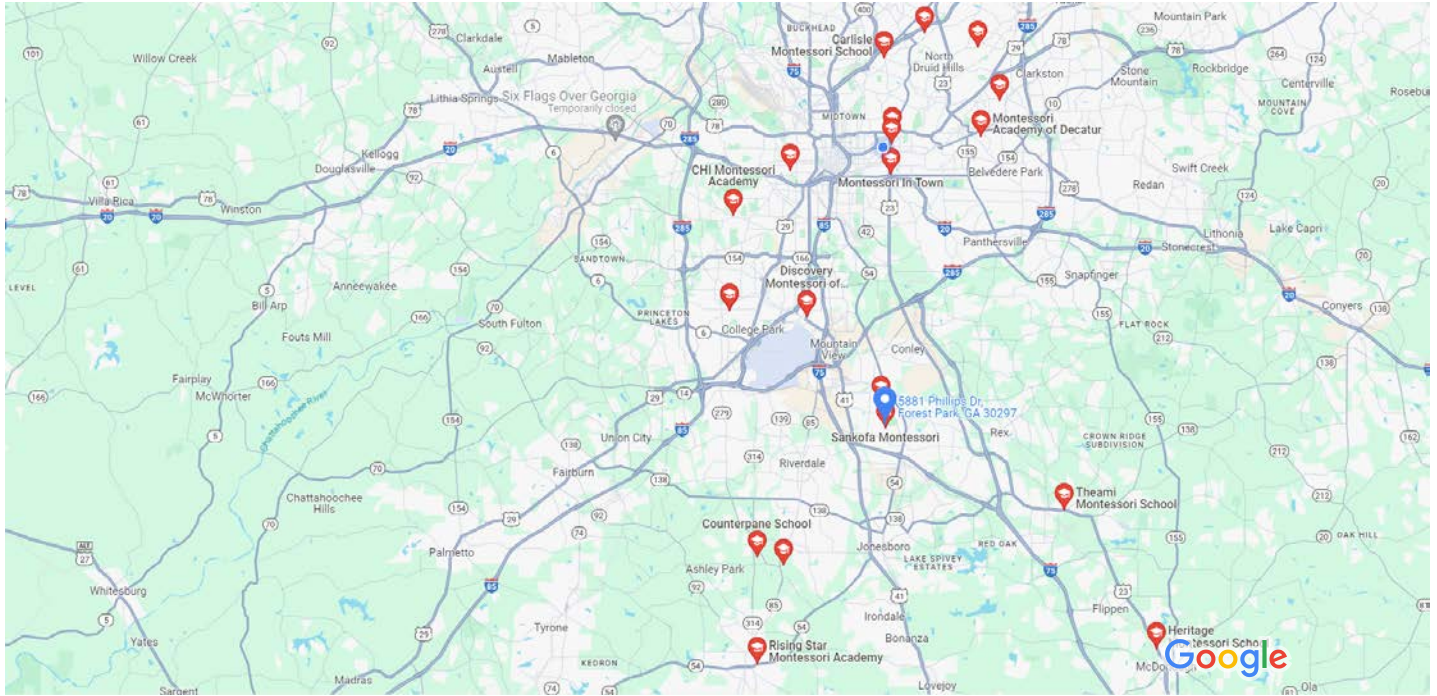
"Sankofa Montessori Signed Charter Contract" History

-  Document created by Sarah Harvey ([REDACTED])
2022-08-18 - 3:08:00 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to [REDACTED] for signature
2022-08-18 - 3:08:40 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by [REDACTED]
2022-08-19 - 2:10:57 AM GMT
-  Signer [REDACTED] entered name at signing as Kimberly D. Karacalidis
2022-08-19 - 10:32:28 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Kimberly D. Karacalidis ([REDACTED])
Signature Date: 2022-08-19 - 10:32:29 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2022-08-19 - 10:32:29 PM GMT



Sankofa Montessori does not provide transportation to our students. We hope to be able to provide transportation when we are at full enrolment in year 5, as that is when our budget can sustain providing transportation for students.

Google Maps Elementary Montessori Schools



Map data ©2024 Google 2 mi

Sankofa Montessori

No reviews

Montessori school · 5881 Phillips Dr
Open · Closes 3:30 PM ·
(470) 665-6169



Website



Directions

Discovery Montessori of Georgia

5.0 (7)

Montessori school · 3391 Dogwood Dr
Open · Closes 5:30 PM ·
(404) 767-5005



Website



Directions

● "This school truly cares about serving the whole child following TRUE ..."

Our Mission Early Learning Center

No reviews

Preschool · 5320 Phillips Dr
Open · Closes 6 PM · (678) 466-0280



Directions

Kulima Montessori


No reviews

Montessori school · 130 Carnegie Pl
Open · Closes 6 PM · (678) 782-8770[Website](#)[Directions](#)**Theami Montessori School**

5.0 (11)

Montessori school · 4340 N Henry
Blvd #110


Open · Closes 3 PM · (404) 207-5214

[Website](#)[Directions](#) "If you are looking for a school where your **children** will thrive, this is it."**Park Schools Montessori**

3.5 (2)

Kindergarten · 3325 Washington Rd
Open · Closes 6 PM · (404) 228-2061[Website](#)[Directions](#)**CHI Montessori Academy**

4.8 (10)

Montessori school · 2295 Benjamin
E Mays Dr SWOpen · Closes 5:30 PM ·
(678) 515-8368[Website](#)[Directions](#) "A safe, peaceful, stimulating environment for our **children.**"**Grow Montessori School**


No reviews

Kindergarten · 1039 Camilla St SW
Open · Closes 4:30 PM ·
(404) 500-2189[Website](#)[Directions](#)**Counterpane School**

4.8 (12)

Montessori school · 839 GA-314

Open · Closes 3 PM · (770) 461-2304


[Website](#)[Directions](#) "The teachers and the **students** are examples of how learning should ..."

Park East Academy


5.0 (1)

Montessori school · 3325 Washington Rd
(404) 228-2601[Directions](#)**International Montessori Academy**


4.5 (8)

Montessori school · 1240 Euclid Ave
NE[Open](#) · Closes 6 PM · (404) 474-6375[Website](#)[Directions](#) "We have **children** in both the lotus and magnolia classrooms at IMA ..."**Montessori In Town**


5.0 (17)

Montessori school · 1192 Arkwright
PI SE[Open](#) · Closes 5:30 PM ·
(404) 784-1038[Website](#)[Directions](#) "Our two **children** have attended the school, and they both have ..."**Atlanta Montessori International School - Druid Hills**

5.0 (6)

Montessori school · 1215 S Ponce
De Leon Ave NE[Open](#) · Closes 6 PM · (404) 500-0501[Website](#)[Directions](#) "I feel so safe with our **children** here. It's amazing. They thrive here."**Rising Star Montessori Academy**

4.5 (8)

Montessori school · 460 E Lanier
Ave[Open](#) · Closes 6 PM[Website](#)[Directions](#) "Rising Star Montessori is an amazing Academy."

Montessori Academy of Decatur

3.8 (29)

Montessori school · 189 Sams St suite a


Open · Closes 6 PM · (404) 320-0400



Website



Directions

 "The teachers at **Montessori Academy** of Decatur treat my child like family."

Montessori School At Emory





CSP SE Subgrant Application Assurances

All CSP Subgrant Applicants must agree to the requirements and conditions the subgrant and CSP program. **The Board Chair should initial each statement below and sign and date at the conclusion of the document.** A final grant application will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted if it does not include the Statement of Assurances for the federal Charter School Program Grant.

1. Application grant contact (charter school authorized representative) possesses the legal authority to apply for this grant on behalf of the school. If the grant contact is not the chair of the governing body (due to conflict of interest), a resolution or motion has been adopted by the applicant's governing body directing and authorizing the grant contact the delegated responsibility to act on their behalf to submit this application, including all understanding and assurances of certifications contained herein, to execute the grant, if approved, to comply with certifications, budget, and fiscal requirements, and act as the governing body's authorized official for the grant program. The grant contact has no conflict of interest with any party (employee, management organization, contractor, vendor, etc.) that has a financial interest in the grant award.
2. The applicant school certifies that they understand an approved charter application and a signed charter contract are required to be eligible for an award.
3. Applicant school agrees to annually provide the U.S. Secretary of Education and the State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving objectives described in this application (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5203(b)(3)).
4. Applicant school agrees to participate in all CSP Subgrantee data reporting and evaluation activities as requested or required by the U.S. Department of Education, the State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia, State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia, and Georgia Department of Education, including on-site and desktop monitoring conducted by the SCSF or SCSC, annual independent audits required by the state that are publicly reported and include financial statements prepared with generally accepted accounting principles, annual reports, and a final expenditure report for the use of subgrant funds. This section includes participation in any federal or state funded charter school research or evaluations. Failure to submit required information may result in a withholding of grant funds or a non-renewal of subsequent year funding within the project period. Audits must also be submitted to the authorizer for review.
5. The applicant school assures that they have provided their authorizer with "adequate and timely notice" of this grant application (as required by ESEA §4310 (6)(B)).
6. The applicant school per ESEA §4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(II), certifies that the Charter Contract from the authorizer articulates that student achievement and growth, as measured by the state's School Performance Framework, is one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the school's charter contract, and that the authorizer reserves the right to

revoke or not renew a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors involving the management of the school, or if not included agree to amend the Charter Contract accordingly to include these before award monies are distributed. The applicant school will provide a copy of the charter contract, and the State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia will review the contract to ensure that student achievement is one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the charter.

7. ✓ The applicant school certifies that it will maintain a high degree of autonomy, consistent with the charter contract and the requirements of ESEA § 4310 (2) and ESEA § 4303 (f)(2)(A), including the school's autonomy over budget, operations, and personnel decisions, and that they have sought, or will seek, all the appropriate automatic and non-automatic state waivers, and any necessary district waivers, to support the level of autonomy negotiated in their charter contract.
8. ✓ The applicant school shall include important information on the website of the school, as required by ESEA § 4303 (f)(2)(G), to help parents and the community to make informed decisions about the education options available to their children, including information on the educational program, student support services, parent contract requirements (including any financial obligations or fees and information regarding textbook assistance), and enrollment criteria. This section requires the school to also provide annual performance, including the State Report card, and enrollment data for the student body and subgroups of students on its website.

Board Chair Signature: *Kimberly Karacalidis*
Kimberly Karacalidis (Dec 12, 2023 08:23 EST) Date: 12/12/23

Name: Kimberly Karacalidis

Charter School/Network: Sankofa Montessori


CSP SE Subgrant Information & Application


Final Audit Report


2023-12-12


Created:	2023-12-06
By:	Sarah Harvey ([REDACTED])
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAHwil1_-DI_pAsbgclzdotTkIhcvtICpm


"CSP SE Subgrant Information & Application" History

 Document created by Sarah Harvey ([REDACTED])
2023-12-06 - 3:37:39 PM GMT

 Document emailed to Kimberly Karacalidis ([REDACTED]) for signature
2023-12-06 - 3:37:45 PM GMT

 Email viewed by Kimberly Karacalidis ([REDACTED])
2023-12-06 - 10:14:52 PM GMT

 Document e-signed by Kimberly Karacalidis ([REDACTED])
Signature Date: 2023-12-12 - 1:23:14 PM GMT - Time Source: server

 Agreement completed.
2023-12-12 - 1:23:14 PM GMT

Profiles: Sankofa Montessori

Applicant Information

Please provide the following information about the applicant charter school/network.

Name of Charter School/Network

Sankofa Montessori

School Identifier (NCES ID), if known

Authorizer

State Charter School Commission

Authorization Date

07/01/2023

Eligibility for CSP Subgrant

New School

Proof of Approved Expansion (expansion applicants only)

School Opening Date/Date of Expansion

07/31/2023

Name of Nonprofit Entity

Sankofa Montessori

Name of LEA

Sankofa Montessori

LEA Identifier (NCES District ID), if known

Applicant Street Address

5881 Phillips Drive

Applicant City

Forest Park

Applicant State

Georgia

Applicant Zip Code

30,297

Applicant County

Georgia

Proposed Location of New/Replicated School or Expansion Site

Proposed Street Address

N/A

Proposed Applicant City

N/A

Proposed Applicant State

Georgia

Proposed Applicant Zip Code

Proposed Applicant County

N/A

School/Network Website

sankofamontessori.org

Management Organization Type

Freestanding

Virtual Status

Not virtual

Grant Contact

Sarah Harvey

Contact Title

Executive Director

Contact Email Address

[REDACTED]

Contact Phone Number

[REDACTED]

What school year will the school first enroll students? For expansion, what school year did the school first enroll students?

2023-24

Grades Offered during Grant Term (36 months from date of application)

Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th

Projected Number of Students for First Three Years of Operation/Expansion (by year)

For each year, note the projected number of students for this new school, replication, or as a result of the expansion (only the additional students from an expansion).

Year 1

90

Year 2

252

Year 3

336

Does/will the school use a weighted lottery?

No

Are current governing board members listed on the school's website? If no, provide an attachment with a list of board members.

Yes

Has the applicant school notified the charter school authorizer of intent to apply for this CSP subgrant?

Yes

Please upload a copy of the letter of intent to authorizer that the applicant is applying for a CSP SE subgrant.

Sankofa - Notification of CSP application.pdf

User Login

[REDACTED]

Profiles: File Attachments

Please upload a copy of the letter of intent to authorizer that the applicant is applying for a CSP SE subgrant.

Sankofa - Notification of CSP application.pdf



Sankofa Montessori
% Sarah Harvey
5881 Phillips Drive
Forest Park, GA 30297

November 27, 2023

State Charter School Commission of Georgia
% Kristen Easterbrook
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE, 1356 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Kristen,

This letter is to notify Sankofa Montessori's Authorizer, the State Charter School Commission of Georgia, of its intent to apply for the CSP grant.

Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,
Sarah Harvey
Founder/Executive Director



External Evaluator Review: [REDACTED] | 2024-02-13

Name	Attachments
[REDACTED] 2024-02-13	No
[REDACTED] 2024-02-13	No
[REDACTED] 2024-02-12	No
[REDACTED] 2024-02-05	No

Review Completed Date

02/13/2024

Application

Sankofa Montessori

Reviewer

[REDACTED]

Reviewer Assignment Tag

type:individual

Responsiveness to community need

On a scale of 1 to 30, where 1 is lowest and 30 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's responsiveness to community need? Applicants should provide evidence of community engagement and outreach. Applicants proposing to expand or replicate in an area of high charter school concentration must demonstrate community need for the unique model. All applicants must present a comprehensive needs analysis as a part of their application demonstrating local support, benefits to the community, evidence of the demand, and demographic projections (supporting a new charter school). Applicants will be rated based on the completeness of their analysis, benefit to the local community, and likelihood to achieve enrollment goals. Applicants should also describe ongoing effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies.

24

Comments - Responsiveness to community need (optional)

Growth mindset

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's growth mindset? Applicants should demonstrate their willingness to engage in open, transparent conversations with the SCSF and technical assistance providers and to welcome feedback with an open mind.

9

Comments - Growth mindset (optional)

Commitment

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's commitment? Applicants must demonstrate their willingness and capacity to adhere to the conditions of any subgrant awards and carry out the goals they set for the subgrant. Applicants must agree to attend all mandatory technical assistance opportunities, submit all required reports, and participate fully in monitoring activities.

9

Comments - Commitment (optional)

Readiness

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's readiness? Applicants must demonstrate their readiness to plan for and carry out the opening of a new charter school, replication of an existing charter school, or expansion of an existing charter school. For new schools, the evaluation team will seek evidence of adequate planning and qualified team members to carry out the academic model approved in the charter and sound operations. For replications and expansions, the evaluation team will review current and historical academic and operational performance, eligibility for expansion or replication, and mitigating factors.

8

Comments - Readiness (optional)

Racial and Socio-economic Diversity

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's racial and socio-economic diversity? All applicants must explain how they will establish and maintain a racially and socio-economically diverse student population and endeavor to recruit faculty and staff who are similarly diverse. If an applicant is proposing a location in a segregated/isolated community and/or offers a culturally responsive educational model, this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Selection Committee.

8

Comments - Racial and Socio-economic Diversity (optional)

Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability

Please evaluate the budget on a scale of 1 to 30. Applicants should present a complete grant budget that adheres to the allowable cost guide and meets the objectives of the CSP SE Grant. Reviewers will look for adequate rationale in the budget narrative for each budget category and sufficient detail to demonstrate that the applicant has a realistic plan for utilizing subgrant funds within the grant period. Applicants should demonstrate a plan for maintaining financial sustainability after the end of the subgrant period.

25

Comments - Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability (optional)

Bonus Points

Does the applicant qualify for locating in a priority community?

Yes

Does the applicant propose offering high school?

No

Does the applicant propose a collaboration with a local public school or district to share resources and/or otherwise serve vulnerable populations?

No

Comments - Bonus Points (optional)

Score Before Bonus Points

83

Total Score

93

Comments - Overall (required)

N/A

Review Completed Date

02/13/2024

Application

Sankofa Montessori

Reviewer

[REDACTED]

Reviewer Assignment Tag

type:individual

Responsiveness to community need

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30

Comments - Responsiveness to community need (optional)

Growth mindset

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10

Comments - Growth mindset (optional)

Commitment

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Comments - Commitment (optional)

Readiness

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Comments - Readiness (optional)

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10

Comments - Racial and Socio-economic Diversity (optional)

Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability

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30

Comments - Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability (optional)

Bonus Points

Does the applicant qualify for locating in a priority community?

Yes

Does the applicant propose offering high school?

No

Does the applicant propose a collaboration with a local public school or district to share resources and/or otherwise serve vulnerable populations?

Yes

Comments - Bonus Points (optional)

Score Before Bonus Points

98

Total Score

113

Comments - Overall (required)

N/A

Review Completed Date

02/12/2024

Application

Sankofa Montessori

Reviewer

[REDACTED]

Reviewer Assignment Tag

type:individual

Responsiveness to community need

On a scale of 1 to 30, where 1 is lowest and 30 is highest, how would you rate the applicant's responsiveness to community need? Applicants should provide evidence of community engagement and outreach. Applicants proposing to expand or replicate in an area of high charter school concentration must demonstrate community need for the unique model. All applicants must present a comprehensive needs analysis as a part of their application demonstrating local support, benefits to the community, evidence of the demand, and demographic projections (supporting a new charter school). Applicants will be rated based on the completeness of their analysis, benefit to the local community, and likelihood to achieve enrollment goals. Applicants should also describe ongoing effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies.

20

Comments - Responsiveness to community need (optional)

Growth mindset

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Comments - Growth mindset (optional)

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Comments - Commitment (optional)

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Comments - Racial and Socio-economic Diversity (optional)

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25

Comments - Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability (optional)

Bonus Points

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Yes

Does the applicant propose offering high school?

No

Does the applicant propose a collaboration with a local public school or district to share resources and/or otherwise serve vulnerable populations?

No

Comments - Bonus Points (optional)

Score Before Bonus Points

81

Total Score

91

Comments - Overall (required)

N/A

Review Completed Date

02/05/2024

Application

Sankofa Montessori

Reviewer

[REDACTED]

Reviewer Assignment Tag

type:individual

Responsiveness to community need

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28

Comments - Responsiveness to community need (optional)

Growth mindset

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Comments - Growth mindset (optional)

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Comments - Commitment (optional)

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Comments - Racial and Socio-economic Diversity (optional)

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30

Comments - Budget Quality & Financial Sustainability (optional)

Bonus Points

Does the applicant qualify for locating in a priority community?

No

Does the applicant propose offering high school?

No

Does the applicant propose a collaboration with a local public school or district to share resources and/or otherwise serve vulnerable populations?

Yes

Comments - Bonus Points (optional)

Score Before Bonus Points

98

Total Score

103

Comments - Overall (required)

N/A