

**AUTHORIZATION OF FOUR CORNERS MONTESSORI PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY**

**A Recommendation**

1. **Division and Department:** Academic Affairs - Public School Academies and Urban Partnerships, School of Education and Human Services ("PSA Office").

2. **Introduction:** When a public school academy's agreement to organize and administer its academy was not renewed at the end of the 2006-07 school year, Oakland University ("University") was presented with an opportunity to authorize a new public school academy. During the past year, 35 applications were extensively evaluated by the PSA Office, which now recommends that Four Corners Montessori Academy ("Academy") be authorized by the University as a new public school academy. The Academy will use the 2008-2009 school year as a planning year, during which the final site for the Academy will be selected, personnel hired and students enrolled. The Academy will open for the 2009-2010 school year and is anticipating an enrollment of 170 students in grades PK-3. The Academy plans to enroll 318 students in grades PK-6 for the 2010-2011 school year.

The PSA Office also recommends that the Academy's agreement to organize and administer its public school academy be for a term not to exceed 10 years, running coterminous with the Academy's academic school year, or through June 30, 2018. Although a 10 year term is requested, the initial term will be six years, renewable by the University based upon the Academy's performance for up to an additional four years. The Academy will be authorized to operate a program ranging from Pre-kindergarten to Grade 12.

Public school academies in Michigan were created by statute in 1994. Since that time, the Michigan Department of Education ("MDOE") has standardized the requirements for agreements to organize and administer public school academies. The authorizing agreement for the Academy incorporates the standardized MDOE requirements, and will be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Vice President for Legal Affairs prior to execution, and will be in compliance with the law and University policies and regulations and conform to the legal standards and policies of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel. The University will be able to terminate the agreement to organize and administer the Academy upon an Academy breach, or the Academy's failure to fulfill any of the statutory requirements applicable to public school academies, without any liability to the Academy, to any pupil, parent, guardian or any other person.

3. **Previous Board Action:** On October 5, 1995, the Board approved Oakland University's Policy on Public School Academies. On May 2, 2007, the Board approved an amendment of the Criteria for the Evaluation of Applications.

4. **Budget Implications:** Oakland University will receive three percent (3%) of the state school funding received by the Academy as an administrative fee for oversight.

5. **Educational Implications:** The philosophy of the Academy is aligned with that of Oakland University's School of Education and Human Services ("School") and will be able to strengthen the mission of the School. With its innovative Montessori instructional program, the

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Academy will offer experiential learning opportunities for the School's teacher interns who are interested in alternative education. Furthermore, the Academy will educate a well rounded and high achieving student body which in turn may become future Oakland University students.

**6. Personnel Implications:** There are no personnel implications associated with this recommendation.

**7. University Reviews/Approvals:** The Academy's application was reviewed and recommended by the Public School Academy Office and the Review Committee. The recommendation was approved by the Dean of the School of Education and Human Services and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

**8. Recommendation:**

WHEREAS, the Michigan Revised School Code of 1976, as amended, permits the Board to authorize the establishment from time to time of public school academies meeting the requirements of the Board and the requirements of applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on October 5, 1995, the Board approved the Oakland University Policy on Public School Academies and Criteria for the Evaluation of Applications; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2007, the Board approved an amendment of the Criteria for the Evaluation of Applications; and

WHEREAS, the University has received the Academy's application requesting that the Board authorize the Academy as a public school academy; and

WHEREAS, the University has determined it is in the best interest of the University and the State of Michigan to authorize the Academy as a public school academy; now therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that the application submitted by the Academy meets the requirements of the Board and of applicable law, and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board approves the application of the Academy; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board appoints the initial Board of Directors for the Academy identified in Attachment D attached hereto; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the University administration shall negotiate and finalize an agreement to organize and administer a public school academy with the Academy, in a form that incorporates the standardized requirements of the Michigan Department of Education and with such provisions as shall be required or authorized by the Revised School Code of 1976 as amended; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that and the term of the agreement to organize and administer a public school academy with the Academy shall expire no later than June 30, 2018; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that the agreement to organize and administer a public school academy shall be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Vice President for Legal Affairs prior to execution, and shall be in compliance with the law and University policies and regulations and shall conform to the legal standards and policies of the Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel.

**9. Attachments:**

- A. Criteria for the Evaluation of Applications
- B. Four Corners Montessori Academy Application Summary
- C. Memorandum from former Dean Mary L. Otto recommending the Four  
Corners Montessori Academy
- D. Academy Initial Board of Directors

Submitted to the President  
on \_\_\_\_\_, 2008 by

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Virinder K. Moudgil  
Senior Vice President for  
Academic Affairs and Provost

Recommended on \_\_\_\_\_, 2008  
to the Board for Approval by

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Gary D. Russi  
President

## CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Public School Academy Application Review Committee ("Review Committee") shall use the following criteria in the evaluation process to assist in determining the strengths and weaknesses of proposed public school academies. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, the Review Committee shall make a recommendation through the University President to the Board of Trustees to authorize or not to authorize the charter.

### **Section I: Demographic Characteristics**

A. Identification of Applicant. The applicant for the proposed public school academy must be clearly identified and his/her affiliation indicated as an individual, a representative of a government entity or non-government entity, or other designation.

B. Name of proposed Public School Academy. The name of the proposed public school academy shall not duplicate that of another known public or private school.

C. Proposed date of opening. The proposed opening date of the public school academy shall be identified and shall be reasonably achievable.

D. School calendar and school day schedule. The proposed school calendar and school day schedule shall meet or exceed any state mandated minimum at the time of the application.

E. Grade level(s) or ages of students to be enrolled. The application shall identify the grade level(s) and/or ages of students to be enrolled. Additionally, plans, if any, for expanding the number of grades and/or ages of students to be enrolled in future years must be clearly stated.

F. Projected enrollment. The proposed number of students to be enrolled must be stated and the method of determining potential enrollment must be identified.

G. Student population. A description of the target student population must be included.

### **Section II: Purposes and Goals**

#### **A. Purposes of the Public School Academy**

The purposes of the public school academy shall be congruent with the mission and goals of Oakland University, as reflected in the Oakland University Strategic Plan, and shall reflect a strong philosophical and educational focus that holds considerable promise for high quality teaching and learning for those students it is designed to serve.

Indicators:

(1) The educational underpinnings on which the proposed public school academy is to be founded are supported in part (but not necessarily in entirety) by research or documented practice elsewhere. Note: In an effort to foster innovation, non-traditional educational practices which are supported by a comprehensive and thorough rationale are encouraged.

(2) The proposed public school academy will effectively address the needs of students.

(3) The proposed public school academy utilizes sound practice (i.e., contemporary teaching methods, structures, etc.), and also incorporates innovative teaching strategies and/or instructional technology.

(4) The proposed public school academy is incorporated pursuant to Section 512a of the School Code of 1976, as amended.

(5) The proposed educational goals, programs and curricula are designed to fulfill at least one of the purposes articulated in Section 511(1) of the School Code of 1976, as amended.

#### B. Educational goals.

The educational goals of the public school academy may include statements of educational inputs; however, the goals must also include outcomes or performance based standards to be achieved by students.

Indicators:

(1) The proposed public school academy is committed to educating each student to his/her optimal level of learning.

(2) The proposed public school academy plans to develop a nurturing, child centered sense of educational atmosphere that contributes to the development of each student's confidence, sense of self-worth, personal enjoyment, and zest for learning.

(3) The proposed public school academy seeks to educate students to meet or exceed state and national standards of achievement.

(4) The proposed public school academy seeks to develop the critical thinking and problem solving skills of students.

### **Section III: Admission and Retention**

#### **A. Admission policy and criteria to be maintained.**

A public school academy shall not charge tuition and shall not discriminate in its pupil admissions policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district. A public school academy may, however, limit admission to pupils who are within a particular range of ages or grade levels or on any other basis that would be legal if used by a school district.

##### **Indicators:**

(1) The applicant must provide a description of its plans to recruit students and to advertise the school's availability. It must specifically describe its plans to advertise within the geographical area to be served. The plan to advertise and recruit will be evaluated on whether the plan is calculated to inform those persons who are likely to be interested in the public school academy. The applicant must describe the enrollment period which will be available for registration by interested families. The enrollment period must offer evening and/or weekend enrollment opportunities. The applicant must describe both its initial plans for recruitment and advertising as well as plans for these activities once the academy has been started and has an established student body.

(2) The applicant must describe the process it plans to use for the random selection of students in the event the number of students wishing to enroll exceeds the number of seats provided by the public school academy.

#### **B. Retention**

The public school academy shall demonstrate a commitment to retain and to educate all students who enroll.

##### **Indicators:**

(1) The proposed public school academy demonstrates a commitment to the retention of all students enrolled.

(2) Procedures are established for intervention and special help or counseling for those students who do not perform up to their potential or who violate established codes of conduct.

(3) The applicant presents a code of student conduct and set of procedures for discipline and dismissal.

(4) The applicant includes a plan for regular involvement of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) or other person(s) legally responsible for the student, both at home and school, and provisions for monitoring this participation.

(5) The procedure for dismissal of students shall include the requirement that the student's parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) legally responsible for the student will be counseled and provided a recommendation for future placement of the student.

#### **Section IV: Curriculum and Instructional Outcomes**

##### **A. Curricular and Instructional Design.**

The curriculum shall be designed to meet the substantiated educational needs identified by the public school academy. The curriculum shall be coordinated in such a manner to allow for effective teaching and learning. Innovations that provide meaningful learning and incorporate the expertise and research of Oakland University faculty and students and the expressed goals and needs of the business community and the community at large are encouraged.

Indicators:

(1) Minimally, the public school academy curriculum must comply with Michigan's core curriculum, if any.

(2) The curricular plan may include a unique curricular element, a unique instructional delivery system, and/or a unique assessment process.

(3) The curriculum plan shall include a comprehensive program evaluation component.

##### **B. Student Assessment.**

Evaluation is an integral part of curriculum and instruction and should occur on a regular basis. Minimally, outcomes evaluation must be incorporated into the assessment plan. Alternative assessment strategies that highlight students' achievement of identified outcomes are strongly encouraged.

Indicators:

(1) The proposed assessment program must include at least one of the following: MEAP, California achievement test, Stanford achievement test, Iowa test of basic skills, metropolitan achievement test, or other State approved tests.

(2) Assessment strategies must be appropriate to the educational goals of the public school academy.

(3) The public school academy will use the assessment results to improve teaching and learning for students.

## **Section V: Physical Facility**

The public school academy shall be operated at a single site that is safe and appropriate for educational programming, and provides for the effective implementation of the curriculum.

### **A. Size.**

The space and the configuration of the site shall be appropriate for effective implementation of the curriculum.

Indicators:

- (1) The facility includes adequate instructional space.
- (2) Instructional space is properly equipped with appropriate furnishings, teaching aids, and student learning materials.
- (3) The public school academy either has, or has access to, specialized space as needed (e.g., library with appropriate holdings, laboratory with adequate equipment and supplies, musical instruments and practice rooms, studios, performance space, technology center, vocational shops, gymnasium, athletic fields, food preparation and dining facilities, etc.).
- (4) The facility has an adequate heating and ventilation system, and, whenever possible, air conditioning.
- (5) The public school academy contains adequate office space and equipment for the professional staff.
- (6) The public school academy has made arrangements for custodial and maintenance services.

### **B. Location.**

The academy shall be located in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb County.

Indicators:

- (1) The application includes an address and description of the facility.



(2) The application includes documentation demonstrating the applicant's legal right to occupy the facility on or before the proposed opening date for the public school academy, or the steps to be taken to obtain that legal right and demonstration of ability to take those steps.

C. Compliance with School Code and Other Applicable Laws.

The facility complies with the State School Code and laws relevant to health, safety, and accessibility standards.

Indicators:

(1) The facility and surrounding area is free from natural hazards and attractive nuisances.

(2) Design plans, blueprints or other documents demonstrate that the facility will be in compliance with the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(3) Documentation demonstrates that the facility complies with the National Fire Protection and Life Safety Codes 101, sections 10 and 11.

(4) The public school academy has property-all risk insurance in an amount sufficient to cover the total value of the academy's real and personal property.

**Section VI: Budget and Finance**

Adequate financial resources are available to meet operating, capital and start-up costs of the public school academy. The proposed operating budget is consistent with the needs of the public school academy.

Indicators:

(1) A five-year financial projection for the public school academy includes consideration of all operating, capital and start-up costs and related funding sources. The applicant must identify financial resources on hand or committed resources from donors or other sources to fund costs of the public school academy not included in State aid.

(2) The proposed operating budgets include consideration for all elements of school operations.

(3) Adequate reserves are available to meet unplanned emergencies.

## **Section VII: Staffing and Governance Structure**

### **A. Governance Structure**

The governance structure is designed to provide for the orderly and effective operation of the public school academy, in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Indicators:

(1) The public school academy demonstrates employment of a site-based cooperative governance structure, placing considerable authority and responsibility into the hands of the public school academy faculty and staff as it relates to the teaching methods and the implementation of the curriculum, and involving parents, the business community and the community at large.

(2) Descriptions of faculty and staff responsibilities, qualifications and certification demonstrate attention to site-based cooperative governance.

### **B. Board of Directors**

The Oakland University Board of Trustees ("University Board") requires that a public school academy meet the following criteria with respect to the method of selection, length of term, and number of members of its board of directors ("Academy Board"):

(1) Method of Selection. Oakland University's Director of Public School Academies and Urban Partnerships ("Director") is authorized to develop and administer an Academy Board selection and appointment process in accord with the criteria below:

a. Initial Academy Board. The University Board shall appoint the initial Academy Board by formal resolution. The Director shall recommend nominees for the initial Academy Board based upon a review of a Public School Academy Board Member Questionnaire, interview, criminal background check, and reference checks. Each nominee shall be available for interview by the University Board or its designee. The University Board may reject any or all initial Academy Board nominees.

b. Subsequent Academy Board Members. The Oakland University Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost ("Provost"), upon recommendation from the Dean of the Oakland University School of Education and Human Services ("Dean"), shall appoint all subsequent Academy Board members. The Director shall recommend nominees to the Dean based upon a review of a Public School Academy Board Member Questionnaire, interview, criminal background check and reference checks. Each nominee shall be available for interview by the Provost or the Provost's designee. The Provost may reject any or all subsequent Academy Board nominees.

c. The Academy Board, by resolution and majority vote, shall nominate its subsequent members, except as provided herein. Nominees shall submit the Public School Academy Board Member Questionnaire for review by the Director. If the Director elects not to recommend any of the Academy Board's nominees for a vacant position on the Academy Board, the Director may nominate and recommend an Academy Board member of the Director's own choosing for the vacant position, or may request additional nominees from the Academy Board.

d. An individual appointed to fill a vacancy created other than by expiration of the term shall be appointed for the unexpired term of that vacant position.

(2) Length of Term. The term of each member of the Academy's Board shall be for a period of three (3) years, except that of the members first appointed, approximately one-third shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years, approximately one-third shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, and approximately one-third shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year. At its organizational meeting, the Academy Board shall designate a term for each of the initial board members appointed by the University Board. All subsequent appointments shall be for three (3) year staggered terms. The terms for each position shall begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> and end on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the pertinent year, except the terms of the initial positions which shall begin upon appointment and end on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the pertinent year.

(3) Number of Directors. The initial number of board member positions on the Academy Board shall be five (5). The number of board member positions shall never be fewer than five (5) or more than nine (9). If the Academy Board fails to attain or maintain its full membership by making appropriate and timely nominations, the Provost, may deem that failure an exigent condition and appoint a replacement.

(4) Qualifications of Members. To the extent possible, the Academy Board shall include (1) a parent or guardian of a child attending the school; and (2) one professional educator, preferably a person with either elementary or secondary school administrative experience. The Academy Board shall not include (1) any member appointed or controlled by another profit or non-profit corporation; (2) employees of the public school academy served by the Academy Board; (3) any director, officer, or employee of a management company that contracts with the public school academy served by the Academy Board; and (4) Oakland University officials or employees. A vacancy may be left on the initial board for a parent or guardian representative.

(5) Oath. All members of the Academy Board shall take and sign the constitutional oath of office, and shall cause a copy of such oath of office to be submitted to the Director. No appointment shall be effective prior to the taking and signing of the oath of office.

(6) Removal of Members. Any Academy Board member may be removed with or without cause by the Provost at any time, or with cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Academy Board.

(7) Tenure. Each Academy Board member shall hold office until that member's replacement, death, resignation, removal or until the expiration of the member's term, whichever occurs first.

(8) Resignation. Academy Board members may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Academy Board. Notice of resignation will be effective upon receipt or at a subsequent time designated in the notice. Any Academy Board member who fails to attend three (3) consecutive Academy Board meetings without prior notification to the Academy Board President, may, at the option of the Academy Board or the Provost, be deemed to have resigned, effective at a time designated in a written notice sent to the resigning Academy Board member. A successor shall be appointed as provided by the method described at B(1)(b).

(9) Board Vacancies. An Academy Board vacancy shall occur because of death, resignation, removal, failure to maintain residency in the State of Michigan, disqualification, enlargement of the Academy Board, or as required by applicable law. Any vacancy shall be filled as provided by the method of selection adopted by the University Board.

(10) Compensation. An Academy Board member shall serve as a volunteer. By resolution of the Academy Board, the Academy Board members may be reimbursed for their reasonable expenses related directly to their duties as an Academy Board member.

(11) Other University Action. The University Board authorizes and directs the Provost to take any other actions associated with the governance of Academy Board members as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the business of Oakland University as authorizing body of public school academies.

(12) Reservation of Rights. The foregoing notwithstanding, the University Board and its designee reserve the right at all times to review, rescind, remove, modify, ratify, or approve any Academy Board member.

(13) Compliance with Law. If at any time a change in applicable law makes illegal any of the requirements, obligations or actions set forth in or contemplated by the foregoing criteria, the affected parties shall comply with applicable law, as such law may be amended from time to time.

C. By-Laws.

A set of by-laws must exist, setting forth the procedures and policies for the effective governance of the public school academy.

D. Administrators.

The head administrator must be an individual who has had three (3) or more years of previous experience as either a teacher or an administrator.

E. Teachers.

Teachers shall be either state certified teachers with the appropriate qualifications to teach the level or subjects they are to be assigned to teach, or Oakland University faculty members. In general, the teaching staff shall be made up of teachers with varying degrees of experience.

F. Paraprofessionals.

Parents and other lay people, including specifically Oakland University education students, may be employed or may volunteer to assist teachers in the instruction of children. In all cases, their activities within the classroom shall be directed and supervised by a certified teacher or Oakland University faculty member.

**Section VIII: Contractual Relationship with Oakland University**

The public school academy enters into a contract with the University on terms and conditions acceptable to the University and in compliance with the School Code of 1976, as amended.

## Attachment B

### PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY APPLICATION SUMMARY

DATE: 6/25/08

**Public School Academy Name:** Four Corners Montessori Academy (FCMA)

**Proposed Location:** Royal Oak, Michigan

**Opening Date:** September 2009

**Existing Status:** None – new application

**Applicant:** Dr. Steffanie Bowles, PhD

**Proposed grades:** Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**FCMA Mission/Vision:** To allow each child to discover his/her learning potential, inborn talents and love of learning by providing him/her with a limitless educational environment. The result will be a FCMA graduate who has learned to respect others and to be respected, who has become a confident learner and who has amassed a body of knowledge that can lead and support the graduate for the rest of his/her life.

**Location Information:** FCMA will be located in Royal Oak in the area between Ten Mile Road and Twelve Mile Road. The FCMA Board of Directors has entered into lease discussions with the owners of three properties within this geographic locale.

**Community Need:** FCMA is named for four adjoining cities in Oakland County: Royal Oak, Ferndale, Berkley and Oak Park, and expects to serve these communities as well as the city of Detroit and other surrounding communities. FCMA will uniquely meet an educational need in Oakland County, based on the following factors:

- There are no public Montessori schools in the area, and only two traditional charter schools, one each in the cities of Ferndale and Oak Park.
- Recent district restructuring in Royal Oak have left no schools open in the southwest end of the city and forced 500 children to relocate to schools in other neighborhoods.
- Although the 2000 census report indicates a declining enrollment, more recent data shows a significant growth in the number of children under the age of five seeking to enroll in kindergarten in the four city area.
- 'Schools of Choice' options, which allow districts to accept students from outside their boundaries, have become more limited as districts face financial challenges.
- It is anticipated that a significant number of homeschooled children will find a Montessori based program appealing because of its developmental nature and individualized instruction.

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**Anticipated Student Population:** FCMA will attract a cross-cultural student body and will be most appealing to parents wishing to continue with Montessori education, parents that are dissatisfied with other educational options and parents who have previously considered or participated in home-schooling. These characteristics are further detailed below.

**A. Parents wishing to continue their child’s Montessori education.**

The Montessori schools in the four-city area offer limited instruction only through age six and do not have a K-8 program. Private Montessori education may be cost prohibitive for families in the targeted population. Other Detroit suburbs have successful Montessori charter schools and waiting lists (e.g. Creative Montessori Academy (Southgate) and American Montessori Academy (Livonia)).

**B. Parents seeking alternative educational choices.**

Parents seeking more intensive learning programs through “School of Choice” options in the targeted area have found barriers because of enrollment limits. The alternative educational model offered in a Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade Montessori school would attract interest because of the proven teaching results of the Montessori method.

**C. Home-school students.**

Parents of home-school students often have an affinity for Montessori education because of its developmental nature and individualized instruction. Research performed by the FCMA applicants, based on 2005 Royal Oak School District figures, shows 1446 school-aged children home-schooled in Royal Oak. A Montessori charter will likely attract a percentage of these home-schooled children whose parents are generally familiar with Montessori education and are more inclined to seek non-traditional options.

**Area Demographics:**

<b>Four Corner School Districts Racial Demographic Percentages (2007)</b>			
<b>District</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Other</b>
Berkley	79.5	17	3.5
Ferndale	38.5	58.4	3.1
Oak Park	7	91	2
Royal Oak	91.7	5.5	2.8

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**Projected Enrollment:**

	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4</b>	<b>YEAR 5</b>
Preschool	16	32	48	48	48
Kindergarten	66	66	66	66	66
First Grade	44	66	66	66	66
Second Grade	22	44	66	66	66
Third Grade	22	44	44	66	66
Fourth Grade		22	44	44	66
Fifth Grade		22	44	44	44
Sixth Grade		22	44	44	44
Seventh Grade			22	44	44
Eighth Grade			22	22	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>554</b>

**Curriculum Plan:** The FCMA will offer a curriculum based on consistent adherence to the 'Michigan Curriculum Framework' requirements. The 'Grade Level Content Expectations' will be linked to the appropriate Montessori equivalents. Reading, writing and math are to be incorporated into applied activities. In addition to the core curriculum, instruction is to be provided in art, music, physical education, health and foreign languages.

**Instructional Strategies:** The Montessori philosophy specifically provides a child-centered, individualized approach to teaching and learning. The instructional design of the Montessori philosophy that supports FCMA's mission and vision includes:

- Individualized, Differentiated Learning
- Mixed-Age Groupings
- Integrated Teaching and Learning

**Financial Information:** FCMA applied for a federal grant administered through the Michigan Department of Education and was one of a select few to receive the full amount available. The grant provides potential new charter schools \$160,000 during the planning phase and \$150,000 in each of the school's first two years of operation. FCMA has also secured a line of credit through their management company to assist with additional expenses related to facility and start-up costs before the school begins to receive their state aid monies.

**School Governance:** FCMA will be governed by a board of five. These members have been active in the development of the plans for this school since its inception. The group enlisted the support from Choice Schools Associates, LLC, in April of 2007.



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Choice Schools Associates, LLC, will serve as FCMA's management company, administering the day to day functions of the school, upon execution of a charter contract. Choice Schools Associates is a dynamic education management company with an outstanding track record in charter school administration and will provide the following services:

- *School Culture*
- *Executive Responsibilities*
- *Instructional Programs*
- *Finance*
- *Community Relations*
- *Legal and Compliance*
- *Human Resources Responsibilities*
- *Accountability*
- *Facilities Management*
- *Information Systems*

Choice Schools Associates currently manages eight other schools in Michigan, including the Creative Montessori Academy in Southgate where students are performing well academically, with MEAP scores that consistently outperform their host district and an 'EdYes! School Report Card' grade of a 'B'.

**Selection Process:** The Oakland University Public School Academy (OUPSA) Office received 35 applications for the open charter. Three applicants were selected to move to Phase II and received more extensive examination and scrutiny. The FCMA application was selected as the applicant having the most potential for success among the finalists, as well as complementing the University's mission. Specifically, FCMA:

- Has a clear mission and vision, which includes providing an educational environment that allows each child to discover their learning potential, inborn talents and love of learning.
- Has a passionate commitment to children and the delivery of educational instruction that is differentiated and individualized.
- Is committed to the research-based Montessori method that has a reputation for high achievement.
- Will serve a diverse student population primarily from Detroit and southeast Oakland County.
- Will implement a strong governing board with a variety of skills and backgrounds.
- Is eager to establish a partnership with Oakland University because of its reputation for hands-on, quality oversight.

FCMA is in an area not currently being widely served by other charter options. Choice Schools Associates, which will manage the FCMA, has a successful track record within the charter school community in providing quality services to the school boards for which they work.

Attachment C



Office of the Dean

School of Education and Human Services  
Rochester, Mi 48309-4494  
Tel: (248) 370-3050 Fax: (248) 370-4202

## MEMORANDUM

May 30, 2008

**To:** Virinder Moudgil  
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

**From:** Mary L. Otto  
Dean *Mary*

**Subject:** Recommendation of Four Corners Montessori Academy

Four Corners Montessori Academy (FCMA) is being recommended to receive a charter created by the open Public School Academy (PSA) slot at Oakland University. Subsequent to receiving 35 Phase I applications, three applicants were moved to Phase II and asked to complete supplemental questions and to participate in an informal interview with members of the PSA staff. The Phase II application process included:

- Curriculum, fiscal, legal and risk review  
The following individuals were internal and external reviewers of the applications: Thomas LeMarbe (Budget & Financial Planning); Margaret Leahy (Manager, Insurance and Risk Contracts); Dr. Carol Swift, Associate Professor, SEHS; Sheryl McLaughlin (Director of Program Development, SEHS); Deborah Rader (Retired Brandon School District Administrator); Betty RiChard (Retired Detroit Public Schools Administrator); Dr. Eleanor White (Retired Rochester Community Schools Administrator); Dr. Michael Williamson, educational consultant for the PSA office from School Quality Solutions.
- Site visits to other schools operated by the Educational Service Providers (ESP) proposed by each applicant
- Visits to a school board meeting of another school operated by the selected ESP
- Formal interviews with the applicant teams

The proposed FCMA has a number of noteworthy characteristics:

- Strong governing board potential with grassroots commitment
- Diverse student population anticipated from metropolitan Detroit area and southeast Oakland County communities.
- Research-based Montessori approach with reputation for high achievement
- Diversifies the University's charter portfolio with alternative curriculum vs. traditional curriculum
- Services a community not widely served by other charter options
- Sense of strong compatibility with other OU charters
- Instructional delivery emphasizing differentiation and individualization
- Quality services for special needs students
- Service learning opportunities for students
- Provisions for operation of a Pre-school program
- Focus on character development and positive values

If granted the charter, FCMA will open September, 2009. The proposed location of the academy is in the Royal Oak area of Oakland County. Choice School Associates (CSA) has been selected by the academy's

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project team as its Educational Service Provider (ESP) and, under the board's authority, will manage many aspects of the academy's operations. CSA currently manages a successful Montessori school in Southgate.

There is consensus among all involved in the decision-making process that Four Corners Montessori Academy has the potential to achieve its goals of excellence under Oakland University's authorization. I request that you approve this recommendation for the presentation to the Oakland University Board of Trustees.

**Attachment D**

**FOUR CORNERS MONTESSORI ACADEMY**

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