

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [X] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Eunice Williams

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Brockman Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2245 Montclair Drive

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Columbia State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29206-1457

County Richland

Telephone (803) 790-6743 Fax (803) 790-6745

Web site/URL http://brockman.richlandone.org/ E-mail eunice.williams@richlandone.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Craig Witherspoon E-mail craig.witherspoon@richlandone.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Richland County School District One Tel. (803) 231-7500

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Ms. Cheryl Harris  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

---

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 28 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 8 High schools
  - 2 K-12 schools
- 47 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	34	33	67
<b>K</b>	23	21	44
<b>1</b>	24	20	44
<b>2</b>	20	26	46
<b>3</b>	21	21	42
<b>4</b>	15	29	44
<b>5</b>	19	21	40
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	156	171	327

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 17 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 74 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 1%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	328
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.012
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
8 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Greek, Spanish, Swedish, Hindi, Telugu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %  
Total number students who qualify: 48
8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
41 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 7 Other Health Impaired
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 32 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes    No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Brockman, guided by the philosophy of Maria Montessori, exists to establish and maintain a child-centered environment that focuses on the development of the whole child.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

All students who live in Richland One are eligible to attend one of the elementary Montessori sites, including Brockman Elementary. Brockman is the only full Montessori school in the district. Brockman does not have an attendance zone, but enrolls students equally from three area schools through three separate random lotteries conducted by the district.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

---

Brockman Elementary School, a public Montessori school of choice, is unique to Richland School District One in Columbia, S.C. As an all-inclusive Montessori school, it provides a hands-on, self-paced method of learning where children are taught in multi-age classes. While the school district is very supportive of public Montessori as a choice, most Montessori offerings in the district are school-within-a-school models. As Richland One's first and only full Montessori school, Brockman serves as the district's leader, as well as a state leader, in public Montessori.

Located in the capital city, in the community of Forest Acres, Brockman benefits from the resources that both a metropolitan and municipality can provide. From the arts, to sports, to major organizations, Brockman also benefits from small businesses, unique local artists and a community residential setting. Historically, Brockman opened its doors in 1960 and, over the years, it has been used in a variety of ways. In 2000, Brockman became a school of choice. From its inception, there has been demand for enrollment, and, as a result, a random lottery process determines enrollment. The need for expansion to meet the growing demand is both a challenge and great opportunity.

Today, Brockman serves 327 children - primary serves ages 3-5, lower elementary, 1st-3rd graders and upper elementary, 4th-5th graders. Brockman's diversity is 26.2%, representing 40 nationalities. Historically, Brockman's level of free/reduced lunch approximates 15-20%. Brockman serves 41 students (12.5%) through special education. A strength is its student mobility rate. At 1.2%, students rarely leave. By the time students are in upper elementary, almost 50% have been state identified as gifted/talented. Brockman's staff are also a great asset. While teachers are required to be state certified, they must also be Montessori trained (77% have a masters and 54% are national board certified). Brockman also benefits from assistants in each classroom. Many are certified teachers who are also Montessori trained. The staff have little to no annual turnover; this has created a culture of support as staff have been able to develop long-term relationships with students and families.

Culturally, Brockman strives to meet individual needs/interests. Inherent in the school's curriculum and philosophy is the understanding that children present unique needs and it is up to the school to respond to these needs, so that each child can reach his/her potential. Brockman's philosophy is that every child can learn and is interested in learning, and that the school must fuel the flame of learning and creativity. As a mastery-based school, Brockman adheres to a growth mindset - learning from mistakes/errors is part of the journey. Students are challenged to demonstrate grit and determination, and to creatively seek solutions to problems. Students are guided to understand that every voice matters and that all benefit from the contributions of others. Twenty-first century skills are embedded throughout the culture as children are guided academically, emotionally, physically, socially and culturally, with the ultimate goal of their becoming creative, empathetic, productive global citizens.

Ranked as a top academically performing school in the state, Brockman staff carefully track individual student growth and progress. Foundational is the integration of learning through the social sciences. Students explore interests while being exposed to learning that is age/level appropriate. The depth/breadth of the curriculum goes beyond state standards and builds in support and interventions as well as extensions for the gifted/talented. As progress is monitored, unique to Brockman is the Response to Intervention (RtI)/Professional Learning Communities (PLC) weekly process, where teachers and leaders focus on students not progressing (RtI), students excelling (needs of the gifted), and teacher development/needs.

Recognized by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Brockman is a 2015/16 Gold Level school, one of fourteen schools identified nationally. We embrace the brain/body connection that research highlights necessary for whole child growth. Brockman is also recognized by the S.C. DHEC as an Open Use School and is an awardee of the national Let's Move/Active Schools Campaign.

Socially and emotionally, our culture reminds students of their role in their world through a focus on self-responsibility and responsibility toward others. Through our peace education curriculum, school-wide events, character education program and discipline model, students are taught conflict resolution skills, self-

control, and responsibility. As a result, Brockman has minimal lost instructional time for behavior and no lost time due to suspensions, leading to higher levels of student engagement.

Brockman's culture is strengthened through a strong partnership between school, home, and community. With student benefit always in mind, the stakeholders are engaged through our Parent Teacher Organization, Fine Arts Boosters, and School Improvement Council. Each group provides opportunities for collaboration, communication and support for the school's mission. Each has representatives that share across groups as well as members that meet monthly with school leadership. Such sharing and transparency provide support for student growth through thoughtful planning of activities/events, fundraising, parent education, and school-wide events.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

---

### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Brockman implements a comprehensive/interdisciplinary curriculum based on Montessori and state standards. The curriculum engages students in lessons/activities that address core subjects of English/Language Arts, mathematics/geometry, science, geography/history including practical life, sensorial, cosmic studies, peace education and service learning as major components of Montessori. Civic responsibility (advocacy/action) is stressed, with students learning to be “upstanders,” not bystanders. Students participate in mock elections, create origami whales and write letters to protest whale hunting, collect winter coats for local distribution, knit caps for children in chemotherapy for the Ronald McDonald House, assemble care kits for a veterans’ hospital, and raise funds for borehole wells in the Azawak desert region.

Students begin the Montessori curriculum at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level and continue through elementary, creating foundational skills through lessons in all subject areas. State standards/indicators are embedded within the Montessori curriculum. The pre-k/kindergarten (primary) Montessori curriculum helps undergird future success with its emphasis on personal development, focused attention, and pro-social behavior, supporting the growth of executive function, self-regulation, and collaboration skills. Students at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level learn complex tasks related to reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as care of self and of the environment, by breaking tasks down into a series of simpler parts and using concrete materials as scaffolding to develop abstract understanding. The multi-age grouping offers opportunities to observe/use imitation as a tool for learning in a prepared environment.

As the core/other curricular areas are discussed below, the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) curriculum is included as the starting point for the student’s academic/child development journey.

In English language arts, reading/writing involves instruction through a “whole language” approach (phonetic, thematic and integrated). Students develop reading/writing skills to gain understanding of phonics/comprehension through visualization and finding the meaning of texts through all genres and real world materials for diverse purposes with the major goal of developing a love of reading. The curriculum involves reading literary, informational and instructional texts for communication, critical thinking, researching, and problem solving. At the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level, students discover that letters have a phonetic sound and when sounds are put together, words are formed; words put together create sentences that provide the basis for written communication. Through these foundational experiences, students are exposed daily to vocabulary, environmental labeling, hearing/reading stories and communication skill development. The lessons/activities at the elementary levels involve exposure to the historical context of language through impressionistic stories and timelines of language both written and spoken, literature, and the background of different genres. In reading and language arts, students develop understanding of the function of words, grammar and syntax, and the context of why, how and where language comes from and its purpose. Students enhance comprehension skills through opportunities to utilize interdisciplinary texts, research topics of personal interest, analyze/synthesize texts and incorporate technology for communication.

The study of mathematics begins in pre-k/kindergarten (primary) and occurs through concrete representations of abstract concepts and active manipulation of specialized materials and repetition. The decimal system of units to thousands begins the exposure of counting, quantity to symbol, and place value guides the foundational understanding of operations, fractions, decimals, algebraic expressions and exposure of concepts of squaring and cubing before the student completes elementary school. The Great Lesson, “The History of Mathematics” provides an understanding of the origin of math. Students build upon their experiences by applying their conception of statistics, measurement and problem solving. Geometry experiences lead toward spatial relationships, and plane figures/solids add to the understanding of area and volume. Application of concepts become evident in real-life situations engaging in calculations, memorization of facts/formulas and more advanced studies, building on expectations of the Montessori curriculum and the state standards for mathematics.

The science curriculum, beginning at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level, involves the foundation of zoology and botany, leading into biology, earth science, astronomy, geology, chemistry and physics, creating points of context for physical laws and how life exists. The sequence of lessons builds on the study of the universe, introduction of life forms, and the scientific processes of observing, collecting, classifying, analyzing data and conducting experiments. The curriculum develops interest/exposure to the natural world. Ecological studies provide an understanding of the interrelatedness of life. The Montessori curriculum's sequence of lessons, with the state-adopted science kits and digital textbook (3rd-5th grade) extend exposure of content beyond grade level expectations, providing students opportunities to explore interests beyond the standards.

Social studies at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level involves awareness of the geographical, physical, cultural, and ecological components of the world and the interconnectedness of the land to people. Students gain a historical context of the universe and how the world began with early humans and ancient civilizations. This foundation leads to the personal exploration of state history in third grade and the presentation of U.S. History based on the 4th and 5th grade state standards in Social Studies.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

As an arts infused school, fine arts are integrated into the curriculum and a weekly related arts schedule provides students from 3K-5th grade the opportunity to experience art, dance and music. Students also participate through artists-in-residence with drama, creative writing and poetry. The purpose of these disciplines through the Montessori curriculum and the state's visual/performing arts standards is to develop creativity through strengthening interest/abilities in multiple ways. Students demonstrate mastery of core subjects through artistic expression and arts integration. Through a historical context, students are exposed to artistic influences of all art forms throughout past and present world cultures. As an additional "artistic" experience, upper elementary students are also being provided a "historian-in-residence" experience this year as university experts provide an African-American historical study which will bring African-American history to life, well beyond state required expectations.

The purpose of our physical education program is to provide students with skills, knowledge, confidence, and attitudes necessary for a lifetime of good health and participation in physical activity. The Montessori curriculum and the state physical education standards emphasize movement and affective development of specific skills though throwing, catching, kicking, and batting; fitness; gymnastics and dance; and net/wall games and invasion games. Students participate in P.E. twice a week with learning focused on the five components of health-related physical fitness.

In foreign language, there is a cultural/linguistic focus concerning the local/global contributions of the Spanish culture. Students from 3K-5th grades are exposed to cultural celebrations, traditional/modern songs and stories, and information about specific Spanish speaking countries. The linguistic focus involves the development of listening and speaking. The goals of the standards involve following directions, building vocabulary, cultural celebration, and geography/weather information. Through the curriculum and experiences twice a week for 25 minutes, students develop proficiency in Spanish communication and cultural understanding.

The focus of technology provides the usage of devices as a resource for creative expression, a source of communication, access to educational sites for audio and visual reinforcement of skills, and as a tool for research. At the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level, students experience the nomenclature of the computer and practice using a mouse. The elementary goals include keyboarding and utilizing software tools with opportunities for collaborating with peers conceptually, systematically and operationally, based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Students become digital citizens through access to district-issued laptops for 3rd-5th grades, computer access in a lab, desktop computers, and the availability of a Smartboard and other appropriate tech tools in each classroom.

Practical life activities at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level are developmental in building the ability to focus, to build independence, organization, coordination, large/fine motor skills, cultural awareness, and

preparation for reading/writing. The practical life lessons allow students to care about the environment, self and other beings through milestone Montessori activities involving spooning/transferring, sweeping, folding, buttoning, food preparation, hand washing, self-introduction, table scrubbing, pouring, and pet/plant care. These beginning experiences, in coordination with physical and quiet activities, develop the ability to organize, plan activities with purposeful movement to accomplish daily life activities and extend service to others.

The sensorial materials and lessons at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level guide the brain towards categorization and organization through the senses. The goals of these activities are toward observing, comparing, making judgments, reasoning, and decision-making.

Beginning at the pre-k/kindergarten (primary) level, Brockman's guidance program emphasizes the responsibilities of mankind toward personal/social responsibility. The curriculum promotes healthy social, emotional peacekeeping, and multicultural awareness and acceptance. Students, along with classrooms processes and school-wide behavioral expectations, build competency in character/peace education, respect for oneself/others, career awareness, acknowledgment of personal boundaries, communication skills and personal accountability in decision-making, relationship building, and work habits, mindfulness, and a growth mindset.

The Montessori Great Lessons present the interconnectedness of living/non-living things. This holistic approach creates a "big picture" and framework for studies in all curriculum areas through the following oral impressionistic stories: Story of the Universe, The Coming of Life, The Coming of Humans, The Story of Writing and The Story of Numbers. The stories are presented each year of the elementary experience. Students acquire knowledge through these holistic, comprehensive and purposeful experiences.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Utilizing the Montessori Method, students at all levels are provided individualized instruction with individualized tracking of mastery of skills/content. As a non-graded model, students' progress through a Montessori learning continuum that spirals/builds in increasing difficulty and challenge. Students utilize hands-on materials that demonstrates an abstract concept concretely during uninterrupted work periods. Lesson presentations normally occur with a child individually or in a small group to model the activity and to provide a framework of guided work choices.

Through multi-graded classrooms, students are able to move at their own pace and each are provided the supports needed. The instructional practices involve self-directed discovery through activity. Students collaborate with peers through project-based experiences, dialogue on shared topics, extension work and literature groupings. The teacher prepares the classroom with the materials, resources and diverse types of work spaces to accommodate each child's needs. Students are encouraged to demonstrate learning through lesson completion and through incorporating technology, arts integration and higher level thinking skills.

The most important intervention is the Montessorian concept of "following the child." This involves the teacher/assistant observing and responding to needs as demonstrated by the student. This process is part of our teachers' daily routine as they regularly record observations concerning instruction, practice, needs, and mastery. This data-gathering defines the student's next step along their individualized learning continuum and may define further supports needed socially, emotionally and behaviorally.

Tiered intervention beyond the classroom is determined through the PLC/RtI process. Through weekly PLC/RtI team meetings, teachers reflect/share student needs. New interventions, the progress of current interventions and parent input provide guidance to make sure students are progressing. The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) provides the major interventional support for struggling readers. A short-term intervention, it provides daily, small-group instruction, which supplements classroom literacy teaching through a reading interventionist, guided by the school's reading coach. Through the RtI process, referrals for additional testing as well as access to special education is made available for students still not progressing. Resource, speech, and additional special education support is available as specific needs are identified.

Brockman also utilizes several additional interventions/resources. After-school tutoring (conducted by the school's teachers) provides students with additional individual and small group support beyond the classroom. Resources like Moby Max and ALEKS are adaptive technological tools that provides support either during the school day or in tutoring and can serve the struggling as well as the gifted student. Moby Max provides support in math, ELA, science and social studies, and ALEKS for math. Both programs can be accessed at home or over the summer.

The school's Peace Builders Center (PBC) is also interventional. The PBC is a designated space where children can work on lessons with a certified teacher, and take a moment, calm themselves, and work out a problem in a peaceful way (replacing in-school suspension). Guidance/Play Therapy provide opportunities for individualized/small group, proactive/preventative intervention for children experiencing social/emotional challenges. Mindfulness and a growth mindset are key school-wide focus areas. Both present skills that students can be taught in the classroom and in the PBC as whole-child opportunities to guide student growth.

At Brockman, students at all levels are continuously assessed through teacher observation. Teachers choose the appropriate Montessori materials and instruction for each child based on their level/ability. In the preparation of the environment, the selection of specific materials with a built in control-of-error, appropriate for the development of each child, is authentic Montessori practice. In addition to observation, daily work journals, conferring with students about their work and planning lessons when needed creates a shared sense of accountability/responsibility for learning that eventually will fully reside with the student.

As a public Montessori school, our school district requires use of the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment as a universal screener through running records, fluency rubrics and comprehension checks and STAR for math and ELA to progress monitor. Additionally, our state utilizes myIGDIS (4K) and DRA2 (5K) for reading readiness, SC READY(3rd-5th) & SCPASS (4th-5th) towards accountability of meeting proficiency of the South Carolina College and Career Standards. At the district level, students are state-identified for Gifted and Talented based on the CogAT for aptitude, IOWA for achievement and the Performance Task as evidence of learning.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Brockman is a place where all children and adults matter and their unique journeys are celebrated. It embodies a distinctive culture of individual choice inextricably linked to personal responsibility, community service, and the celebration of peace. Fully differentiated multi-age classrooms allow students to joyfully/productively engage in learning activities throughout the day, aided by the observations, guidance, and support of classroom adults. Beyond the classroom, all staff members, regardless of role, embrace the school’s vision of “a vibrant learning community in which each child and adult feels respected and valued.”

As a philosophically focused curriculum, Montessori communicates the limitless possibilities for children within a prepared environment. The culture of the school is in sync with this, promoting intellectual growth unrestricted by mandated standards, as well as diversity in creative expression, such as Odyssey of the Mind experiences, drama, dance, video creation, photography, and other visual arts. Children are consistently involved with decision making that directly affect them.

Emotional safety is a priority at Brockman. In addition to direct instruction and modeling in conflict resolution, teachers and staff work closely across grade levels to establish a strong network of support. Regular Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings focus on student social/emotional as well as to academic concerns. Social and emotional skill development is facilitated by classroom environments with a family-like feel, as well as Friendship Groups, disability awareness programs, and embedded multicultural appreciation experiences. Community service is the norm, from freely given peer help in classrooms, to Friendly Helpers who support classes of younger students, to school-wide enthusiastic participation in the district’s Martin Luther King annual food drive.

Students are expected to coexist peacefully with all members of their community and are given instruction and encouragement in peace education and mindfulness. Through guidance lessons using the MindUP and Mindful Life curricula, students learn how to be emotionally and socially responsible through self-regulation. The Peace Builders Center provides additional assistance for students who need to work through specific personal and interpersonal challenges.

This respect for the individual extends to the teaching staff. Teachers feel supported through open door access to site-based administration, as well as leadership observations designed to encourage growth. Professional development (PD) often emerges from teacher-solicited input. Weekly Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings unite adults around the best interests of children. Faculty meetings are places where topics of interest and concern are discussed within guidelines of mutual respect.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Successful schools partner with students, families, and the larger community. A member of the National Network of Partnership Schools, Brockman develops an annual action plan with strategies to meet school, family, and community goals targeting student success.

Extensive volunteer training supports positive student outcomes. Parent/grandparent volunteers assist at-risk students, as do University of South Carolina (USC) education majors and softball team members. A yearly breakfast celebrates volunteers.

Healthy students are successful students. Brockman stakeholders have committed to making healthy lifestyle choices for optimum outcomes. In 2016, the school was a national Gold Award Winner (Alliance for a Healthier Generation) for supporting healthy choices by students, staff, and families.

Brockman teachers encourage parents to observe students. The popular “Learning at the Hands of Your Child” event allows children to teach parents classroom lessons. Teachers actively communicate with

parents about student celebrations/struggles. Through the PLC/RtI process, teachers link with families to discuss pathways to student success. Students with challenges (academic or social/emotional) needing further support are referred to Brockman's Intervention Team. Parents converse often with teachers before Intervention Teams meet to brainstorm additional strategies. Brockman's summer program to reduce "summer slide" in at-risk students and to ease student transitions between grade levels is successful due to this family engagement.

Brockman's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and Fine Arts Booster (FAB) Club encourage parents and corporate sponsors to take both leadership and fundraising roles. Funds raised promote academic achievement by providing visual/creative arts classes; purchasing equipment/supplies to support instruction; and underwriting Montessori conference attendance costs for teachers' professional development.

A powerful community connection/expression of Brockman's core values is the school's annual International Day of Peace celebration with Peace Dove Awards recognizing outstanding community peacekeepers. Recent Peace Dove recipients have included students (now senior adults) key to district desegregation in 1964; and the founder of a local academy designed to break the cycle of generational poverty. In 2016, Brockman spearheaded a district-wide peace celebration and donated a peace pole for the district administration grounds.

The School Improvement Council (SIC), an advisory group of staff, parents, and community members, develops and monitors school improvement/innovation consistent with Brockman's mission. It generates the annual progress report on goals met. Members take providing feedback/input seriously; they understand that their knowledge, wisdom, and experience strengthen Brockman. The SIC helped launch the district Montessori middle school and is now working with RCSD1 to provide a Montessori high school option.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Quality professional development (PD) is vital for educator growth and student achievement. PD experiences at Brockman are about success for all learners and focus on two areas: 1) student need as indicated by summative test and formative observational data; and 2) teacher and administrator personal development that has a direct positive impact on learning, what Montessori saw as the inner work of the adult.

There is a dynamic feedback loop at Brockman in the PD areas above. Concerning student achievement, in reviewing state standards assessment data, teachers and administrators have noted challenges related to math problem solving, applying test-taking strategies effectively, and elaboration in writing. Classroom formative observational data confirms these student needs.

In response to these observations, PD has taken the form of district-offered sessions on using the Empowering Writers curriculum and site-based collaborative studies of texts like 12 Strategies for Understanding Word Problems. Teachers have also explored tools such as Problem of the Month tasks made available through the Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative to help students become confident and effective problem solvers in their daily lives through practice with selecting, using, and explaining appropriate problem solving strategies. Student progress in topics addressed by professional development is closely monitored through regular PLC and RtI meetings.

Teacher and administrator personal development is also focused on student outcomes. As teachers have expressed interest in topics such as mindfulness to help students with self-regulation and focus, administration has been greatly supportive, offering opportunities for staff members with expertise to share with colleagues, and underwriting the cost for Mindful Life staff to provide research-based instruction, with extensive materials for use in the classroom. This year, after much discussion about non-negotiables of authentic Montessori practice, PD components related to maintaining the prepared environment and heightening observation skills have been implemented, using Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) video tools and input from Montessori consultants. Freeing up time for level teams to address environmental preparation issues during the school day has been a welcome gift to teachers. Common

planning time for levels also translates into regular opportunities for team members to collaborate on strategies and tools for implementation of PD topics.

The district is also supportive of the unique PD needs of Montessori teachers. Montessori experts have been brought in to provide philosophical support and renewal experiences to Montessori teachers throughout the district, and regular PD offered on the district level now consistently includes Montessori-specific components.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The holistic philosophy undergirding Montessori classroom practice at Brockman is reflected in a comprehensive network of leadership support, promoting student academic and social/emotional success. At the same time, it fosters ongoing professional/personal growth for faculty/staff. This is made possible through the integrated working of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), the Brockman Leadership Team (BLT), the principal and administrative team, the School Improvement Council (SIC), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and the Fine Arts Booster Club (FAB).

At Brockman, adults work together tirelessly to ensure success for all students. Weekly PLC meetings within levels are held to address student-centered concerns indicated by observational and quantitative data. These data, in turn, inform regular Response to Intervention (RtI) conversations among level teachers, support staff, and the administrative team. In RtI, academic needs/challenges of students including those identified as gifted are shared, along with observations of students' counterproductive behaviors. Adults brainstorm how to increase student engagement, scaffold instruction for success, and think outside the box with interventions that mesh with observed student interests, strengths, and affinities. Using resources such as Brockman's Peace Builders' Center, they also strategize ways to facilitate students' connections between personal choice and responsibility.

In addition, whole school PLC and Montessori Action Plan (MAP) meetings ensure that adults stay focused on core values/practices of Montessori by targeting key areas for continued exploration/reflection. These community meetings are vehicles for renewed commitment to the philosophical underpinnings of practice. A recent example is a year-long focus on the practice of mindfulness to reduce the damaging effect of stress on executive function in students and adults. Classified staff, vital to the program's effectiveness, address their unique needs and discuss productive ways to support school success in gatherings facilitated by their own representatives.

Brockman staff believe that students, being unique, also experience success through a variety of creative avenues. This is heavily supported by FAB through the underwriting of weekly dance instruction, resident artist costs, and many creative after school offerings.

The PTO is highly responsive to the faculty's material/professional development needs, supporting student instructional success by providing annual funds for classroom materials and teacher attendance at Montessori conferences.

The SIC, a powerful advocate for the Montessori program at Brockman, ensures communication among representatives of faculty/staff, parents, community members, PTO, and FAB. Monthly meetings are opportunities for stakeholders to share concerns and ideas related to the school community, and brainstorm ways to meet observed and projected needs.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

The Response to Intervention/Professional Learning Communities (RtI/PLC) combined process is one that contributes to our success. RtI involves academic interventions designed to provide assistance to students performing below grade level. Our PLC model integrates/links with RtI. As a school, we hold ourselves accountable for all students, from those who are low-performing, to those identified as gifted, as well as every child in-between. This approach allows us to collegially support our staff/families as we work to support every child. This model is integrated within the school's instructional approach where learning is personalized, as we focus on the development of the whole child - physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

The RtI/PLC team is comprised of administrators, curriculum resource teacher, psychologist, teachers, guidance counselor, and reading coach. Parents are also important team members. RtI/PLC meetings are scheduled weekly during common planning with each level, with parents included when needed. The weekly meetings focus on students below level, gifted students, reading/level needs across the continuum, and the professional needs of the teachers, all driven by the data/information available. Parents are invited if academic growth is not occurring or additional information is needed, or if there are behavioral, physical, social or emotional concerns.

Brockman's RtI/PLC process is rooted in Montessori and the district's universal screenings which consist of assessments conducted with all students in PreK-5th. Screenings are administered three times a year - fall, winter, and spring.

Data from screenings, along with formative data/teacher observations, is analyzed and tiered instruction is planned. Tier 1 instruction is interventions facilitated by the teacher during uninterrupted work time for all students, based on individual student achievement (individual work plans); Tier 2 provides more intensive interventions for those not responsive to Tier 1; and Tier 3 is intensive interventions for students with extreme need (further individualized instruction in and out of the classroom). Every student is included, regardless of low, middle or high levels of performance.

Behavioral, social and emotional data is also included, as it relates to student performance/growth. This data may be teacher/staff anecdotal data, information about further/other testing, or parent information (the goal is to create the most detailed picture possible of the student's whole child needs/strengths).

Winter 2017 screening data demonstrate proficiency/excellence. This data shows the results of team efforts to support the growth of the whole child – we believe the academic gains are the result of needs being met in all areas of growth.