

# Robert Frost Public Charter School Charter

## Integrating Montessori and Project-Based Learning

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- *Amendment to add grades 9-12 approved by NH DOE Board - March 2022*
- *Amendment to remove World Language requirement for HS graduation approved by the NHED Board – February 2025.*

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## An Introduction

The Robert Frost Public Charter School application is for amendment of a state-issued charter for grades K-8 to include grades 9-12, providing an alternative approach for a high-quality public education for the families of Carroll County and surrounding areas. The current student enrollment for 2021-2022 is 43 students, our charter allows 152 students, our current facility can accommodate 100. K-12 students will be educated within one facility located in Conway, NH. The facility provides a centralized and easy accessible location for families, staff and special educators. RFPCS was founded to deliver a powerful integration of Montessori (an individualized approach to skill acquisition and personal growth) and project-based learning (real world, collaborative experiences for the application of those skills). The mixed-age groupings and an approach to teaching centered on the child, rather than the teacher, enables our students to move at their own pace, supporting children of all abilities and backgrounds to be successful.

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* brought together Montessori and Project-Based Learning, two powerful approaches to education. This unique model motivates students by engaging them in their own learning, from basic skill acquisition and mastery on through to the real-world application of those skills. The Montessori experience works to develop academic, organizational and personal skills and when those skills are then tested, explored, broadened and applied in the context of a real-world collaborative project, the educational experience is enhanced, and student knowledge and understanding is broadened. Students' respect for one another is deepened. Their communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills are developed. Students learn to reflect on their experiences, successes and challenges.

The Robert Frost Public Charter school operation has matured as an organization and managed to successfully navigate the early growing pains of a new school. RFPCS's future is bright and we expect the future to provide many opportunities to positively impact students and families within our community. Through continuously educating students from kindergarten through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the past nine school years, our school community has recognized the value in this alternative form of education and have requested that the school look to include a high school option for students who have thrived in the RFPCS environment.

RFPCS is supported by our local school community and by the greater community at large. The school is a strong and active member of the community at the local, state and regional level. We regularly partner and collaborate with local businesses, colleges and universities, local educators for professional development, and non-profits that bring specialized services to our students. We were invited and participated in the strategic planning for the local school district (SAU9) and continue to work closely with district personnel to provide special education services to RFPCS students that require them. Our staff and students are active in many local non-profit organizations as volunteers and participants in their programming. We partner with many organizations to bring programming, experience and curriculum expertise to our students and staff. Many of these collaborations provide opportunities to our students for their service projects. Here are a few of the ongoing relationships that bring value to our school community:

Mount Washington Valley Economic Council  
UNH Collaborative Extension  
MWV Science Fair  
MWV Chamber of Commerce  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
Kiwanis  
Lions Club  
Rotary  
Garden Club  
Mountain Top Music  
NASA Ambassadors  
NH Astronomical Society  
The Conway Public Library  
Tin Mountain  
Conway Humane Society

RFPCS has experienced many successes and while we face challenges that are not unlike other New Hampshire Public Schools & Public Charter Schools we continue to experience great success delivering the school's charter. Our dedicated team of teachers, administrators, trustees and parents build on every success and tirelessly work towards providing this free public education option to Carrol County and beyond. Successful achievements for our organization include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> K-8 Public Charter School to open north of Concord
- First Public Montessori School north of Concord.
- Completed successful Audits for 9 years of operation with the highest Developed a curriculum map linking Montessori and Common Core
- Developed a Student Information System that aligns with Montessori Scope and Sequence and the Common Core Curriculum
- Established Operational Policies
- Discharged students from IEPs based on the learning environment provided
- Student academic achievement surpass expectations

Public Schools, including the Robert Frost Public Charter School, cannot and will not charge tuition to New Hampshire residents. While a per-pupil allotment provided by the state will provide a basic, consistent level of funding, this sum is unlikely to completely cover the costs, as has been the experience of many of our state's existing public charter schools.

From the initial planning stage of this project, we have understood the significant need for building a sustainability and development plan that includes fundraising large and small, and the importance of crafting an effort that garners support from families, community members and businesses. We seek support from local and national foundations to assist with operating costs and have experienced success in this area.

## A: EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* creates life-long learners by providing an intellectually rich and challenging experience delivered through the combination of the Montessori tradition and Project-Based Learning. In a safe and peaceful setting, dedicated educators foster students' individuality, creativity and critical-thinking skills to fully prepare them for future scholastic, civic and personal success.

### Educational Philosophy

- Address the needs of the “whole child”- emotional, social, cognitive, physical and sensory
- Respect developmental stages of childhood and adolescence.
- Create mixed-age classrooms where peer-to-peer teaching and modeling is fully supported to enable the sharing of experience and knowledge, as well as the social and academic development of our students
- Provide materials and lessons that appeal to a variety of learning styles - kinesthetic, visual, tactile, social, auditory
- Allow students to take as much time as they need to master a skill and move on to the next skill when they are ready.
- Develop individual work plans, with student/teacher collaboration, that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Promote executive skills including organizational, self-control, adaptability, initiative, memory, planning, self-monitoring.
- Promote experiences where students create and develop real-world projects that enable them to apply new skills across content areas and develop leadership skills.
- Use Project-Based collaboration to build a cohesive classroom environment where students are valued for their strengths and abilities.
- Create a classroom environment where students with special needs are able to participate fully and are valued by their peers for their abilities.
- Provide an academic experience above and beyond the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum*, delivered through the *Montessori Scope and Sequence* and community-based project learning experience.

### Key Goals and Expected Outcomes

- **High Academic Achievement and Standards** will be established through the use and development of a curriculum that will integrate the *NH Core Curriculum* and the *Montessori Scope and Sequence*. With an emphasis on the mastery of materials across all areas of academic focus, our students will be expected to achieve or surpass their personal learning plans or stated Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals for the year. Faculty will utilize a variety of assessment methods in order to continually measure student growth, and plan

appropriately for students' individualized learning plans. These will include individual portfolios and Montessori-based progress measures in addition to state mandated standardized testing. The complete academic program will foster the development of a collaborative learning community and promote responsible global citizenship; a peaceful approach to conflict; and the integration of curriculum partners from the greater community.

- **Personal Growth and Development** will flourish alongside academics through the Montessori curricula, with its emphasis on social responsibility, combined with carefully designed collaborative projects that highlight the individual skills and personal knowledge of our students to develop self-esteem, leadership and interpersonal skills. Traditional and non-traditional learners alike will become engaged and empowered in this safe and peaceful environment.
- **Student-centered approach to instruction** will define every aspect of the School. Our classrooms will be populated by Montessori-trained teachers who will utilize the Montessori approach to individualized instruction to meet each individual student's academic, social and emotional needs and expectations. Every student will develop his or her own learning plan with the support of a teacher and will have the opportunity to experience success on a daily basis. Project-based learning experiences will also be developed based on student interest and community needs with older students taking on a significant role in the development of projects as well as their execution.
- **Percentage of children referred for special education will be reduced** in our school environment where all children have individual learning plans and the flexibility to choose when and how to engage in the academic elements that make up their learning plan.
- **Family Commitment** to the School's Mission and success will be a core element of building and maintaining our school community. Parents and Guardians will be integrated into the School's function, thereby fostering a connection to the education and social development of their children and to the success of the School.
- **Respect** will develop and flourish through the Montessori practice of grace and courtesy among students, faculty and families.
- **Celebration of Diversity** will ensure that students, families and faculty of all means, abilities and backgrounds will be valued for the unique skills, abilities and the perspectives they bring.
- **Service-Learning Opportunities through community-based and school based projects** for students of all ages will ensure a connection to school community and the greater community and the development of responsible and engaged citizens.



## **B: GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PLAN**

### **Board of Trustees**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School's* Board of Trustees will be the guardian of the school's Mission and will work to establish the School, monitor its health and viability, advocate for the School and its students whenever possible, and assess, with regularity the Mission's relevance and vitality. The seven to nine-member Board of Trustees will govern the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* with statutory responsibilities pursuant to RSA 194-B: 5 for "general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school."

Trustees will represent the diversity of stakeholders with a personal interest in the School's success, including school families, area colleges, business leaders and community members. Selection will be based on personal and professional background as well as a commitment to the School's Mission, support and sustainability. The Board of Trustees will be comprised of a minimum of seven (7) and maximum of nine (9) members. A minimum of two (2) and maximum of four (4) people will represent families of children attending the School; a minimum of three (3) and maximum of seven (7) Trustee positions will be for business community members, local community members, and/or educational or philanthropic sponsors. The School Administrator (HOS) will be an ex officio board member. The School Administrator (HOS) will attend meetings and have a voice but will not have a vote or attend executive sessions.

The Board of Trustees may establish other ex officio board members and/or advisors who will be non-voting. The Board reserves the right to alter the makeup of its governing body as per the School's needs.

The Board will have officers including: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Role descriptions for Board officers will be developed by the Board and approved as part of its operational guidelines. Governing policies and bylaws, including policies that establish subcommittees and standing committees of the Board will also be established by the Board.

The Board will hire and oversee the school staff with Board Officers working most directly with the School Administrator. The School Administrator will be empowered to direct and implement many operational decisions (e.g. day-to-day issues that arise in matters relating personnel, and daily school business and organization). Curriculum matters, including the coordination of special education services for students, will be addressed first by the School Administrator (*see section J*). The School Administrator will always be responsible to the Board, in ways clearly defined. Protocols for communication and reporting will be established to ensure a successful and productive relationship between the School Administrator and the Board.

It is expected that the roles reserved for the Board will include, at a minimum:

- Hiring and firing of the School Administrator and staff
- Approval and oversight of annual budget and fund-raising programs
- Setting policy (e.g. code of ethics, personnel manual, etc.)
- Appointment of Board advisory members
- Delineation of educational priorities in collaboration with the Learning Coordinator and teachers
- Oversight for the School's growth plan
- Setting professional salary and compensation program
- Reviewing and approving significant contracts (e.g., for facilities and benefit programs)
- Matters for which the board serves as a hearing body for action or appeals
- Oversight of major appeals
- Any other matters prescribed in statute or rule.

The Board of Trustees will meet monthly during the school year for strategic planning, to review and discuss School operations, and take action as per its governance functions. The Officers may be called upon to meet more frequently. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of Board members present at each meeting. "Present" will apply not only to those physically present but also to those who hear and participate through alternative means (e.g. conference call, video, etc.). The Board will obtain contracted services to assist in its work, as needed (e.g. consultants/experts in governance, curriculum development, setting of benchmarks, development and board training).

The following principles of good practice for the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* are based on guidelines from the National Association of Independent Schools. The Board and the School Administrator will work in partnership to adhere to these principles.

1. The Board shall oversee the *Robert Frost Public Charter School's* Mission and objectives.
2. The Board shall review and maintain bylaws, and establish policies and plans consistent with the Mission.
3. The Board shall be accountable for the financial well-being of the School, including capital assets, operating budgets, fund-raising, and endowments.
4. The Board shall select and support the School Administrator and other staff.
5. The Board, or a committee of the Board, shall conduct a written annual evaluation of the performance of the School Administrator and work with the School Administrator to establish goals for the following year.
6. The Board shall evaluate itself annually and establish goals for the following year.
7. The Board shall keep full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies.
8. The Board shall work to ensure that all of its members are actively involved in the work of the Board and its committees.
9. The composition of the Board shall reflect a balance of expertise and perspectives needed to achieve the Mission of the School.
10. The Board shall develop itself through ongoing education, new trustee orientation and leadership succession planning.
11. The Board shall assure compliance with applicable laws and regulations and minimize

exposure to legal action.

## **C: METHODS BY WHICH TRUSTEES AND THEIR TERMS ARE DETERMINED**

*The Robert Frost Public Charter School Board of Trustees* is established to govern and support the mission and vision of the Robert Frost Public Charter School in Conway, NH. The goal in selecting Trustees is finding members who support the Founders' vision and have a commitment to the School's Mission and goals as defined in the School's Charter. Trustees will be recruited based on their professional expertise, including educational, financial and governance experience to the Board of Trustees of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*. Appointment of Trustees will require approval by a majority vote of the Trustees.

Trustees of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will have terms of three (3) years. The Board will have staggered term completion to facilitate transition. Terms can be renewed by nomination and majority vote of the Board.

Trustees of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will select and appoint future Trustees and vote on policies for Board governance and filling vacancies. For purposes of conducting business, the Board will be subject to New Hampshire Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees who must be physically present or participating through video or voice communication systems. Records and minutes of meetings will be kept in accordance with statutory guidelines. Board members are expected to regularly attend board meetings. The Board will consider regular participation to be crucial in order to ensure success of the Board's effort and the School overall. Board members who miss 50% or more of meetings may be replaced.

Openings on the Board will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Board, keeping in mind the various stakeholder positions to be filled and a desire for diverse and balanced perspectives. Board members elected to fill out the term of a Board member will have a term that completes the remainder of the prior trustee's term.

## **D: GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES TO BE USED, OR POTENTIAL LOCATION IF SUCH INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE**

Robert Frost Public Charter School currently utilizes modified church space at 110 Main Street, Conway, NH. The space supports all students K-8. The space includes 5 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, administrator office, special education service room and a large playground.

The Board of Trustees is actively searching for a larger space to lease or purchase.

## **E: MAXIMUM NUMBER, GRADES OR AGE LEVELS AND, AS APPLICABLE, OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PUPILS TO BE SERVED**

*Robert Frost Public Charter School* currently serves 49 students with the potential for supporting approximately 152 students K-12. The School serves elementary-age and high school age students in grades K-12 in a mixed-age classroom setting. Class configurations include Kindergarten, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12 classrooms as needed.

Robert Frost Public Charter School introduced kindergarten to establish *Robert Frost Public Charter School* as a complete elementary school, in keeping with the state's standard for kindergarten to be fully incorporated into the public school system. We encourage applications across all grades. Admission is determined by available space. When the number of potential students exceed the available spots; a blind, lottery is conducted to determine who will be invited to enroll. (*Also see Admission Procedures*)

### **The Montessori and Project-based Learning Approach: Building the School Community**

The Montessori pedagogy is significantly different from that of a traditional classroom, in part because it is a student self-directed environment, and in part because the carefully designed materials that students use to explore concepts are sequential, building upon a student's past experiences with these Montessori-specific materials. Therefore, the method of ramping up a Montessori school is slightly more complicated than a ramp-up program for a more traditional approach. Montessori experts agree that it can be challenging for most children beyond 2nd or 3rd grade to enter into the tradition if they have not had previous exposure.

Our School began by filling the lower elementary classrooms in order to build a cohort of Montessori-experienced students who will graduate into our upper elementary program. We then introduced kindergarten in year two and junior high in the fourth year. High School grades will be introduced gradually once amendment is approved.

We have executed our growth keeping in mind the following:

- The need to grow at a reasonable and responsible rate to best serve and support our students, their families and our faculty.
- The need to integrate students with and without Montessori experience, especially during the first years of the School's existence.
- The need to establish multi-aged classrooms with the goal of 24 students (depending upon classroom space) with one Lead Teacher and one Assistant Teacher per classroom when we meet this goal.

As with all charter schools, any student can apply for available spaces within the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*, and should the number of applicants exceed our capacity, our classrooms will be

populated by children chosen via a blind, lottery system, organized by grade. Like any public school, we can expect that our student body will be a mix of many kinds of learners, from many different backgrounds.

While evidence from other charter schools in New Hampshire show limited attrition, we expect to see fluidity in our enrollment based on the demographics of Carroll and Coos County where most of our students will originate from. We recognize that families move more often in this community and the surrounding areas and often time experience hardships in the area of transportation. As a state-issued charter, *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will be able to continue to meet our students' educational needs wherever they reside in New Hampshire. In Conway, there is considerable movement of students from school to school.

### **Our Students: Drawn Together from Many Corners**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* is a welcoming community with a diverse student body. Our commitment to an individualized approach to instruction, and our focus on building a cohesive, collaborative community through Project-Based Learning opportunities attracts a variety of different learners, from those who would like to move at a faster pace than their peers, to those who need more time and support. We believe that these differences will make for a stronger learning community.

Our classrooms look and function very differently than traditional public school classrooms. To aid in the transition of our students with no previous Montessori experience, our lower elementary students have full access to the key Montessori-specific materials used by pre-k and kindergarten students. Additionally, the classroom teachers develop personal learning plans for new students that ensure that they are helped into the Montessori approach in whatever ways are determined to be necessary.

### **Shape and Size of Our Classrooms**

As stated earlier, the Montessori classroom is a mixed-age classroom. Over time, our classrooms have become communities of learners thanks to the practice of keeping classroom groups together (as much as possible) with the same classmates as they progress through each 3-year block (kindergarten, grades 1-3 and grades 4-6 grades 7-9, and grades 10-12). To build successful Montessori teaching environments, we strive for fourteen (14) students in our kindergarten class, fourteen (14) to twenty-four (24) students in each lower and upper elementary classroom, and fourteen (14) to twenty-four (24) students in our Junior Varsity (7-9) and Varsity (10-12) Classrooms. We strive to provide each classroom with these enrollment numbers one (1) Lead Teacher and one (1) Assistant. As enrollment numbers can vary from year to year, as will the assignment of staffing to classrooms. This class size plan allows for teachers to provide individualized attention to their students and to observe each child, each day. It also enables small-group work, as well as full-group work and projects. Most public Montessori schools around the country strive for those approximate numbers.

## F: CURRICULUM

### Strategic Teaching and Learning

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* blends the instructional strategy of Project-Based Learning with the Montessori educational philosophy and curriculum to create a unique educational model that creates a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom where teachers act as facilitators of learning to motivate students to actively engage in their own learning from basic skill acquisition to exhibiting mastery by applying their acquired skills to real-world applications.

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM: \*Curriculum mapping has been done for grades K-8, and will be completed for grades 9-12 upon approval of expansion. Materials used will be a combination of Montessori Extended Works already available, texts, slides, music, video, and other materials available online. Engageny.org curriculum will be the basis for our core curriculum, while the Board of Trustees is looking to provide advanced curriculum as needed through Edmentum Online Learning Programs. Through their “Courseware” program our students would have access to Core, advanced, electives, CTE, world languages, college and career readiness, and ELL all aligned to New Hampshire standards. (For example of current curriculum, and EngageNY curriculum, see attached.)

### The Educational Environment

According to Tony Wagner, the author of “The Global Achievement Gap,” one of the primary reasons our public schools are failing is lack of engagement. Our students are bored with the current public school environment and curriculum which teaches to the “middle” student and relies heavily on memorization and multiple choice assessments. In contrast, engagement is the guiding principle that drives the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* teaching and learning environment. By blending the Montessori philosophy with Project-Based Learning, the classroom becomes a child-centered, active learning environment.

Dr. Montessori believed that children learn best in what she coined a “prepared environment,” one that makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an organized fashion. Following this philosophy, the charter classrooms will be filled with manipulative, hands-on learning materials developed by Dr. Montessori, as well as complementary resources to foster Project-Based Learning, all of which encourage students to use all five senses to experience concepts they will come to master. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, a visitor to our charter classrooms might observe many subjects — math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc. — simultaneously being studied by individual students or small groups of Project-Based learners, at times independently or with teacher guidance. Through order, repetition, exploration, manipulation, communication and collaboration, students develop a deeper content knowledge, make critical connections across disciplines and develop an understanding of their place in our rapidly changing world. Many of the Montessori materials used by students as they progress are self-correcting and begin with basic concrete concepts, then move toward more complicated abstract principles. Over time, students naturally move beyond the need for using manipulative

materials as memorization and skill mastery are achieved.

Educational research is quite clear that the “sage on the stage”, teaching to the middle educational model is not an effective teaching method for our 21<sup>st</sup> century world. At the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*, the teachers do not stand at the front of the classroom dictating one lesson at a time, expecting everyone to learn the same thing at the same time. Instead, they circulate among the students, who freely move about the classroom working at their self-chosen, individual or project-based activities. Teachers guide their exploration, ensuring that every student eventually experiences all subject areas and moves on to the next step as soon as he or she is ready.

The ground rules for this learning community are centered around respect for self, each other and property. Clear expectations are articulated to the students and progress is documented.

Collaboration is fostered and successes, whether individual or collective, are celebrated by all. Our blended method fosters freedom of choice — what students want to learn and how— but also insists on the development of well-balanced learners. Students and their teachers develop a work contract to ensure growth and success in all areas. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* follows the Montessori workday which includes a 3-hour uninterrupted morning learning block. This extended work period allows students to explore materials and concepts deeply and independently. It is here where students develop concentration, focus and a disciplined work ethic.

Multi-age classrooms further assist in solidifying the learning process — older students help the younger students, building maturity, nurturing, and leadership skills in the process, and demonstrating their own mastery of subject matter. Students model respectful work habits, communication and social skills, and a shared culture of responsibility, community and support for all. To know how to collaborate effectively and be responsibly competitive later in life, students need daily opportunities to solve complex problems while working with others. This is the educational approach that the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* offers.

## **The Teacher’s Role: Observer and Guide**

The job of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* teacher is to follow each student’s progress and create an environment where curriculum materials are made available for students to explore in an attractive, organized and progressive manner. The educator must have extensive knowledge of the use and progression of those materials and guide students in their exploration and discovery. *Robert Frost Public Charter School* teachers are charged with (1) meeting the students’ physical, mental and emotional needs, (2) designing individual and group learning opportunities, and (3) creating extensive documentation of the progress and activity of all those in the classroom. Ultimately, our teachers support their students in ways that lead them toward success, independence and the ability to work cooperatively with others. These educators know when to offer assistance, and when to step back and let self-discovery and independence happen. They trust and respect the student, so that they will trust and respect themselves and others around them.

Social responsibility is part of every aspect of our blended method. Grace, courtesy, peace and a cosmic connection to all things is part of school culture. Because most of the Montessori materials are self-correcting, they afford students the ability to learn on their own, freeing teachers to give more one-on-one time to the students who need more assistance.

An effective assessment system uses multiple strategies to demonstrate growth and performance over time. Therefore, the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* has created an ongoing assessment model that blends the Project-Based Learning tools, Montessori methods of assessment such as the teacher's observation, record keeping, student portfolios and a growing selection of Montessori-oriented assessment materials with standardized testing, to meet state and national requirements.

### **Creating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thinkers**

The primary goal of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* is to help each child reach his/her full potential so that they become independent, lifelong learners who take responsibility for themselves, for their classmates and for their surrounding environment. During their educational journey, students will lay the foundation to become 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers with higher-order critical thinking, analytical and collaborative learning skills. On this path of self-improvement and self-discovery, they learn that they are not alone and that encouraging, supporting and working together with other learners not only leads to success for themselves, but for their classmates and their society as well. As they grow to understand their connection to, and responsibility for, their world, their appreciation for the gifts others have to offer is increased.

## **G: ACADEMIC AND OTHER LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The following describes, by subject, our goals and approach to the K-12 grade curriculum. It represents a merging of the *New Hampshire Core Curriculum* with *Montessori Scope and Sequence* and *Project Based Learning*.

### **Social Integrity (K-12)**

Outcomes:

- Students will collaborate effectively with their peers to complete project-based assignments.
- Students will value the contributions of all their peers and offer equal kindness and consideration to each other.
- Students will treat everyone with respect and advocate for the respectful treatment of all.

Curriculum: Using the principles of Project-Based Learning, students will be given daily opportunities to work with their peers to solve complex problems by sharing ideas, formulating a plan for success, delegating the responsibility of implementation, supporting each other to identify snags, adjusting the plan when necessary to develop a solution and celebrating the achievement together. Using the principles of Complex Instruction, students of low social status are chosen by the teacher to lead a



group project themed around a subject the low status student is very good at or highly interested in. Through work on the project, the low status student demonstrates his expertise and his status and self-esteem both rise.

## Language Arts (K-8)

Outcomes:

- Students will read at or above grade level with fluency, accuracy and enjoyment in a way that makes meaning clear.
- Students will write effectively and creatively in print and cursive for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will practice oral presentation across all curriculum areas to develop purposeful and articulate communication skills.
- Students will work together on projects that promote cooperation, problem solving, collaboration and supporting each other.

Curriculum:

Through use of manipulatives and a classroom environment rich in reading materials, our students will develop both encoding and decoding skills. Phonics, grammar, punctuation, word study, etymology, spelling and writing will be practiced by students daily or weekly. Literature, elements of a story, poetry, drama, the history of language and reference and research skills will be studied extensively by students at least once a year. Students will obtain a rich vocabulary and sophisticated oral and written skills that demonstrate mastery of grammatical concepts. Children will learn to be reflective about what they read and write and to make connections between literary themes, genres and their everyday lives.

## English Language Arts – High School (4 Credits)

Students will follow the NH Common Core Standards-Aligned competencies for English Language Arts and Literacy broken into the following 5 categories.

- Reading
- Writing
- Research
- Listening & Speaking
- Use of Technology

## Mathematics (K-8)

Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate solid and applicable understanding of key concepts and principles central to the study of numbers and the mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Students will demonstrate solid and applicable understanding of key concepts, relationships and principles central to the study of plane geometry and algebra.
- Students will be able to form equations from narrative descriptions of real world problems

- and solve them correctly.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and use of standard and metric measurement of length, area, volume, weight, time and temperature.
- Students will work together to apply math solutions to real world problems in a group setting.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and use of fractions, decimals and USA monetary values

#### Curriculum:

Utilizing the Montessori Method, an extensive set of manipulative materials and the study of the history of math, our students' mathematics skills will move from a concrete to abstract understanding of numbers, operations, geometric relationships, elementary algebraic concepts and problem solving. Through individualized and group lessons and projects, students will learn sound arithmetic skills. They will manipulate fractions and decimals and explore concepts of equality and equivalence. Utilizing self-correcting Montessori materials, group teaching, graphs and charts, peer teaching and direct teacher guidance, a variety of paths to mastery is available to students.

### Math – High School (3 Credits)

Students will follow the NH Common Core Standards-Aligned competencies for Mathematics broken into the following 8 categories to include Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II.

- Symbolic Expression
- Numbers and Number Systems
- Reasoning and Computational Strategies.
- Metacognitive Skills and Communication
- Measurement
- Algebraic Functions, Patterns & Relations
- Geometry
- Data Analysis, Probability and Statistics.

### History (K-8)

#### Outcomes:

- Students will achieve comprehension of how time is measured.
- Students will develop a core understanding of the fundamental needs of humans and the different ways those needs have been met through the passage of time.
- Students will explore the steps of technological advancement that led humans from Stone Age existence to the development of ancient civilizations.
- Students will explore the contributions of ancient civilizations to our modern day existence.
- Students will have an understanding of, and appreciation for diversity and its role in societal development, both locally and globally.

#### Curriculum:

Our Montessori curriculum is grounded in cultural studies and awareness through the stories of time, life and civilization. The study of history begins with the concept time, then how humans have met their needs over time, and finally the role those developments played in the creation of diverse cultures. Through use of the *Montessori Great Lessons*, children will attain a grasp of the origin of the universe, the formation of the earth, the timeline of life, and the history of human development and technology. With the use of timelines, charts, impressionistic lessons, manipulative materials, role playing and research opportunities, students achieve an overview of where *everything* came from and how it is all connected. They then have the choice and opportunity to do research or projects on the parts that most interest them. They discover how *they* are cosmically connected to, and influenced by, everything that came before them, and how what they now do impacts everything that comes after.

### History & Social Studies – High School (4 Credits)

Students will participate in group and individual lessons covering the NH Common Core Standards-Aligned competencies for history and social studies broken into the following 4 categories.

- Civics & Government
- Economics
- Geography
- History

### Science (K-8)

#### Outcomes:

Students will participate in group and individual lessons and activities, as well as independent research in:

- Astronomy – formation and life cycle of stars, formation of planets and solar systems, type, size, distance, name, order, etc, of planets and moons.
- Chemistry – elements formed in stars, periodic table of elements, properties of solids, liquids and gases and atomic structure of elements.
- Geology – Igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks – types of, how they are formed, properties like streak and cleavage, metals, crystals, uses of rocks.
- Biology – 5 kingdoms of living organisms, classification of plants and animals, parts of plants and animals and the purpose of those parts, types of plants and animals and their various life cycles and inter-relationships.
- Physics – types of force, using force to do work, various types of simple machines and how they work, both independently and together, research in how things work.

#### Curriculum:

Students will experience activities in various scientific disciplines including astronomy, geology, earth science, botany, zoology, chemistry, and physics. They begin their study of biology with the classification of organic and inorganic. Astronomy and chemistry are introduced by looking at the difference between energy and matter. Earth science and geology begin with modeling the interior layers of the earth. Students will employ the Scientific Method as they move through these lessons and into more advanced areas of study. These concepts are reinforced by the use of experiments and Montessori impressionistic lessons and charts designed to help children grasp complex/abstract concepts. Additionally, the approach will integrate hands-on study, by focusing on process and techniques of discovery. Collaborative group projects will be employed, as well as individual research to foster understanding and a sense of community.

### Science – High School (2 Credits)

Physical Science: Students will use science and engineering practices to:

- Demonstrate an understanding between interactions between atoms and molecules, and how these interactions affect the properties of substances.
- Demonstrate an ability to make predictions about the interactions of objects based on the properties of objects and the forces between them.
- Demonstrate an understanding that energy can be accounted for as either motion or relative positions of particles.

Biology: Students will use science and engineering practices to:

- Demonstrate understanding of how systems of cells function to support life processes.
- Demonstrate understanding of the factors causing natural selection and the process of evolution of species.
- Construct explanations for the role of energy in the cycling of matter in organisms and ecosystems.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship of DNA and chromosomes in the processes of cellular division that pass traits from one generation to the next.

### Practical Life (K-12)

Outcomes:

- Students will care daily for their school environment, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Students and faculty will work collaboratively to establish green practices within the school setting.
- Students will occasionally cook and prepare meals for their class, working cooperatively with each other.
- Students will work collaboratively to establish a caring community by developing and demonstrating kindness and respect for all members of the community.

#### Curriculum:

A unique element in the Montessori tradition is the area of Practical Life where skills pertaining to care of self, the environment and all living things are taught with the goal that students become fully capable and responsible adults. It is in Practical Life where the youngest students develop fine and gross motor skills learning to dress, pour, sort, wash and dry dishes and prepare simple foods, among other basic activities. As they mature, our students will also aid in maintaining the school both inside and out, all with an emphasis on being stewards of their community and surroundings. Developing green practices within the school setting fosters an understanding of how to minimize our negative impact on the natural world.

Practical Life activities encourage independence, responsibility, self-discipline and self-reliance, and aid in the development of concentration and cooperation, thus expanding students' social and emotional education and growth. It is also here where students develop and practice responsible social skills. By establishing a school-wide atmosphere of kindness and respect, children will work cooperatively with faculty and parents to create a safe and secure learning environment where differences can be recognized and valued, and diversity celebrated. This prepares the students for the experience of community service.

### World Languages (K-12)

#### Outcomes:

- Students will gain exposure to and proficiency in one or more foreign languages, developing skills in speaking, writing and reading.
- Students will be able to communicate daily needs and wants in a foreign language.
- Students will have a basic knowledge of foreign cultures.

#### Curriculum:

One or more foreign languages will be integrated into all K-8 classroom levels to expand their communication skills and exposure to other cultures. Through the use of supplemental Montessori materials and other self-correcting resources, students of all ages will work toward proficiency in reading, writing and communication skills in the language(s) studied. Beginning with basic vocabulary and conversational practices, students will formalize their foreign language skills and learn more advanced concepts. In addition, students will study the culture of the countries where these foreign languages are spoken. The study of foreign language will enable our students to communicate with others within and beyond their immediate community, with an aim toward the development of a global citizenry.

High school students have the option to choose world language as an elective course towards graduation credits.

## Civics and Service (K-12)

### Outcomes:

- Students will practice core values of kindness and consideration in the classroom and beyond.
- Students will understand, appreciate and participate in community service.
- Students will understand and appreciate diversity of all kinds and its impact on *Robert Frost Public Charter School*, as well as the greater local and global communities.
- Students will participate in community service projects that reinforce the importance of caring deeply for our environment and for people less fortunate than ourselves.

### Curriculum:

Service and responsibility for others is a core Montessori value and as such will play a key role at the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*. Our lower elementary students will have ample opportunity to volunteer both within the school community and beyond. As they mature, our students will integrate service learning across areas of their curriculum. Students will be encouraged and supported as they choose philanthropic endeavors to participate in at the local, national and international levels. Those experiences will then be examined and discussed in the classroom to develop each student's appreciation of cultural differences of all kinds.

## **Technology (K-12)**

### **High School (.5 Credit)**

#### **Outcomes:**

- Students will become familiar and comfortable with existing computer and internet technologies leading to use in research and communication across all disciplines.
- Students will understand the history and impact of technology on human society.
- Students will become proficient in information management via the use of the internet, databases, spreadsheets, graphing, power point, word processing, etc.
- Students will practice the SAFE use of social media, learning to protect themselves and others from cyber thieves, predators and bullies.

#### **Curriculum:**

Our technology curriculum will enable our students to work confidently with existing and developing technologies given the interconnectedness of our 21st century world. Computers, software, and internet access will be used as tools to aid in our students' educational needs and development. Students will be instructed in the safe use of the internet and how to protect themselves while gathering information. Safe and responsible use of social media will also be emphasized and practiced. This element of our curriculum recognizes that technology is the backbone of our economy and evolving culture and understanding technology is an essential skill for participating actively in the twenty-first century.

## **Visual and Performing Arts (K-8)**

#### **Outcomes:**

- Students will practice creative expression using a variety of artistic mediums.
- Students will explore patterns, form, balance, perspective and composition.
- Students will study various artistic movements, famous artists and their works.
- Students will listen to music from various cultures and time periods.
- Students will study a variety of composers, singers and songwriters and their works.
- Students will explore a wide variety of musical instruments and the concepts of rhythm, tone, pitch, dynamics and notes in scale.
- Students will be given performance opportunities in dance, drama, oration and puppetry.

#### **Curriculum:**

Using individual activities and group collaborative projects, students will have daily opportunities to create and express themselves through the arts. They will have access to listening centers, musical instruments, paint, clay and other mediums. In addition, instructional card materials, books and charts will provide opportunities to study art and music from other cultures throughout history, including classical composers and master artists. Periodic group performance projects will encourage whole body creative expression. Projects and study in all academic areas will incorporate artist expression and creativity.

## Visual Art - High School (.5 Credit)

- Students will apply appropriate media, techniques, and processes.
- Students will identify and apply the elements of visual art and principles of design.
- Students will select and apply a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.
- Students will analyze the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- Students will analyze, interpret and evaluate their own and others' artwork.
- Students will make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.
- Students will understand the range of careers in the field of visual arts and identify careers associated with this field.

## Music – High School (.5 Credit)

Students will complete a music appreciation curriculum where they will learn to recognize the development of music from a historical and cultural perspective. Students will study the fundamentals of music and discover basic music terminology, instrument families, tempo, rhythm, form and meter. These elements will then be used throughout the course as a foundation for discussion of music throughout history. Eras covered will include Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and a variety of 20th century genres. Students will gain an understanding of the context in which music was created by recognizing and aurally identifying style characteristics, genres, and representative masterworks from various periods.

## Physical Education and Health (K-12)

### High School (1 Credit)

Outcomes:

- Students will participate in a basic physical education program aimed at developing strength, endurance and suppleness.
- Students will study human body systems and functions and the basic requirements for promoting good health.
- Students will explore human development through an age appropriate approach that promotes a healthy sense of self.
- Students will understand the value of teamwork and sportsmanship via cooperative group games and team sports.

Curriculum:

Students will have the opportunity to experience the importance of team building and teamwork through cooperative games and group sports. Our physical education program will be geared toward building physical strength and coordination to the best of each student's abilities, rather than competitive play. We use local resources as well as accessing national programs to develop a well-rounded physical education experience for our students. The Health curriculum will explore the function of body systems, such as skeletal, circulatory, digestive, etc. and basic healthy practices, like proper nutrition, regular exercise, adequate rest and renewal practices.



Our age appropriate human development curriculum will include aspects of healthy friendship and relationships, adolescent development, peer pressure, drug and alcohol education, human sexuality and balanced, healthy life styles.

## **H: ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT OF PUPIL ACADEMIC AND OTHER GOAL ACHIEVEMENT**

In the Montessori classroom, the child is observed every day and those observations are recorded by the classroom teachers and serve as a core reference for developing progress assessment. In the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*, we will also utilize additional means of formal and informal assessment, including but not limited to objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science and mathematics, to satisfy both national and state requirements, and to quantitatively measure each child's progress. We will comply with 194-B:8, V, "At least annually, and near the end of each school year, a chartered public school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil, as specified in RSA 194-B:3 II(h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited, to the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state." The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will also use assessment methods that correlate with skill areas across the curriculum, including activities using materials that measure mastery, developing student portfolios of work samples and group and individual projects and reports. These evaluation methods will be applied at least weekly, using results to make regular adjustments to each individual's learning tools and strategies in order to ensure academic success.

*Robert Frost Public Charter School* will further develop and evaluate assessment tools, schedules and practices for our students. While our youngest children will play a modest role in developing their individualized learning plans, as students mature their role becomes more significant in planning their course of study. Older students and their teachers will develop individualized programs and work together to ensure that all the set goals are met. At least twice a year, reports will be issued for student and parent review. Additionally, formal teacher conferences will be held with students and their parents/guardians. It is expected that these conferences will take place at least twice per year, in the early fall to establish academic, personal and social growth goals, then again in the spring to review progress and evaluate and improve implementation plans.

Throughout the year, students will be shown many ways to present and reflect on their accomplishments. They will write at least weekly in journals covering many areas of the curriculum. An important role of this journaling will be to aid students, teachers and parents/guardians in evaluations. Teachers will guide students as they develop their portfolios designed to capture and highlight pivotal lessons, projects and touch points that characterize each student's journey throughout the year and show each student's ability to organize what he has learned. Teachers will keep charts of progress for each child in math and language, recording completed activities and making note of those skills that need further practice. These tools and others that may develop

during our planning and implementation periods will enable teachers and their students to articulate growth and identify difficulty, thus ensuring that the most successful learning can occur for each child.

*Robert Frost Public Charter School* will have an annual assessment calendar.

- **Daily Observations** and recording of those observations using checklists and other means of adjusting the personalized learning plans and facilitating the teachers' work in recording and communicating each student's progress. This documentation will be made available to students and parents/guardians at any time upon request.
- **Student Portfolios of their best work** will provide our students, their teachers and parents/guardians with a powerful means of assessing working knowledge across all areas of the curriculum throughout the year.
- **Group Projects and Collaborative Presentations** will enable students and teachers to evaluate their skills at working cooperatively to solve problems, developing effective leadership, sharing and coordinating tasks and communicating efficiently.
- **Progress Reports** based on observation and linked to the individualized learning plan will be analyzed by teachers, students and parents/guardians. Issued approximately 4 times per year, these will assess academic progress as well as personal growth and development.
- **Teacher Conferences** will be held at the beginning and end of each academic year with students and their parents/guardians to establish or review learning plans, goals and progress.
- **Benchmark Testing** will be done to assess student skills in the critical areas of reading and math using nationally recognized assessment programs. These assessments will take place at least once early in the year and once mid-year to support teacher planning and evaluate student growth.
- Standardized Testing state and national testing requirements will be integrated into this schedule as dictated by the law.

**I: FOR SCHOOLS OFFERING HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS, GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION FOR ITS PUPILS.**

**Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

Monday – Friday 8:45am – 3:15pm

	<b>NH State Requirements</b>	<b>RFPCS Requirements</b>	<b>NH State Credits</b>	<b>RFPCS Credits</b>
Arts & Music Education	Y	Y	.5 Credit	1 Credits
Info & Communication Technologies	Y	Y	.5 Credit	.5 Credit
English	Y	Y	4 Credits	4 Credits
Mathematics	Y	Y		
Algebra	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
Geometry	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
Algebra II	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
Sciences	Y	Y		
Physical Science	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
Biology	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
Social Studies	Y	Y		
US & NH History	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
World History	Y	Y	.5 Credit	1 Credit
Civics (US & NH Government)	Y	Y	.5 Credit	1 Credit
Economics	Y	Y	.5 Credit	1 Credit
Health	Y	Y	.5 Credit	.5 Credit
Physical Education	Y	Y	1 Credit	1 Credit
<del>World Language</del> (amended February 2025)				<del>2 Credits</del>
Open Electives	Y	Y	6 Credits	6 Credits
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS</b>			<b>20 Credits</b>	<b>22 Credits</b>

**J: STAFFING OVERVIEW, INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS**

*Robert Frost Public Charter School ensures that students are supported in their academic endeavors and personal growth, by seeking highly qualified, nurturing educators who will treat them with dignity and respect. Our educators serve as leaders, guides and role models as they assume the responsibility of building cohesive collaborative classroom communities where our children will feel free to challenge themselves and grow as individuals and as part of a group. Our students will feel safe, and encouraged to mature and develop at their own pace as they work to reach their full potential.*

Our classrooms will be run by one (1) Lead Teacher and supported when enrollment supports by an

Assistant Teacher. Our Lead Teachers will hold, at minimum, an accredited and nationally recognized early childhood, lower or upper elementary, or secondary Montessori certification, depending on their grade level position, New Hampshire Teacher Certification or three years of teaching experience. *The Robert Frost Public Charter School* teachers will be nurturing, reflective, and creative problem solvers who are committed to the School's Mission and Vision. Our Assistant Teachers must demonstrate their ability to embrace our educational approach and School Mission as they work to support the Lead Teacher/s.

As per New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:14. IV, a minimum of 50% of our Lead Teachers will hold New Hampshire teaching certificates or have at least three years of teaching experience.

In addition to our teachers, who will be responsible for the personal and academic growth of our students, we will create the innovative position of "Learning Coordinator", the role is to oversee curriculum implementation throughout the school, who will hold at least one Montessori certification or be New Hampshire Teacher Certified. This role will support teachers as necessary and coordinate with outside consultants to ensure that any outside programming correlates with the school's educational mission. The Learning Coordinator role may also serve as the liaison for special education issues and work with sending school districts to coordinate delivery of special services in a manner that is true to our schools' mission and values to the greatest extent possible. In our dynamic teaching environment, professional development will be particularly important and our Learning Coordinator and School Administrator will work with our teachers and parents to coordinate professional development opportunities that meet the needs of our school, students, staff and families.

Our school will also have a School Administrator who may hold at least one Montessori certification or School Administration Certification. This individual will be responsible for implementing the charter as it drives the daily operations and management of the school and be the liaison with the state, sending school districts, and with the greater community for the purpose of securing/coordinating resources and fundraising.

Using a combination of the Learning Coordinator role and a School Administrator will ensure that our school meets the requirements of all local and state agencies, is sustainable in terms of human and financial resources, and will serve to maintain a consistent school atmosphere and educational approach across all classrooms. This structure will also support individual teachers as they work to meet our school's goals. Based on total enrollment numbers, the roles of Learning Coordinator and School Administrator will be fulfilled by one person.

## **K: PERSONNEL COMPENSATION PLANS, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR LEAVES AND OTHER BENEFITS, IF ANY.**

### **Compensation**

Teachers and Administrative Staff will be paid a salary. Assistant Teachers, and other personnel, whether full-time or part-time, will be paid on an hourly rate as employees or as independent professionals based on negotiated rates.

Base Salary and Pay. During Employee's employment, the School will pay Employee an annual salary agreed upon by both parties and described in the Employee Offer Letter. Salary will be distributed in equal weekly payments on the \_\_Friday\_ of each week at the School, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Any allowed deductions from pay will be itemized each pay period. When a payday falls on a holiday, paychecks will be issued the following workday. This salary may be adjusted from time to time in the unilateral discretion of the Board.

### **Employment Contingent on Confirmation of Preliminary Requirements**

Any employment shall be contingent upon satisfactory completion of the following prerequisites for employment:

- Background Investigation and Criminal History Records Check in accordance with New Hampshire RSA 189:13-a;
- Written recommendation from a qualified physician that the Pre-employment Medical Examination required under New Hampshire RSA 200:36 for school personnel indicates that the Employee is medically capable of performing his/her designated assignment and is free of communicable diseases.
- Any person whose teaching license has been revoked, or who has otherwise been rendered ineligible by law to be employed as a teacher, shall not be eligible to teach in the School.
- All employees are required to provide proof that they are eligible to work in the US on their first day of work and complete an I-9 (employment verification form) with the School. Only specific forms of ID are acceptable to complete this form.
- All employees should also complete W-4 forms as soon as possible prior to the first payroll cycle.

### **Vacation**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will publish an annual calendar of holidays and vacations during which the School will officially be closed.

### **Personal & Sick Leave**

Full-time salaried staff will receive personal & sick days each school year, to be used in the year in which they are accrued. Part-time salaried employees will receive personal & sick days. For purposes of sick leave for part-time salaried employees, one day will equal the number of hours in that employee's regularly scheduled work day.

## **Other Benefits**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will strive to offer health and other benefits to its full-time, salaried employees. Such benefits may be offered as a choice system with a specific annual election or as a specific insurance plan provided by the School with an employee contribution. Board policy and availability of specific benefit programs will determine the specific benefit type offered. Board policy and the requirements of specific benefit programs will determine whether, and to what extent, part-time or non-salaried personnel will be eligible for benefits and at what percent of full-time equivalent allocation.

## **General Provisions**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and rules related to pre-employment screening, hiring, employment compensation and leave, and reserves the right to amend the above personnel provisions as necessary to comply with applicable laws and rules, and as otherwise necessary.

### **Administration Performance Evaluation:**

- The Head of School is evaluated formally on an annual basis, utilizing questionnaires and interviews with staff, students, parents, and board members. Areas of excellence are identified along with areas that need improvement along with goals for the upcoming year.
- Teachers and staff are evaluated throughout the school year and presented formally in the spring by the Head of School. Specific goals are created and support is given to achieve these goals.
- The Board of Trustees seeks feedback from the Head of School, Teachers, Staff and families as to whether they feel their needs are being met, and what types of programming, support, or services would be helpful and aid the school in its long term planning.

### **Professional Development:**

Professional development is provided throughout the school year to all teaching staff. Specifically, there are 2-3 days of training the week prior to school starting in the fall covering areas that were identified by the Head of School and the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in June of each year (Behavior Management, COVID Protocols, Social Emotional Learning, Self-Care, etc.) There are also opportunities to take advantage of specific programs offered by the state, partner agencies, and other institutes of higher learning such as the Montessori Leadership Institute throughout the year.

## **L: PUPIL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, INCLUDING REASONABLE PROVISION FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S OWN RESOURCES FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS RESIDING OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT IN WHICH THE CHARTER SCHOOL IS PHYSICALLY LOCATED**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will follow the guidelines of 194-B:2,V which states: "Pupils who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located shall be provided transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the charter school. For the purposes of open enrollment, neither the sending nor the receiving school district shall be obligated to provide transportation services for pupils attending an open enrollment school outside the pupil's resident district." It is our expectation that students who attend *the Robert Frost Public Charter School* and reside in the host district shall have the opportunity to ride district transportation.

Students attending the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* who do not reside in the host district will be required to arrange for their own transportation. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will make every effort to support families as they explore transportation options and facilitate ride sharing between families of students from outside the district.

## **M: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES RELATED TO COMMITMENT TO NONDISCRIMINATION**

Our school's success depends on a dynamic and diverse student body and staff. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will celebrate diversity in its students and staff and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of the School or in any other way that is prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees has adopted a policy of open acceptance and has set in place administrative procedures to address any discriminatory concerns.

## **N: METHOD OF COORDINATING WITH PUPIL'S LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) FOR MATTERS PERTAINING TO ANY REQUIRED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING METHOD OF COMPLIANCE WITH ALL FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO EDUCATIONALLY DISABLED**

## **PUPILS.**

### **Charter School Responsibility & Method of Coordinating with Student's Sending School District**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to New Hampshire charter schools.

### **Charter Public Schools & Special Education**

As an open enrollment school, the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will accept applications from any child who is a New Hampshire resident and will discuss the school with any interested parent. In accordance with New Hampshire law (RSA 194-B:8), the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will not discriminate against any child with a disability as defined in RSA 186-C. Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B:11, III, when a child with disabilities attends a chartered public school, all current options available to the parent and the school district are retained.

### **School District Special Education Responsibility**

ED 1104.01, effective 3/27/17, sets forth the following sequence of the special education process:

- (a) Referral;
- (b) Evaluation;
- (c) Determination of eligibility;
- (d) Development and approval of the IEP;
- (e) Placement;
- (f) Ongoing monitoring of the IEP; and
- (g) Annual review of the IEP.

It is clear pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, III, that decision-making responsibility for the special education process for children with disabilities attending a public charter school remains with the child's sending school district. In addition, RSA 194-B:11, III provides that the sending school district remains responsible for the funding for children with disabilities attending a chartered public school. Any federal funding or other funding available to a sending district related to special education, to the extent and in a manner acceptable to the funding source, shall also be directed to the receiving chartered public school on an eligible per pupil basis pursuant to RSA 194-B:11, IV. These important provisions allow the responsible sending district and the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* to cooperate creatively to meet a student's special education needs. The sending district will be



required to provide the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* with a complete copy of each student's IEP for implementation and monitoring purposes.

## 0: ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

We have developed and are committed to building a strong and diverse community of learners who embrace our unique approach to education which respects the individual yet fosters collaboration.

Admission to the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* shall be open to any student who resides in the State of New Hampshire. Methods of admission shall not be designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

For the success of the school, prospective families will need to be educated on and be committed to our educational approach. We will provide interested families with literature and opportunities to learn about the school formally and informally from our School Administrator, Learning Coordinator, and teachers.

### Admission Procedures:

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* follows a basic method of admissions that defines charter schools nationwide:

- Admission shall be blind.
- Should the number of applicants exceed capacity, students will be chosen by a lottery system, with a wait list developed from the lottery overflow.

At a minimum, the admissions process will include the following:

1. Prospective students and their families will tour the School and attend at least one informational meeting at which our educational approach and school expectations (including a commitment from families to volunteer in the school community) of students and their families will be explained.
2. Application packets with information about the School, and its philosophy and expectations of attending students and their families, will be shared, along with student-related policies. Parents will be asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the School's Mission, volunteer commitments, and other expectations as part of the admission process.
3. Interested families will then submit their application.
4. A committee will review the applications to be sure all information is complete.
5. Students entering Seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) through Twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade will be required to submit a formal Application for Admission which provides basic information about the student, their interests, reason for applying and educational history. Prospective students and parents will also attend a formal interview with RFPCS Staff. \*Returning students in good standing will be exempt from this process, but will be required to file an Intent to Graduate form to hold the

student's space in the high school program.

6. To successfully develop functioning classrooms and at the same time ensure the opportunity that our school experience is available to all, the school will offer space to students without previous Montessori experience.
7. Should applicants exceed the number of allotted slots, a formal lottery, organized by grade and Montessori experience will be held. Those not accepted in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery.
8. All accepted students will receive notification. Those who have been wait-listed will be notified.
9. Accepted students and their families will be required to sign an agreement to fulfill a certain number of volunteer hours in support of the school and to fill out Student and Family Interest Surveys that will assist teachers in the development of personally meaningful and relevant project-based learning experiences. No student will be enrolled without submitting these forms.
10. After the enrollment process is complete, the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will hold meetings for admitted students and their families and provide an orientation for students and families.

The Board of Trustees of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will establish an Admissions Committee. We reserve the right to have the Admissions Committee further develop and amend the specific admissions process.

### **Enrollment Provisions**

- *The Robert Frost Public Charter School* will offer automatic re-enrollment to its students, provided they are in good standing (as decided by a team including the Lead Teacher, Learning Coordinator and School Administrator). Families will have to provide a letter of intent to re-enroll by a stated date preceding the lottery, so there is clarity about available spaces.
- *The Robert Frost Public Charter School* will admit from the wait-list should space become available after the lottery.
- Siblings of children already enrolled at the School will receive preference.
- The Board will reserve the right to give preference in enrollment to children of School Faculty as part of the employee benefits package.

### **P: PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT GOVERNANCE AND DISCIPLINE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES TO BE USED FOR DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, INCLUDING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION.**

A core value of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* is the development of student character and leadership skills. In multi-age classrooms, and through our carefully designed curriculum, *Robert Frost Public Charter School* students will develop important self-monitoring, communication, and

leadership skills as they progress academically and develop socially. Self-discipline, self-advocacy, governance, communication and conflict resolution will be inherent to the curriculum. It is a priority at the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* that students are physically and emotionally safe while at school. A code of ethics has been established to address this priority both with regard to infringements on safety and respect, and to create clear and meaningful methods of problem solving. To do so, we draw on Dr. Maria Montessori's work which strongly emphasizes peace and conflict resolution. Our Learning Coordinator will work to support teachers in addressing any behavior issues they are experiencing with students in their classrooms in a manner that is respectful of the student, their family and in keeping with our mission.

Our teachers will work collaboratively and interactively with their students to establish basic classroom rules and guidelines to be followed by all. Our students will learn to advocate for themselves and others, mediate and communicate to resolve conflicts, and establish and work with a system of integrity to rectify injury and achieve resolution in the context of our safe and peaceful environment.

Disrespectful or continually disruptive behavior will not be accepted. The School's written code of ethics outlines appropriate responses to such behaviors. All issues that resist being resolved within the classroom will be addressed with a team effort involving administrators, teachers and the student's family. Families will be partners in forming corrective behavior plans and involved at every stage of the process through meetings and written information. Although we will work to avoid it, expulsion from the school may be the end result of this process. A detailed behavioral expectation policy and discipline procedure policy was established by staff and board members.

## **Q: METHOD OF ADMINISTERING FISCAL ACCOUNTS AND REPORTING, INCLUDING A PROVISION REQUIRING FISCAL AUDITS AND REPORTS TO BE PERFORMED BY AN INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets and prevent and detect financial statement misstatements. The School will maintain accurate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations. An annual financial report will be provided including an audit by an independent certified public accountant.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Treasurer to provide the oversight necessary for monitoring the financial status of the School. The Treasurer shall report the financial status of the School to the Board of Trustees at least monthly. The Board shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the School, including policies on conflicts of interest for Board members and Faculty. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the weekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors. The Board has approved an accounting policies and procedures manual to be followed by all employees, contractors and Board

members to ensure the proper tracking and use of School funds.

A general account will be set up for the administration of funds, and the Treasurer and named members of the Board of Trustees will have check-writing authority. Two signatures will be required on all checks. Each individual with check-writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with the guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Except for emergency purchases approved by the School's authorized personnel (up to a maximum to be established by the Board of Trustees), all expenditures and contracts will be handled through an encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and status of account balances.

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:10, I-V). This law requires an annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process. The School will also comply with all requirements set forth in ED 318.07 regarding the contents of its annual report. As required by law the annual report will be provided to the state board, local board and any person who requests it. In addition a summary version of the annual report and periodic reports will be provided to the parent or guardian of each student at the School and shall be made available to the legislative body.

The Board will select an independent auditor annually to complete the required annual audit and report. The audit will address accounting practices and review the School's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with applicable generally accepted accounting principles. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year.

The Board of Trustees will review and respond to the audit report, if necessary, and include the audit results in its annual report.

## **R: ANNUAL BUDGET, INCLUDING SOURCES OF FUNDING**

*Robert Frost Public Charter School* Founders, Board Members, staff and families understand the need to make contributions to augment the state-provided funds in order to deliver the quality of educational services and variety of project-based opportunities that make up the curriculum. Contributions from the School community will take many forms — volunteer time in the classroom or within the school, assistance in various areas dependent on expertise (computer support, construction, etc.), and possibly even financial contributions from individuals who choose to contribute in this way. All donations will be tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

The Board of Trustees has committed to adhering to a strict budget with achievable contribution and fundraising goals. Through careful planning and the utilization of state and federal funding, the

school has shown its' ability to meet all financial obligations.

### **S: SCHOOL CALENDAR ARRANGEMENT AND THE NUMBER AND DURATION OF DAYS PUPILS ARE TO BE SERVED PURSUANT TO RSA 194-B: 8, III.**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will follow, a school year in accordance with the RSA 189:1 and RSA 189:24 and will follow the calendar of our host district in most instances in order to best coordinate transportation services. Any school-specific changes to the schedule will be monitored carefully to ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours.

The school day will begin at 8:30 AM and end at 3:15 PM.

### **T: PROVISION FOR PROVIDING CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will be a public school afforded the same protections as all other public schools under RSA 507(b), which provides for limited general liability for the charter school and its agents. The Board procures adequate insurance coverage as required by the State, including but not limited to general liability for the School.

### **U: IDENTITY OF CONSULTANTS TO BE USED FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, IF KNOWN**

None at this time.

### **V: PHILOSOPHY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND RELATED PLANS AND PROCEDURES**

The students of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will achieve the greatest success when our teachers and families work together. We see families as key participants in the building of the school community and the success of the program. The regular presence of our students' parents/guardians is an integral part of the landscape of the *Robert Frost Public Charter School*. We ask that families participate in school activities as schedules allow, contributing a designated number of hours of volunteer service during the course of the school year. These volunteer experiences can and will take many shapes and forms including, but not limited to supporting classroom activities, providing needed skills or services, organizing or facilitating school events or fundraisers, etc. Parents will also be valued members of our Board of Trustees (*see Governance, Section B*). We recognize that parent education is an important part of healthy child development and academic

success and, as a result, the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* works with families to provide informational sessions or training opportunities on topics of value to families, such as elements that make up our educational philosophy (including the Montessori Method and Project- Based Learning), parenting topics and other areas of interest.

Parents/guardians of children at *The Robert Frost Public Charter School* will receive regular reports on their children's academic and emotional growth through progress reports and regular parent/teacher conferences (see *Assessment, Section H*).

Central to our educational approach will be the empowerment of both parents and their children to become advocates for their education, while encouraging respectful and thoughtful dialogue and we will encourage that sense of advocacy by facilitating two-way communication through a variety of means such as written feedback, surveys, and meetings.

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will be committed to the education of everyone in our community — our students, our teachers, the families we serve, board members as well as business and community collaborators. We seek to bring a variety of educational opportunities to the School, and aim to shape the School in a way that encourages people from within and beyond the school community to come together to become engaged, learn, and grow.

## **W: PLAN TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND PUPILS**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* employs many forms of outreach to recruit and inform potential students and their families of the opportunity the School will provide. Because the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* is the first charter school in Carroll and Coos County serving students K-12 we will need to educate families and the greater community about our School.

Working with community leaders, we have developed outreach materials and approaches appropriate for various audiences. School tours and observation opportunities are offered and we see this as a path towards our goal of becoming a lab school for teacher preparation programs.

The Board will form a recruitment committee and partner with several service organizations working in and around the Conway area to build our student body. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will establish relationships with members of the Conway school district as well as other area districts, and with potential feeder schools.

## **FACILITIES:**

- A. The Robert Frost Public Charter School operates at 110 Main Street, Conway, NH.
- B. RFPCS currently operates with approximately 4,800 sq. ft. of indoor space along with a large field and playground area adjacent to the building. Our growth plan includes a search for a space with

approximately 8,000 to 10,000 sq. ft. along with outdoor green space.

C. Our current location upon re-design can accommodate 5 classrooms, 3 office spaces and ample outdoor green space. Growth plan seeks to expand to 8 classrooms, 4 office spaces, a multipurpose space, and outdoor/green space.

D. The RFPCS Board of Trustees is actively seeking a larger facility to lease or purchase.

## **X: GLOBAL HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School*, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district which sends its students to the charter School, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the “Indemnified Parties”) from any and all claims, demands actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys’ fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter school, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils. The School shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties’ own acts or omissions.

## **Y: SEVERABILITY PROVISIONS AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE**

If any part of the charter contract is determined to be invalid or illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation or illegality shall not affect the remaining portions of the charter contract, which shall remain in full force and effect. Any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

## **Z: PROVISION FOR DISSOLUTIONS**

If the *Robert Frost Public Charter School* ceases operation, the Board shall consult with an attorney and the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met.

Upon the dissolution of the School, the assets remaining after the payment of all its liabilities, and the return of any loaned items to rightful owners, shall be distributed to the RFCS Foundation or organizations operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes that qualify as an exempt organization within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to state or local government, for a public educational purpose.

## **AA: IN THE CASE OF THE CONVERSION OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL TO A CHARTER**

## **CONVERSION SCHOOL, PROVISION FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUPILS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ATTEND AND TEACHERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO TEACH AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL**

Not Applicable.

## **BB: A PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE SCHOOL'S PUPILS AFTER THE CHARTER SCHOOL MAY CEASE OPERATION**

In the event that *Robert Frost Public Charter School* shall have cause to cease operation, the Head of School will work with the Board to develop a student transfer process and advise all parents/guardians, Staff and Faculty of the process to be followed. To complete each student's personal file, parents/guardians shall be asked to provide a statement of intent regarding their children's education, moving forward. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will obtain parent/guardian permission for release of information in order to notify the new schools of the impending transfers. *Robert Frost Public Charter School* Staff, Faculty and Board will make every effort to be available for consultation, sharing students' portfolios, individualized learning plans and other relevant materials with the receiving school. It is important to remember that our students' Montessori experience will be linked to the *NH Core Curriculum*, and so though they may be more practiced in independent work and have developed other Montessori-related skills, it is expected that these children will easily matriculate into other schools and be at or above grade level.

Each family will also receive notice by mail, in a timely fashion, advising them of the dissolution of the School and the plan for student transition. The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will also help guide families toward options that may best match their needs and abilities academically, and if appropriate, geographically. And of course the School will ensure that the receiving schools have appropriate information to facilitate the students' transitions.

## **CC: IN ADDITION TO AN APPLICATION, EACH CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICANT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, SHALL PREPARE A PROPOSED CONTRACT.**

Not Applicable.



**DD: AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN WHICH CLARIFIES EXPECTATIONS FOR EVALUATING THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM AND WHICH CONTAINS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT A FULL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN SHALL BE DEVELOPED AND READY TO IMPLEMENT PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE OPENING.**

The *Robert Frost Public Charter School* will provide the New Hampshire State Department of Education with reports on our programs and progress annually. Utilizing a variety of curriculum-based and other assessment tools as well as data collected from our students, we will measure and quantify student, classroom and school progress in all learning domains. Surveys, interviews and informal feedback from Faculty/Staff and families will enable us to gain deeper insight into our overall educational impact and success including the evaluation of our non-academic goals such as parent involvement, learning atmosphere and stake-holder satisfaction. We will share information about our progress in relation to all of our goals with our school community annually. In addition, our annual reports will inform the Department about our student enrollment, financial operations and governance.

This reporting will address the following questions:

1. Is the School making progress toward achieving our Mission?
2. Is the School responsibly using public funds?
3. Is the School promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
4. Is the School sustainable?

**Robert Frost Public Charter School – Board of Trustees**

Tracy R. Strout  
Juliet Fleischer  
Cathy Brings  
Tony DeTore  
Kim Wakefield

Janine McLauchlan – Head of School