THESIS

LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP:
CRITICAL FACTORS THAT MOST GREATLY IMPACT LONG TERM
ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

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Abstract

Without followers there can be no leaders and, conversely, without leaders there can be no followers. This is a time-tested maxim. This is true not only in humans, but in the animal kingdom as well, as it is a primal, naturally occurring relationship. However, despite the unbreakable bond between these two conditions and the absolute dependency one has on the other, historically, the majority of literature has placed greater emphasis on leadership. Positions of leadership are often strongly correlated to status, wealth, and education (Van Vugt, 2006). While this researcher does not refute the necessity or the impact a leader may have within an organization, it has become increasingly apparent that the role of follower has an equally important place.

There is no question that an organization requires both leaders and followers. However, over time, it has been suggested that there are specific critical factors that both leaders and followers possess which impact the long-term success of an organization. Revealing these key factors and how they most greatly impact long-term organizational success is the focus of this thesis.

While the first focus of this research discusses the leader/follower phenomenon, the secondary focus places specific emphasis on job performance evaluation, particularly within the Swan River Montessori Charter School organization. A ten-question survey was completed by its employees. The data collected ultimately created the foundation of a new system – one that meets the needs of both the leaders and followers within the organization.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Organization

Swan River Montessori Charter School (SMRCS) is a small, Montessori-based charter school in Monticello, Minnesota that is currently in its fourth year of operation. It is home to approximately 175 students ages three through twelve. While SRMCS considers itself to be one school, it is home to two distinct programs. One program is the Children’s House Program, which serves the youngest of their students, ages three through Kindergarten. The second, more primary program is the charter school, which serves their elementary population of grades Kindergarten through sixth grade. In total, there are 40 students in Children’s House and 135 in the charter school.

The school is governed by a six member school board comprised of parents, teachers, and community members. It is their duty to oversee the school finances, the building company that oversees the facilities, and vote on any school policies as mandated by the state or by the SRMCS organization. Swan River has one School Director, comparable to that of a school principal, whose job it is to manage all of Swan River, including its staff, families, etc. There is also an Early Childhood Coordinator. This person oversees the private Children’s House Program, particularly enrollment and collecting tuition. This position reports directly to the School Director. Overall, Swan River currently has 26 employees, including the administration, lead teachers, classroom assistants, paraprofessionals, and maintenance staff.

The History of the Organization

Since its inception over four years ago, SRMCS has seen much success, but it has not been without hardship. During its first year of operation, the organization went through drastic
changes due to an unstable, volatile administration. Specifically, one of its founding members was ousted after months of ineffective leadership, including hostility towards employees, corruption, and fraud. It was during this time that many of the employees of Swan River considered leaving to find employment elsewhere. There were high levels of distrust and stress throughout the organization and employees were in a constant state of fear due to the instability of the leadership.

After months of working in such a hostile environment, the staff of Swan River signed a letter requesting that the current head administrator be removed from her position. They demanded a new School Director be instated, one that was Montessori-trained and more cognizant of its philosophy, both as a person and as a professional. In February of 2005, the school board voted these changes be made and a new Director took over immediately. Simply stated, this first year was a rocky one, but ended with a change in leadership that all hoped would bring positive transformation to the organization. With this change in place, the employees were willing to stay at Swan River and start fresh for a second year.

Despite this difficult beginning, SRMCS did manage to experience many successes, the first of which is secured enrollment. Not only have they retained full student enrollment each year, it is supplemented by a waiting list for every grade level. During their third operational year, Swan River had such an increased demand from their community that they expanded their school by two classrooms. The administration, along with the community, desired even greater expansion, but their limited building capacity hindered their ability to do so.

A second area of success is financial stability. Based on data provided by their accountants and yearly auditors, Swan River has continued to be fiscally sound every year and considers themselves a leader and role model for other charter schools both state and nationwide.
According to their 2007-2008 annual audit report, SRMCS was off on their yearly budget by only 0.1% compared to other local school districts that were off by 10% or more. They have also worked hard to accumulate 40% of their expenditure rate in a savings account. Their biggest concern as cited by the auditor: how to spend down the money they have.

There is no doubt that this fledgling organization has had many ups and downs throughout the last few years. Many of the employees who have been present since the beginning are just now able to get past the difficulties experienced during the first year. Only recently has the current administration witnessed an increase in trust and collaboration among its employees. It is only in the past year or two that the staff has been able to slowly shift its focus away from fear and uncertainty and focus on cohesion and growth. However, there is still a lengthy road ahead for the people of Swan River Montessori, especially with regard to deciding exactly what kind of organization they are and want to be.

Statement of the Problem

As of this writing, Swan River Montessori Charter School is in a state of stagnancy. While they desire movement toward a very attainable goal of organizational health and wellbeing, they seem to struggle with implementing action steps leading toward this movement. In order to avoid any previous patterns of vertical striving, disorder and disequilibrium, this organization must rally together and become a cohesive, collaborative team. They need to shift their focus away from self-interest and place it on social interest, i.e. that which is best for the whole. To do this, a number of areas need to be addressed.

First and foremost, they must become more knowledgeable about the organizational structure that they have in place, including employee roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
Second, they must gain a better understanding of the state of leadership and followership that currently exists at Swan River and how this relationship is impacting the organization. Due to the instability experienced by employees with regard to the initial administration, there is no stable double-loop input/feedback system in place to support effective communication. While the administration tries to provide opportunities for input and feedback, these opportunities are not yet fully structured or consistent. Third, they must utilize the leader/follower relationship to co-create specific steps that will promote organizational growth. Rather than being told what to do and how to do it, the employees need to be motivated to “buy back in” to the mission and vision of the school. They need to be inspired to do better and be better. Finally, this organization should form a more structured hiring process that will support recruiting more highly qualified candidates that are aligned with the mission and vision of SRMCS.

Objectives for This Study

The objectives of this study are three-fold. First, the researcher begins by taking an in-depth look at the leadership/followership phenomenon. More specifically, the researcher’s goal is to provide a definition of leadership and followership; to discuss why each is important and why each exists; to outline the primary characteristics of effective leaders and followers; and to understand how these critical factors impact long-term organizational success. The critical factors outlined in this study will directly apply to SRMCS and may greatly impact any future movement this organization chooses to make.

The second objective for this study is to specifically address the now lacking input/feedback system that SRMCS currently employs. As stated in the following literature review (chapter two), one critical factor that leads to long-term organizational success is the
ability of leaders to connect with their employees and work together to support the stated mission and vision of company. Thus, the researcher has compiled qualitative data from current employees of Swan River to create a new job performance evaluation system, which will also encourage movement from a single-loop input/feedback system to a double-loop system. The goal of this new system is to strengthen the leader/follower connection as well as provide improved, consistent opportunities for input/feedback between Swan River’s leaders and followers.

The final, minor objective is to help SRMCS develop a baseline structure for a new hiring/job placement system. Input was received by the current employees of Swan River which outlined what each believes are important qualities that potential candidates must possess to be an effective member of the SRMCS organization. They also offered feedback on the hiring process, including who specifically should be a part of the interviewing process.

Topics to Be Discussed

The following is a list of topics that will be addressed throughout this study. Some are general questions relating to the leadership/followership phenomenon while others are specifically tailored to the Swan River Montessori Charter School organization.

- What is the importance of leadership and followership and why do they exist?
- What are the key characteristics of effective leaders and followers and how do these characteristics assist in overcoming issues facing long-term organizational success?
- How has/is the leaders/follower relationship impacted SRMCS organization?
- How do the employees of SRMCS view their current job performance evaluation system?
- What changes in this evaluation system do the employees want to make and why?
• What will the new job performance evaluation system for SRMCS look like?

• Who specifically should be a contributing member of the interviewing process when hiring for a position at SRMCS?

• What qualities/characteristics must a potential candidate possess to be considered a good fit for the Swan River organization?

Research Question

What are the critical success factors with regard to leadership and followership that most greatly impact long-term organizational success and how can these factors be applied to Swan River Montessori Charter School’s job performance evaluation system to best promote a double-loop input/feedback structure?

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms related to the leader/follower phenomenon. These terms are referred to throughout this study.

Leadership. An influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect shared purposes (Densten, 2002).

Effective or exemplary followership. Followers who distinguish themselves from ordinary followers by being “self-starters” going above and beyond what people expect of them (Banatu-Gomez, 2004).

Long-term. Five-plus consecutive years.

Organizational success. A unified, productive culture that shares an understanding of the organization’s purpose and goals (Banatu-Gomez, 2004).


*Job performance.* Work performance in terms of quantity and quality expected from each employee. These standards are the basis for employee reviews (BusinessDirectory.com, 2008).

*Job performance evaluation system.* A formal system in place to evaluate the work performance of each employee throughout an organization.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study it is assumed that:

- The information provided by Swan River Montessori Charter School with regard to its current job performance evaluation system is both accurate and truthful.

Limitations of Study

SRMCS is a very small organization employing only 26 full and part time employees. The data provided by its employees represents a small group of people and may or may not be comparable to any potential data collected from larger organizations. Of these 26 employees, four represent administrative positions, and of these four, only two represent administrative positions that hold decision-making authority. With regard to this study, three of these administrative positions responded to the survey providing data for the new evaluations system. This represents roughly 21% of the total gathered data even though this group represents only 12% of the staff member total.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The relationship between leader and follower has never remained stationary. History tells many tales of the dynamics between these two roles and one thing remains constant – there is no constant with regard to this relationship. Prior to the 19th century, masters ruled heavily over their apprentices. During the industrial revolution of the 20th century, leaders were “industrial barons” who controlled the economic future of the working class (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003). This later evolved into thought patterns that followers were comparable to sheep-like subordinates (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003). By the end of World War II, soldiers returned home to the workforce where the “guys at the top” mindset was ever-present (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003). This directly resulted in diminished responsibility on the follower’s behalf, particularly at the lower levels within organizations.

In the 1970’s, when the baby-boomer generation ruled, a “not my job” mentality had become rooted within the workforce. Leaders chose to respond by implementing various incentive programs. Quality circles and profit sharing are just two examples. A decade later, the information era emerged and leaders/managers were overrun despite their continued efforts to lead by intuition. By the 1990’s, competition rapidly changed the economy from national to global markets. Organizations responded yet again by changing focus from the individual worker to a team mentality. Soon this team-centered approach gave way to different types of incentives like job enrichment and total quality programs (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003).

Today, there is no question the world is increasingly complex and the pace increasingly rapid. This has brought with it a massive shift in power. Where once the leader had ultimate autonomy, now the followers hold a vast amount of influence and power.
The Importance of Leadership & Why it Exists

According to the research of Mark Van Vugt (2006), there are many theories relating to the evolution of leadership. One of these theories, Leadership as Strategy for Social Coordination, states that leadership evolved among humans explicitly for the purpose of solving group coordination problems (Vugt, 2006). It was found that individuals who frequently engaged in group activities faced recurring decision-making issues (Vugt, 2006). The question was raised as to how group action could be initiated, while at the same time, group cohesion was upheld. The solution concluded that if some of the individuals took a lead role while the remainder of the group served as followers, cohesion would be maintained (Vugt, 2006). Thus, leadership and followership became necessary functions within groups, which in turn, encouraged group action. From this study, it was determined that if leadership promotes group cohesion and movement toward a common goal, without this role the opposite may be true. Leader-less groups may suffer from stagnation due to the inability to solve decision-making and coordination problems.

According to the research of Cyndi Crother-Laurin (2006), 50-75% of current organizations are led or managed by people greatly lacking in leadership competence. It is her claim that these incompetent leaders are people who are hired or promoted based on technical competence, business knowledge, and politics (Crother-Laurin, 2006). Very few are chosen or offered promotions based upon their ability to lead others. Managers employed for reasons outside of leadership skills often portray similar characteristics. They manage or lead by crisis, are too often poor communicators, and are insensitive toward employee morale issues. They are often viewed as mistrustful, over-controlling, and micro-managers. These detrimental traits
Leadership and Followership

often lead to greater ineffectiveness within the teams they oversee, and their employees experience low morale and a general feeling of alienation (Crother-Laurin, 2006).

Conversely, skillful leaders seem to encourage higher levels of creativity in their followers. There is a greater sense of team and a healthy motivation to work as part of the whole, rather than for the individual (Crother-Laurin, 2006). This, in turn, generates the desire for followers to “buy in” to the vision of their leader and the organization.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

There are vast amounts of research that discuss various factors that create effective leaders. For the purpose of simplicity, this researcher narrowed the findings down to five of the most common characteristics found. They are as follows:

1. Passion for their vision and a passion to lead,
2. The ability to inspire
3. The ability to mobilize
4. The ability to connect
5. Other important qualities

*Passion for their vision and a passion to lead.*

Effective leaders must not only have the ability to lead, but they must also have a strong desire to lead. With this desire, they must bring forth the vision of the organization and inspire their followers to work toward this shared vision. This model is desired by leaders for it is thought that experiencing a sense of meaning and passion for work creates a bond that holds organizations together in times of success and times of crises (Kerfoot, 2004). The founder of Wal-Mart, Sam Walton, has been quoted as saying, “If you, as a leader, love and are committed
to your work and are out there every day modeling that passion and commitment, everyone around you will soon catch the passion.” Creating a committed culture starts with the leader first demonstrating a passion for the people of the organization (Kerfoot, 2004, p. 358).

The Ability to Inspire

Along with a leader’s passion to lead, they must also possess the ability to inspire, or energize, those around them. Simultaneously, these leaders must continually sell their vision to the people, act in accordance with that vision, and ask the right questions at the right time. They also demonstrate the possibilities, give reassurance, and offer hope for a bright, stable future (Mourkogiannis, 2007). It is the job of the leader to make followers comfortable and supportive of the activities and decisions of the company. Again, they must motivate others to “buy in” to the shared vision of the organization. Ultimately, the essence of a good leader is to explore the unexplored and then show it to the people. “A leader sees more clearly than anyone else does the way to go by nurturing a continual inner openness to inspiration and revelation” (Bantutu-Gomez, 2004, p. 145).

The Ability to Mobilize

All leaders must have the capability and competence to mobilize their followers to perform necessary tasks. “Every leader must be able to move a team to action, to build coalitions, define campaigns, set targets, and encourage networks” (Mourkogiannis, 2007, p. 34). While inspiring followers typically involves large numbers of people, mobilization requires leaders to connect with and influence key team members and their specific skills and abilities (Mourkogiannis, 2007). The ability to mobilize followers efficiently and effectively is of great importance. As the leader, one must clear the path for action to take place.
The Ability to Connect

According to literature by Karlene Kerfoot (2004), many potentially great leaders fail because they are unable to make positive connections with the people who are responsible for the success of the organization. Kerfoot (2004) believes that the ability to sense how others feel and to understand their perspective is a leader’s most important competency. With this in place, they can create the kind of cohesion necessary for an organization to be successful. They are able to convey how the shared vision of the organization correlates with the individual and personal goals of its people.

Kerfoot (2004) describes a simple yet direct way for leaders to connect with their followers: become an assistant to the people who work for you. She believes that by being the follower’s equal and working with them side-by-side as a team, the leader will model the very characteristics necessary for organizational success. The leader ultimately sets the tone of how people are to be treated, and in return, the people truly feel and know that they are a valuable asset, that their skills contribute to the betterment of the organization, and that their best interests are what matters (Kerfoot, 2004).

According to the work of Peggy Madera (2000), truly good leaders are good followers. They have excellent interpersonal skills and strong teaming skills. They observe others and actively listen in order to learn from the people. They understand the needs and wants of their followers and know when it’s the proper time to lead and when it’s the proper time to follow (Maders, 2000). They are deeply connected to the organization, and more importantly, the people within the organization, because they know that this connection leads to success.
Other Important Qualities

This researcher found numerous sources revealing a variety of optimal leadership qualities. The following comprise a list of other desirable traits that followers and organizations deemed important in their leaders: honest, communicator, listener, visionary, patient, decisive, self-driven, charismatic, high energy (Cavell, 2007).

The Importance of Followership & Why It Exists

Imagine a game like Follow the Leader in which all the participants only sought to be the leader and none were willing to follow. It would not take long to figure out that such a game could not work. Quite simply, without followers, there can be no leaders, because if no one is following, then no one can be truly leading. Good leaders must have many things, but having followers is the most essential (Madera, 2000).

The importance of followers is often underestimated. Despite the number of followers far exceeding the number of leaders throughout organizations and elsewhere, research and other types of literature is very limited. Unlike leaders, followers receive no specialized training on how to be a follower, let alone an effective one. Peggy Madera (2000) suggests this is because most of us follow for the majority of our lives. It is her belief that perhaps followers assume they need no formal instruction because this role is a part of every day life. However, Madera (2000) continues by saying that people should never assume that because it is so routine, they have the necessary skills to be effective.

Followers exist because, without them, action and/or movement would be difficult or perhaps impossible. There is little doubt that organizational success is all too often attributed to the behavior and personality of the leaders rather than any of the followers (Hall & Densten,
According to Hall and Densten (2002), it was concluded that leaders contribute approximately 20% to the success of an organization, while followers are the key component to the remaining 80%.

The Two Dimensions of Followership

The importance of followers has only recently begun to be acknowledged within organizations. New research is beginning to challenge the view that leaders are the ones actively shaping the world of business or that followers should be viewed as the sheep-like, mindless mass (Hall & Densten, 2002). Based on the research of Peter Hall and Iain Densten (2002), there are two dimensions of followership. The first dimension refers to follower thinking and spans from critical independent thinking to uncritical dependent thinking.

The critical independent thinking dimension represents a style of autonomous thinking that includes constructive criticism, innovations, and creative thought. Critical independent thinking involves followers understanding their significance of their actions, the actions of others, and the impact of decisions on the organization’s vision. In contrast, the uncritical, dependent thinking dimension represents a non-challenging style of behavior and reflects a ‘must-be-told-what-to-do’ attitude. This uncritical style involves followers seeking only one course of action where alternative possibilities are not considered. These followers accept the ideas of leaders without thinking or commitment. (Hall & Densten, 2002, p. 91)

The second dimension of followership refers to the degree in which the follower is engaged in their work. This ranges from active to passive styles of engagement or involvement.

The active style represents full participation by followers and involves followers taking the initiative, assuming ownership, and being self-motivated. The passive style represents limited participation by followers, and involves followers being lazy and dodging responsibility. Followers adopting this passive style require constant supervision by their leaders. (Hall & Densten, 2002, p. 91)
When one takes the above dimensions of critical independent thinkers to uncritical dependent thinkers, and active to passive engagement, and places them on a two-axis grid, it generates a taxonomy of followership producing five general types of followership. They are as follows:

1. **The alienated follower** is a passive yet independent critical thinker;
2. **The conformist follower** actively participates but does not utilize critical independent thinking;
3. **The passive follower** exhibits neither critical independent thinking nor active participation;
4. **The effective follower** is both a critical independent thinker and active in the organization; and
5. **The pragmatic survivor** uses all other styles depending on which style fits the prevailing situation. (Hall & Densten, 2002, p. 91-92)

The above listed types assist in defining followership beyond the typical terms of conformity, weakness, and passivity, which are primary reasons why the contributions of followers to organizational success continue to be overlooked and devalued (Hall & Densten, 2002). The two-axis grid, like the one described, allows for the recognition of effective follower types e.g. as active employees desiring to achieve success. It is suggested that if organizational stakeholders study this type of taxonomy, they will better understand how their followers provide a rich source of abilities and skills, all of which contribute to the long-term success of the company.

**Characteristics of Effective or Exemplary Followers**

The long-time image of followers as sheep, unquestioningly subordinate to a leader’s command, is rapidly diminishing with the increasing competitiveness of the world’s economy. The role of follower has begun to shift from the “subordinate sheep” to being active partners in the pursuit of productivity and organizational success (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003). Followers “contribute to the competitive viability and longevity of the organization consistent with values,
norms, and needs of society” (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003, p. 20). The definition of follower is no longer synonymous with subordinate. Today, followers engage all of who they are—mind, body and spirit—into the vision and purpose of their organization. Gene Dixon and Jerry Westbrook (2003) site five primary and unique characteristics and behaviors of followers. They are highlighted as follows:

1. The courage to assume responsibility
2. The courage to serve
3. The courage to challenge
4. The courage to participate in transformation
5. The courage to take moral action

*The Courage to Assume Responsibility*

Exemplary followers will always demonstrate ownership with regard to themselves and the organization. Rather than waiting for opportunities to arise, these followers create opportunities to maximize their abilities. They are continually generating new ideas and solutions to improve processes throughout the company and assume responsibility for their actions at all times.

*The Courage to Serve*

The best followers continually look for ways to shift the workload from their leader to themselves. They show commitment by assuming new or additional responsibilities and by being a team player. If being a member of a team means doing less than desirable tasks, these followers are willing (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003).
The Courage to Challenge

Optimal followers are willing to confront or challenge their leader or group, when it is appropriate, to help ensure proper action is taking place. While they prefer harmony and cohesion, they will jeopardize it, when necessary, to uphold the shared vision or purpose of the group. They push for consistency in their leader and expect the same of others (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003).

The Courage to Participate in Transformation

Effective followers will always recognize and accept when it is time for change within the organization. They will remain loyal during difficult times and place personal development and advancement on the back burner. They are committed to the organization despite the fear and uncertainty that typically correlates with transformation.

The Courage to Take Moral Action

Dixon and Westbrook (2003) describe this behavior as the “courage to leave.” This idea of taking moral action states that the courageous follower will take morally based action to protect the follower, the organization, or even the leader in order for organizational growth to continue. Ultimately, the follower will leave if or when it is deemed appropriate.

There are numerous other key characteristics and behaviors of effective followers. Loyalty, trustworthiness, being ethical, and having a positive attitude are just a few examples. Great followers add value to the group by focusing on goals, taking initiative, and modeling commitment to others (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). They have a keen sense of direction, drive and intensity, and master skills that make them indispensable to the company for which they work. These are the people who are enthusiastic, flexible, embrace change and transformation, and possess a set of core values consistent with that of their organization (Frisina, 2005).
Issues Facing Long-term Organizational Success

Even the most successful organizations face times of difficulty and crisis. Whether it is employee turnover, decreasing morale, or a shifting economy, both leaders and followers are critical factors in facing problems and finding solutions. A number of surveys and reports issued near the end of 2007 revealed some troubling trends that will be of concern for organizations in the near future.

Turnover is becoming a growing problem. Forty-seven percent of the organizations polled stated that turnover has increased within the past two years (HR Focus, 2008). It has been suggested that organizations, particularly the Human Resources Department, place a primary focus on developing the skills of existing employees rather than on attracting new workers (HR Focus, 2008). In addition to turnover problems, approximately two out of three organizations are also finding it difficult to find and retain high performing, high skilled workers (HR Focus, 2008).

Another related problem facing organizations around the world is leadership development (HR Focus, 2008). Specifically, organizations are indicating problems related to rotating leadership talent and the passing of knowledge from the older generations of the company to the younger (HR Focus, 2008). These gaps force organizations to develop their employees rapidly in order to address the needs of the company. With so much emphasis being placed on the present, a large question mark remains on the future. The question is then raised: what is needed by organizations to overcome these potentially devastating issues?
Essential Elements for Overcoming Issues Facing Long-term Organizational Success

_The Leader/Follower Relationship_

According to Jerry W. Levin (2000), the most essential elements of organizational success will remain the same in the 21st century as they were in the 20th century. All of these essential elements revolve around people, i.e. the leaders and followers of the organization. They include hiring, training and motivating people, creating a healthy work environment, supporting the shared vision of the company, and simply getting people to make the right choices and do the right thing (Levin, 2000). In order for these to occur, the relationship between leader and follower must be strong, healthy, and consistent.

_Understanding the Relationship between Leaders and Followers_

According to James Rosenau (2004), “followership is of such importance that often it is not clear who is leading and who is following (p. 17).” This is perhaps one of the most important keys to remember when trying to understand the relationship that exists between leaders and their followers. The two are so vital to each other that the roles often fuse together and become one. Therefore, it would be a dire mistake for a leader to take the follower for granted. If a leader fails to do this or if the leader’s performance is deemed inadequate in the eyes of the followers, it is very likely that this leader would lose their support, which in turn, would inevitably lead to the leader being forced out of his position. While some followers may remain loyal to their leader if this type of situation were to occur, stable leadership requires considerable followership (Rosenau, 2004).

Thus, it may be concluded that a shift in power has occurred. Where once the lowly follower was seen as the sheep-like subordinate only doing as told, s/he now holds an increased amount of power and influence. Today, the masses are more competent and informed. They
have come to realize that leaders need what they have to offer and without that offering, the system fails. No longer do followers unquestionably comply with their leader, but rather rally around whom or what will lead to the fulfillment of their expectations (Rosenau, 2004). If the leader fails to comply, the leader is more than likely out of a job. Thus, there is a need for balance and respect with regard to the leader/follower relationship.

*Strengthening the Relationship between Leaders and Followers*

Once the relationship between these two functions is understood, there must be a constant effort to strengthen and support it. According to the work of Karlene Kerfoot (2007), this must begin with the leader and the characteristics and behaviors that the leader offers to the people. If the leader is able to keep the people engaged, loyalty, attitudes, and productivity will increase. When this occurs, like the domino effect, the energy produced infects all who are in its path. This supports a happy, healthy culture and work environment, leading to the end result: organizational success.

More specifically, there is the issue of trust. Trust is a primary requirement to maintain a strong relationship between leaders and followers. Over and over again, organizations have become so focused on competitiveness and profit that it has tainted the trust followers may have in the system. Over and over again, organizations have failed because the drive for autonomy among its people has impaired interdependency (Bujak, 1999). According to Bujak (1999), creating a shared purpose or vision and deeming interdependency as crucial are additional elements for collective success. Effective leaders have the ability to express naturally a sense of trust that creates and supports the environment necessary for followers to operate within (Crother-Laurin, 2006). It is through the understanding of the importance of this leader/follower
relationship that connections and interdependencies remain at the heart of the organization (Crother-Laurin, 2006).

Another important component necessary to strengthen this relationship is the need for the leader and follower roles to be interchangeable and dynamic. A good leader knows inherently when to take on the role of leader and when to be the follower. The same can be said for the follower. S/he must understand when it is appropriate to step up and go beyond specific job requirements and when it is time to comply with the wishes of the leader without question. Each must be able to play the other’s role when necessary for the sake of the group and the organization and then revert back with ease and precision. When this is mastered, organizations move that much closer to the success they desire.

The Development of Future Leaders

Today’s level of success within an organization is all too often dependent on the current leaders who reside within that organization. However, it is inevitable that time will give way to turnover, even with the most loyal of employees, who will some day retire. As questioned by Studer (2007), as today’s leadership team gives way to tomorrow’s leadership team, how can momentum be maintained? In order to sustain success, Studer (2007) believes that organizations must shift the focus away from developing the individual leader and focus primarily on developing consistently effective leadership. One major factor impacting organizational success is that when the current leader of the organization leaves, the success the company benefited under his/her leadership often disappears, too (Studer, 2007). The key, as stated by Studer (2007), is to “standardize proven leadership practices that will survive in your organization longer than any individual leader or team (p. 2).” In other words, Studer’s advice is to promote
leadership behaviors within the people that do not rely on any one particular leader to execute. While Studer (2007) believes this is just common sense, he also adds that very few organizations practice it and those who do reap many benefits.

*The Development of Future Followers*

Based on the work of Quint Studer (2007), 25% of employees who leave their position do so within the first 90 days of employment. Thus, to retain a newly hired employee, the leader must immediately begin to build a relationship with him or her. Studer (2007) suggests that by holding two one-to-one meetings, one at 30 days after hire and the other at 90 days, that there is an increased likelihood for the employee to stay with the organization. During these meetings, the leader has a prepared list of questions relating how well things may or may not be going. Most importantly, it is a scheduled time to offer the employee a chance to ask questions as well as provide and receive feedback on various issues or concerns. It is Studer’s claim that if these meetings are handled well, new-hire turnover decreases up to 66%. The ultimate goal with this suggestion is to begin building the relationship between the leader and the follower that will encourage trust and open communication. From this degree of participation and involvement stems a sense of ownership and commitment, which, as it strengthens, will lead to greater overall success of the organization.

**Critical Success Factors**

There are many factors that must be taken into consideration when examining why organizations succeed or fail. The purpose of this research is to highlight specific critical success factors with regard to leadership and followership that lead to long-term organizational success.
Critical Success Factors with Regard to Leadership

The first success factor, in relation to leadership, is the characteristics/traits of the leader that make him or her effective. These must include, but are not limited to the following:

- Being passionate for the vision of the organization,
- Having the passion to lead others,
- Possessing the ability to inspire and mobilize individuals and groups, and
- Establishing and continually strengthening the connection between the leaders and the followers.

A second success factor in relation to leadership is how the leader views their followers. Due to the increasing shift of power from the leader to his or her followers, the leader must be able to create and maintain a healthy balance between meeting the needs of the organization while simultaneously meeting the needs of its employees. Because leadership cannot exist without followership, one may conclude that both parties must work in sync versus one side dominating the other. Only when leaders truly understand the need for this balance will success be the final outcome.

With these necessary characteristics and increased knowledge, leaders will be able to effectively lead others and help them buy in to the vision and mission of the organization. It is when people have a purpose, and feel inspired to fulfill their purpose, that organizations succeed over time.

Critical Success Factors with Regard to Followership

The first critical factor, with relation to followership, is the characteristics/traits of the follower that make him or her exemplary. The best followers amplify particular traits that
organizations deem far more desirable. These characteristics include, but are not limited to the following:

- The courage to assume responsibility and take ownership,
- The courage to serve their leader(s) by assuming additional workloads and being a team player,
- The courage to challenge leadership, when appropriate, for the sake of the organization and its vision,
- The courage to participate in transformation when the organization is facing change, and
- The courage to take moral action, when necessary, to protect the development of the organization.

Organizations desire to retain followers who represent an autonomous style of critical, independent thinking, which includes constructive criticism, innovation, and creative thought. They want people who are active within the company and who take initiative, assume ownership, and are self-motivated. However, a great follower also has the ability to challenge their leader, when appropriate, for the sake of the leader and the organization. Good followers know when to accept the ideas of the leader and when to ask difficult, but necessary questions.

A second critical success factor is the commitment of the follower. It is inevitable that every organization goes through periods of change and transition. The best followers are those who remain reliable and committed during these times of organizational change and transformation. Whether the change is viewed as positive or negative, exemplary followers remain loyal to the company and place any personal or professional gain to the side for they understand the needs of the company must come first.
How Critical Success Factors Impact Long-term Organizational Success

When the above success factors are in place and both the leaders and followers are exhibiting and supportive of these factors, long-term organizational success will be sustained. Companies will reap benefits over time because many of the issues facing long-term success will diminish. Specifically, turnover will likely decrease because employees will have a greater sense of pride and ownership. Rather than feeling like a dispensable corporate number, employees will feel like they belong to a community and, therefore, will desire to contribute to the vision and purpose of that community. As the organization retains its employees and gains the reputation of having a team-centric culture, it will be more likely that high performance, highly skilled workers will wish to be part of that company. In turn, as more high performance, highly skilled workers are recruited and retained, the more productive and effective the organization becomes. As the productivity and effectiveness of the organizations increases, more focus is placed on developing leaders to continue this increased level of productivity. As leaders are being developed effectively, they will have the greatest level of understanding as to how to sustain long-term organizational success and the cycle is able to continue for years to come.

Summary

There are numerous critical success factors with regard to leadership and followership that impact long-term organizational success. This literature review focused specifically on offering definitions of these two roles, their levels of importance, and the primary characteristics/traits that were deemed most desirable by organizations. There was also a focus on certain issues facing long-term success within companies and how these issues can be overcome via the highlighted critical success factors.
The relationship between leaders and followers cannot be denied, nor should it be. One cannot exist without the other. Thus, it is far more beneficial for organizations to deem this relationship a partnership rather than an opportunity for one to dominate the other. Only when this concept is truly understood and accepted by an organization and its people, will culture shift and long-term success be the outcome.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The following chapter outlines the methodology used throughout this research study. Specifically, it describes who the subjects are that participated, the requirements to participation, when the study took place, and how data was collected.

The Research Instrument

In order to create a new job performance evaluation system for the employees of SRMCS, the researcher received as much input from the employees of the organization as possible. A ten-question qualitative survey was created (see Appendix A). Of these ten questions, eight were related specifically to job performance, including feedback about the current evaluation system and input about what the new system should include. The remaining two questions related to the hiring process and how to choose optimal candidates for employment when positions become vacant.

Participation Requirements

The only requirement to participate in this study was that the subject had to be a current employee of Swan River Montessori Charter School and Children’s House Program. The demographics of the individual employees were not deemed important and are not addressed anywhere in this thesis.
Description of the Subjects

Of the 26 total employees of SRMCE, the researchers received responses from 14. Of the 14, various positions throughout the organization were represented. Job positions included lead Montessori teachers, classroom assistants, special education, paraprofessionals, office personnel and administration.

Description of the Data Collection Process

The survey was distributed via email the first week of October in 2008. The employees were asked to complete the survey within two week’s time. When completed, they were to submit it back to the researcher via email, if possible, or to submit a hard copy. All of these survey responses are located in Appendix B and are in the random order they were received.

After the data was collected, the researcher compiled the information into a table (see Chapter 4) in order to clearly see and understand the input and feedback that was being provided by the subjects. From this data, a new job performance evaluation system was created and presented to the Swan River administration (see Appendix D). The goal is for this system to be utilized for the upcoming mid-year formal employee evaluations in January of 2009.

Summary

The methodology used for this study included a ten-question qualitative survey that was distributed to the 26 employees of SRMCS. The data outlined in the next chapter includes all of the feedback received from the 14 subjects that responded. The purpose of obtaining this information was to create a new job performance evaluation system for the SRMCS organization.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Results from Employee Survey and Researcher’s Summaries

The following pages provide all of the written survey responses from the participating employees of SRMCS. Each question is written as it was on the survey and is followed by the response given by each subject as well as the researcher’s summary of the subject’s response.

QUESTION ONE: Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

Subject One: The director.

Researcher’s Summary: Superior.

Subject Two: Paraprofessionals, general education teachers, assistants, director, and parents. All of these people make the fluency of my job smooth they all have a role in my student’s lives. If I do my job well, it makes their job that much easier.

Researcher’s Summary: All people in direct contact with subject’s position.

Subject Three: The employees’ superior should know best how those we work with would characterize our strengths and weaknesses pertinent to job performance. We work in a small staff environment thus tensions should be obvious.

Researcher’s Summary: Superior.

Subject Four: Me, the lead teacher and the director The lead teacher sees and works directly with the assistant. I think I should also evaluate my performance based on how understand expectations and what might be potential barriers for me completing my job.

Researcher’s Summary: Direct superior and head superior.

Subject Five: Colleagues who work at my grade level because they are the most likely to observe and know what and how I am teaching in my classroom, they are more aware of my interactions with the students, their parents, and coworkers… they work directly with me in decision making situations, problem solving, etc. They are familiar with the goals and reasonable expectations specifically dealing with my age group. They have the most contact with me and know me the best. I also think it is important for an administrator to be involved to some extent with employee evaluations.

Researcher’s Summary: Age-level peer teachers & head superior.
Subject Six: Board of Directors, Staff, and parents

Researcher’s Summary: All people in direct contact with subject’s position.

Subject Seven: Besides the immediate supervisor, I think that the employee should be given the option to request feedback from their peers. This can provide the employee with valuable input. They can then assess what steps to take if there are areas that need improvement.

Researcher’s Summary: Peers & head superior.

Subject Eight: The teachers, in that if I’m running late with lunch, it puts their schedules off. Cathy, Katie and Sandy… they are all in a position to listen and watch how I do my job and best able to point out good and bad of that performance.

Researcher’s Summary: Administrative superiors.

Subject Nine: Mainly the director, but also peers since they need to work together to make the school successful. Peers can also contribute information on where the employee shines and what they might need help working on.

Researcher’s Summary: Peers & head superior.

Subject Ten: I think with my position as a lead Montessori teacher, that the director Sandy should be the contributing member. For assistant teachers, I think it should be the lead Montessori teacher they work with and the director. I feel the lead teachers know how the assistant performs their job more than the director, due to the fact that the lead teacher spends the entire day with her assistant.

Researcher’s Summary: Direct superior & head superior.

Subject Eleven: Sandy and Katie because they are the ones who oversee the entire school and most held accountable to “higher ups”. I also believe that peer evaluation can be useful, but it can also be harmful. For example, if an evaluator is great buddies with the teacher or vice versa, that can get in the way of a “constructive” evaluation. Great caution needs to be taken if this were to be a factor in the evaluation of an employee. With proper training focused on the students while evaluating, peer evaluation could also be considered.

Researcher’s Summary: Administrative superiors & possibly peers.

Subject Twelve: Sandy. She’s the director of Swan River. Possibly Katie also, but I think Sandy would be better because of her elementary experience in a Montessori classroom.

Researcher’s Summary: Administrative superior with specific Montessori background.
Subject Thirteen: Sandy and two or three assistance. No one (from SRMCS) really sees me teaching at the MCC. The assistants sometimes see a beginning or an end to my class. Sandy because she is the director and is my boss.

Researcher’s Summary: Head superior.

Subject Fourteen: The director and a peer teacher because they have the best understanding of the position and job description.

Researcher’s Summary: Head superior & peer teachers.

QUESTION ONE SUMMARY:

Of the fourteen subjects that responded to this survey, eleven stated that their direct/head superior should be the primary contributing member of his/her job performance evaluation. Four of fourteen stated that peer co-workers should also be included in the process while two of fourteen stated that all people directly involved with the subject’s job position should be included.
QUESTION TWO: When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

Subject One: The first year of employment, every two years after that.

Researcher’s Summary: Less than annually.

Subject Two: I feel that the employees should have their jobs evaluated two times a year. There is no reason to keep an ineffective team member employed. There are many highly qualified teachers who are currently not employed so there is no reason to have nothing but the best.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually.

Subject Three: Annually seems good. Never on a Friday. You don’t want to leave an employee time to obsess over some minor constructive criticism.

Researcher’s Summary: Annually.

Subject Four: Generally twice a year, at the beginning of a school year to lay out expectations and at the end to see if they are satisfied. I guess if there is a problem sometime in the middle it would only be fair to meet and discuss and potential concerns. I don’t think concerns should go unmentioned until a performance review. Simply because it would not give an employee time to work on or clear up any problems.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually unless there are issues to be addressed.

Subject Five: End of the year, once a year

Researcher’s Summary: Annually.

Subject Six: Administration and Facilities—after 3 months then annually, Teaching Staff—twice a year. November and April

Researcher’s Summary: Annually for administration, bi-annually for staff.

Subject Seven: Annually. The appraisal should be done before the budget is determined for the next fiscal year. Naturally, objectives would be set at the beginning of the school year. I recommend informal quarterly reviews to discuss the progress made on the objectives/goals. The “formal” annual appraisal should contain NO surprises.

Researcher’s Summary: Annual formal evaluations, quarterly informal evaluations.

Subject Eight: Informal evaluation at 3 months for new employee, 6 month evaluation if necessary based on job performance, otherwise 1 one year formal written evaluation.
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Researcher’s Summary: Annually with probationary period for new employees.

Subject Nine: I believe that employees should be evaluated twice during the year. Both half way through the year and again at the end of the year.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually.

Subject Ten: I think the employees of Swan River should be evaluated twice a year; in the months of January and May.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually.

Subject Eleven: Once year? Maybe less if a teacher or other employee has been there longer (3–5 years?) and had good reviews throughout that time.

Researcher’s Summary: Annually or less if long-term employee.

Subject Twelve: Once or twice a year. It might be good to have one of the observations with notice that you were going to be observed. It seems like Murphy’s Law sometimes that things don’t go as expected when you are being observed without notice.

Researcher’s Summary: Annually or bi-annually.

Subject Thirteen: I think employees should be evaluated twice a year their first two years at SRMCS and then once a year after that. The first evaluation should be within the first four months of school starting and the other two the three months after that.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually initially then annually after two year period.

Subject Fourteen: I’m somewhat inclined to say twice a year, once in the winter and again at the end of the year. My feeling is that if there are things to be improved upon, the staff member then has the remainder of the year to improve before the decision is made for the following year.

Researcher’s Summary: Bi-annually.

QUESTION TWO SUMMARY:

Based on the data provided, eight of the fourteen subjects indicated that employees should be formally evaluated bi-annually or twice per school year. Seven subjects indicated that evaluations be given annually or once per school year. Some subjects stated that evaluations may need to take place more frequently if there are issues to be addressed with a particular staff member.
QUESTION THREE: What specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated on? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

Subject One: Punctuality, competence with following the directives of the lead teacher, respectful demeanor with staff, students and parents.

Researcher’s Summary: Punctuality, competence, respect for others.

Subject Two: The ability to present lessons that meet the needs of all types of learners (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc.), involved in their students during work time, effective classroom management, positive attitude, enthusiastic, motivational.

Researcher’s Summary: Teaching skills, attitude.

Subject Three: Communication skills with staff i.e. does teacher seek professional help when needed? How willing is the teacher able to try a new method to better approach a students’ needs? Does the teacher collaborate? When advice is given, is it followed? Is the teacher gaining the confidence to make decisions on their own? How much support is needed? Does the teacher create conflict among staff or students or help to minimize it?

Researcher’s Summary: Teaching skills, communication skills, adaptation, and collaboration.

Subject Four: General day-to-day responsibilities such as being on time and following basic guidelines, showing up to required meetings, turning in time sheets etc. The ability to work with teacher and other co-workers. Ability to take direction and completing specific tasks Ability to work with children and be a support in the classroom. I think an assistant should be evaluated on working with children.

Researcher’s Summary: Punctuality, respect, ability to work with others, professionalism.

Subject Five: I think the current employee evaluation lists the same things I would come up with.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current system.

Subject Six: (Did not respond to question.)

Subject Seven:

1. Ensure the safety of the children during the school day. This includes verifying who is entering the school. Maintaining a safe and secure environment so that the children can flourish in a calm setting.
2. Customer responsiveness. My customers are the parents and the children attending the school. My goal is to respond and get back to the parents if they have any questions and/or concerns. I think that everyone at Swan River needs to respond to E
Mails, telephone calls within 8 hours. This would be the maximum time in responding.
3. Meet or exceed all due dates set by the Dept. of Education (MDE) for reports due to the state.
4. Report to the Dept of Health the annual immunization data.
5. Process all billing and mail to School Business Solutions based on the agreement between Swan River and SBS. Respond to any questions in regards to outstanding bills. Verify that the Payment Disbursement Forms contain all the correct data.
6. Respond to any queries about Swan River from interested parents in enrolling their child at the school.
7. Partner with District 882 the busing of the children who live in the Monticello 882 school district.
8. Provide records/information to other school districts.
9. Prepare for and participate in the annual audit.

Researcher’s Summary: Providing a safe school environment, great customer service, punctuality, organizational skills.

Subject Eight: Accuracy of office work (phone message, data entry etc). Maintaining a smooth running lunch program, accurate lunch counts to reduce waste, being sure the #’s are correct in the system and accurately reporting those numbers in a timely manner to the state.

Researcher’s Summary: Organizational skills, detailed, punctual.

Subject Nine: Following the Montessori Philosophy
  Classroom management, flow of the environment
  Performance ability to meet job requirements
  Ability to work with your team
  Dependability

Researcher’s Summary: Understanding of Montessori Method, team player, dependable.

Subject Ten: A teacher in a lead Montessori role should be evaluated on: preparedness for the day, professionalism with peers, professionalism with parents, respect of children, appropriate level of discipline given, knowledge of where their students are academically, communication with parents, order and cleanliness of room, promptness of deadlines, new work or ideas created yearly, record keeping, level of happiness, respect given from parents, knowledge of materials and respect for the method.

Researcher’s Summary: Professionalism, teaching skills, organizational skills, attitude, and understanding of Montessori method.

Subject Eleven: Ability to engage the students, appropriately challenging the students, seeing student improvement and learning throughout the year, the ability to plan and be prepared daily, flexibility in changing a lesson when it’s not going as planned, flexibility to change schedule to accommodate the school as a whole, communication with parents and/or other school employees.
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Researcher’s Summary: Teaching skills, organizational skills, adaptability, and communication skills.

Subject Twelve: I think the current evaluation form is very thorough: Professional knowledge, Responsibility, Initiative, Interpersonal Relations, etc. Sometimes I find it difficult to rate my performance on so many specific items. Maybe we could use a checklist as a guideline and write about each category in regards to strengths and possible weaknesses in each area.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject indicates satisfaction with current system, but then offers new suggestions such as checklists and qualitative feedback opportunities.

Subject Thirteen: Class management, improvement in a percentage of the children’s fitness from beginning of year till end

Researcher’s Summary: Teaching skills.

Subject Fourteen: Relationships with students, parents, fellow staff members – how well you communicate with each, what their feelings are towards you, effectiveness with curriculum – meaning how well do you get through what you are supposed to do. Contribution to school community, i.e. attendance at events, as well as attendance on school days.

Researcher’s Summary: Communication skills, teaching skills, engagement.

QUESTION THREE SUMMARY:

Subjects specified a variety of areas that should be included on an evaluation. Six of fourteen stated that various components of what the researcher has deemed as “teaching skills.” Four of fourteen stated that organizational skills were important. Two stated that an understanding of the Montessori Method was important while two of fourteen also stated that they were satisfied with the current system being utilized at Swan River. Other areas cited by subjects were attitude, professionalism, punctuality, and communication skills.
QUESTION FOUR: What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

Subject One: I do not feel that staff you work with can evaluate a peer. The smaller the educational setting …the task becomes harder.

Researcher’s Summary: Opposed.

Subject Two: I feel that random peer evaluation should be utilized and I feel that it should be unannounced. I feel that teachers put on a show when they know they are being evaluated. If any teacher can be evaluated at any time I think that good work ethic would always be practiced.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive.

Subject Three: I’m not sure. I think that the criteria have to be clear and evaluated over time in a very unemotional way.

Researcher’s Summary: Undecided.

Subject Four: I think peer evaluation is good for the sake of strengthening the school and the mission of the school. I think it is good for growth and skill building. I think it absolutely has to have a clear and stated purpose. I think it needs to be obvious what the mission is and understood by the entire staff. I think the purpose of a peer evaluation would be to strengthen the skill set in a staff member towards filling the mission of the school. The issue with peer evaluation comes when one does not know what they are looking for in an evaluation or there is conflict between peers then it becomes subjective and unhelpful. I also think the staff being evaluated needs to agree on the criteria so they know what they are being evaluated for.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but must have clear guidelines.

Subject Five: I don’t feel qualified to evaluate classrooms that are not at my grade level especially without having that training, although I do think there is merit in observing in peers’ classrooms for the purpose of learning and gaining new insights and ideas. So I would have to say no.

Researcher’s Summary: Opposed.

Subject Six: I think that it can be the best evaluation and it should be used. I think some discussion or training on how to evaluate should take place.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but must have clear guidelines/training.

Subject Seven: I think that Peer evaluation can be a positive tool. I think that it should be utilized at Swan River. Peer evaluation is a risk taking step. It can, though, give an individual an opportunity to obtain more in depth feedback. In a work setting, it is sometimes difficult to know how an individual is perceived. With peer evaluation, “blind spots” can be identified. It
can also provide positive feedback which is something that everyone needs. People sometimes do not realize the impact that they have on others. The more open that we are to receiving respectful and thoughtful feedback can provide us with a wealth of knowledge. I do NOT think, though, that the peer evaluation should determine the pay treatment at the beginning of this process. If the goal is to eventually utilize the peer evaluation in the pay treatment, then the process should be introduced and employees become accustomed to this method over a period of time. For example, take about three appraisal years before including the peer evaluation as a portion of the pay treatment.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but should not be used to determine pay.

Subject Eight: If a peer were to give input for an evaluation to my supervisor and it was worked into my evaluation then I don’t have a problem with that. I do believe however, that the use of peer evaluations can build animosity and conflict over time… just based on past experiences.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive if anonymous, otherwise opposed.

Subject Nine: I think it should be used since peers work together to create a team. If a team member is not contributing to the team it cannot create success. I do believe though that the director should have the most say in an evaluation to even out any bias.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but with Director’s input.

Subject Ten: I do think that peers definitely THINK they have a correct opinion of their peers. However, I don't think that peers evaluation would be helpful. I do agree with the saying, "Sometimes the truth hurts." Sometimes one needs to hear the truth. In a professional setting, I would be afraid it would create hard feeling. I would not be for peer evaluation. I would however be open to hearing the argument of those who would be for it.

Researcher’s Summary: Opposed, but open to hearing more on subject.

Subject Eleven: Ooh, see number 1!

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but must have clear guidelines.

Subject Twelve: I think it is okay on an informal basis as in observations, but not as part of a formal evaluation.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive in informal evaluation, opposed in formal evaluation.

Subject Thirteen: Yes, it would be great to hear what my peers see and think. Only if you can handle the feedback from a peer, not everyone can. Maybe have the responses typed with no names.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive, but needs to be anonymous.
Subject Fourteen: I think peer evaluation is quite valuable. The feedback that you can get from peers is different than what you might hear from a supervisor. Yes I think it should be utilized at SRMCS because I feel that it could make us a stronger staff and encourage more collaboration. On the other hand it could divide such a small staff, if people have a hard time receiving feedback from peers.

Researcher’s Summary: Supportive.

QUESTION FOUR SUMMARY:

Of the fourteen subjects, three stated they were opposed to peer evaluation. One subject was undecided on the issue. Ten of fourteen were supportive of the idea, but many cited stipulations such as providing clear guidelines to employees, must be anonymous, should not determine pay, or must also include input from director.
QUESTION FIVE: How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should utilized by the evaluator?

Subject One: Verbally, by the Director. The evaluation would direct the need for specific continuing educational needs.

Researcher’s Summary: Verbally by head superior.

Subject Two: I feel that feedback should be given confidentially, in a positive format, and included a list of things to work on. I would utilize this feedback by trying to work on each weakness. I feel that the evaluator should remain confidential and the information should remain confidential.

Researcher’s Summary: Written format stating areas for improvement that is very confidential.

Subject Three: It is best to give every worker a list of strengths and a list of goals for improvement. The lists are used as milestones by both sides to be used as comparison to promote growth and improvement.

Researcher’s Summary: Written format outlining strengths and areas for improvement.

Subject Four: I think a performance evaluation should be collaborated. I think it should be for the purpose of professional growth and to strengthen the school.

Researcher’s Summary: Collaboratively, focused on growth.

Subject Five: I like written and discussion of feedback. Follow up discussion should take place, especially if there are concerns.

Researcher’s Summary: Written and verbal format.

Subject Six: In writing and verbally. It should be used to set goals and measure growth.

Researcher’s Summary: Written and verbal format.

Subject Seven: The feedback would be in writing. It would be given directly to the individual. The evaluator would not see the feedback until the third year. In this way, everyone would become accustomed to receiving the feedback. It would also allow the establishment of a time frame to include this feedback in the pay treatment. I also think that the employee should provide feedback to the supervisor. An appraisal should be a “two way street”.

Researcher’s Summary: Written format and focuses on both the evaluator and evaluatee.
Subject Eight: Feedback should be given as written topics with verbal explanation. I would hope I would put any feedback given to use to improve my job performance. I think feedback should be utilized as a tool to improve performance and correct poor performance.

Researcher’s Summary: Written and verbal format for purposes of growth.

Subject Nine: Meet with the individual receiving feedback with suggestions and comments in writing so it is easier to remember and follow up on.

Researcher’s Summary: Written and verbal format.

Subject Ten: I think the performance evaluations should be given in a sit down eyeball to eyeball meeting. To be given it in a sealed envelope without any communication over it would not be productive. I utilize the concerns on the evaluation by making them a goal for the following year. I take the positive feedback and build even more on them. I think the evaluator should keep the evaluation from year to year to ensure the concerned areas are improved on and everything else stays consistent.

Researcher’s Summary: Written and verbal format that is archived.

Subject Eleven: In person from at least one the evaluators. I would try to improve my lessons and interactions with students, parents, and staff members as needed. The evaluator could use this to see a “big picture” of the staff as a whole and how things are going with student progress, overall school climate, and where there is need for improvement in specific areas (i.e. a subject area, planning, communication among staff, etc.)

Researcher’s Summary: Verbally. Director could use all gathered information to gain an overall sense of the culture/identity of the organization.

Subject Twelve: It’s helpful to read over a written evaluation before talking in person with the director. Hopefully I would learn from constructive criticism. I think having goals for what you want the employee to work on is helpful.

Researcher’s Summary: Written then followed by verbal format.

Subject Thirteen: I would like it in a sealed envelope, with the feedback typed. I would use it to improve my teaching abilities so I can better my student’s lives.

Researcher’s Summary: Written, confidential format.

Subject Fourteen: I would like my feedback in a meeting with my supervisor, along with suggestions for areas of improvement and how to accomplish that. I use it for self reflection and guidance to improve my job performance.

Researcher’s Summary: Verbally by supervisor.
QUESTION FIVE SUMMARY:

Of the fourteen responses, three subjects stated that feedback should be given in a verbal format. Four of fourteen stated that feedback be offered in a written format while six of fourteen stated that it be in both written and verbal formats. Various subjects also stated that this feedback be confidential and for the purposes of professional growth.
**QUESTION SIX:** What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

Subject One: Fund continuing education.

Researcher’s Summary: School could pay for continuing education for staff.

Subject Two: I would encourage the sharing of ideas and techniques. I also feel that it would create a bond between the staff.

Researcher’s Summary: School could provide a forum for staff to share ideas/techniques.

Subject Three: I would like to know what you mean as it relates to my job. Do you mean educational opportunities or is it getting advice from colleagues? If it’s the latter, keep up the good work.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is pleased with interactions with colleagues.

Subject Four: As far as an assistant position, I am not sure. I think that general expectations could be clearer. How do I know if I am doing well or needing improvement?

Researcher’s Summary: Subject desires clearer job expectations and feedback about strengths and areas for improvement.

Subject Five: I like the idea of providing time and money to attend workshops, classes, etc. in areas that I find I need more information or education.

Researcher’s Summary: School could pay for continuing education for staff.

Subject Six: Offer opportunities for networking. Also, feedback.

Researcher’s Summary: School could provide a forum for networking and gaining feedback.

Subject Seven: The Swan River Staff Family has been tremendously supportive of my role at the school. My professional needs are met through seminars/conferences held at MDE.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current provisions made by school.

Subject Eight: Provide positive feedback when deserved and guidance when needed and / or requested.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject desires stronger input/feedback loop.

Subject Nine: Provide opportunities for continuing education like in the past for classroom management, mental health, etc.
Researcher’s Summary: School could pay for continuing education for staff.

Subject Ten: SRMCS I feel could support me by listening to my suggestions on issues that a teacher should and does know better then administrative personal. For example; kindergartners placement into first grade for the following year. Also, to maybe hear a compliment not only during evaluations would help teachers feel better about what they do everyday.

Researcher’s Summary: Administration could provide more ongoing positive feedback to staff (outside of evaluations). Listen to staff input/feedback, especially in regard to areas where teachers may have more/better insight than administration.

Subject Eleven: Let me know when I’ve done something that is really liked or when student progress is seen. If I am doing something that needs improvement, approach me about it (kindly please) but also have ideas to help me improve. Also, keep me informed of any/all opportunities for staff development (classes, clock hours, etc.). Does the school pay for any staff development opportunities out of the school day? (For example, the music educator’s convention in February in Minneapolis?)

Researcher’s Summary: School could pay for more continuing education for staff. Provide more ongoing feedback outside of evaluations.

Subject Twelve: Keep looking for workshops that are available that might interest Montessori teachers. It is nice to know when Swan River is willing to pay all or part of the cost of the workshop.

Researcher’s Summary: School could pay for more continuing education for staff.

Subject Thirteen: SRMCS has done so much to support me already! Get a bigger school with their own gym. (J/K) The staff does a great job bringing the students on time and keeping them quiet till they get in the gym.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current provisions made by school.

Subject Fourteen: We have made some changes this year that have already begun to help me, weekly meetings with the staff at the same level and a scope and sequence we developed together. I would like to have more observations by my supervisor and peers and of my peers to gather ideas for how to handle things in my classroom.

Researcher’s Summary: Increase classroom observations.

QUESTION SIX SUMMARY:

Of the fourteen subjects, five cited that Swan River should provide/fund more opportunities for continuing education for staff members. Three subjects stated that they were satisfied with the current provisions by Swan River. The remaining responses ranged from increasing classroom observations to offering more input/feedback to employees outside of formal evaluations.
QUESTION SEVEN: If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Subject One: I would do it differently. I would have everyone start at 100% and assume that they will stay there. Then I would let the staff know when they have not met the expectations detailed in their job description. I would then give the staff opportunities to learn the skills needed.

Researcher’s Summary: Offer feedback and provide opportunities to improve on weaknesses.

Subject Two: I would include various questions on performance. It would be in a question/answer format.

Researcher’s Summary: Written format.

Subject Three: It would include a good description of the workers job goals or requirements. A scale on which to measure how well the goals are being met. (There are templates for this) The key is that each person has new goals and areas that they are commended on. Experience doesn’t change the formula it refines the goals.

Researcher’s Summary: Provide clear job expectations and a quantitative scale for performance measurement. Focus on goals.

Subject Four: I would state clear direct objectives such as is able to complete basic tasks, strives to connect with students, is flexible, and works well with others. Other indirect measures might be enthusiasm, positive attitude, decision making, objectivity, and punctuality.

Researcher’s Summary: Provide direct and indirect measurements with clear objectives to be met.

Subject Five: It would look very similar to what we are currently using as I feel what we use is adequate

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current evaluation system.

Subject Six: Strengths, weaknesses, recommendations for improvement.

Researcher’s Summary: Focus on strengths and areas for improvement.

Subject Seven: (You are asking for a lot!!) I would include subject headings and room for comments. The statements would be appropriate for the particular job function. I would have a box to check to show that the individual did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations. The last page would leave room for evaluator and employee comments.

Researcher’s Summary: Use a scale with room for written comments.
Subject Eight: I would like to see something that reflects the job description. I’m not in favor of rating systems. I like having text with good and bad spelled out as well as opportunities that I may have missed and things that I have done well but were unexpected.

Researcher’s Summary: Focus more on job description, avoid scales, and use qualitative measures.

Subject Nine: Job duties summary, area for comments and suggestions.

Researcher’s Summary: Focus on job description and written feedback.

Subject Ten: Ahhh.....Duh......Dunno know.......  

Researcher’s Summary: Subject did not provide specific input/feedback.

Subject Eleven: Sorry Katie, I’m going to skip this one as I really don’t know!

Researcher’s Summary: Subject did not provide specific input/feedback.

Subject Twelve: I think it should focus on strengths and weaknesses in different categories. Sometimes it’s hard to rate yourself on checklists. It might have a section for writing about strengths and weaknesses.

Researcher’s Summary: Use a qualitative system that focuses on strengths and areas for improvement.

Subject Thirteen: Classroom management, meeting the needs of the children in that subject matter, communicates well with parents when needed, communicates well with the staff. A number chart, 1-5 poor, meets, and exceeds.

Researcher’s Summary: Use qualitative measurement system.

Subject Fourteen: I think there would be a self-evaluation component, peer review, observations by supervisor and peers and a meeting with my supervisor. I’m not sure exactly what it would look like.

Researcher’s Summary: Combination of self, peer and superior evaluations.

QUESTION SEVEN SUMMARY:

Researcher received a vast array of responses to this question. Three subjects indicated a desire to use a written, quantitative scale format while two desired a qualitative system.
QUESTION EIGHT: Do you hold any expectation for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

Subject One: I would expect administrators to have suggestions for improving job performance through in-house education.

Researcher’s Summary: School should provide means to an employee to work on weaknesses.

Subject Two: Teachers that are using the evaluation to their advantage and making appropriate corrections should be rewarded and those that are not meeting expectations should be given an opportunity to change or be replaced.

Researcher’s Summary: Reward/punishment system.

Subject Three: Absolutely. The most recent evaluation is placed side by side with the new one so the evaluator can reflect (celebrate) with the employee on how well they did and help to further stretch and get more out of each employee. I would hope if there was a bigger issue it would be taken care of outside of the evaluation process on a need basis.

Researcher’s Summary: Compare current evaluation with previous evaluations to show growth or lack of growth over time.

Subject Four: I believe for the sake of the school’s success that you have to be in unison with the mission and the staff of the school. What would purpose of a job evaluation if there are no expectations? Since our school has a compensation plan that has no bearing on performance I am not sure what the post-evaluation expectation would be.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject desires clear expectations and questions post-evaluation expectations when performance is not tied to pay.

Subject Five: I would expect that the administrator would communicate with me as to how things were going post evaluation. An example would be that in the section where goals/areas to improve is, that the administrator would be checking with me to see if I had been able to meet the goals I had set for myself.

Researcher’s Summary: Superior would provide ongoing feedback based on stated goals in evaluation.

Subject Six: I would expect to be held accountable to meet expectations once I was made aware of the areas of weakness and a plan of action was formed. If positive growth was not attained, I would expect to be let go.

Researcher’s Summary: Growth must take place based on stated goals in evaluation. If no growth, then termination.
Subject Seven: I would expect that if I was not meeting expectations that an action plan would be established. Again, I must emphasize that the appraisal should NOT have any surprises. If the employee is performing below expectations, then the supervisor should have taken steps throughout the school year. If progress has not been made then the appraisal and pay treatment would reflect the job performance.

Researcher’s Summary: Create a plan to meet stated goals in evaluation, but issues must be addressed both in and outside of evaluation process.

Subject Eight: If I need improvement I expect to be held to that and a follow up on those areas in 90 days. If I have done well then pay increases are always welcome!

Researcher’s Summary: Probationary period for improvement.

Subject Nine: I would want to see that they are helping the individual grow to a better member of the SRMCS family. Follow up with ideas in which they can be more successful.

Researcher’s Summary: More follow up after evaluation.

Subject Ten: This is one I feel strongly about. Yes, I do believe there should be a post-evaluation after an evaluation that has concerns. There should be a time table set, say 6 weeks, to make the concern a non-concern or to show that there has been significant progress made. It should also be looked at again at the following evaluation. I do not believe when children's educations are at stake that there should ever be a, "wait and see" kind of attitude. A teacher should be performing at his/her best and not given vast amounts of time to improve.

Researcher’s Summary: Improvement should be seen in a specific time frame and if not met, stronger measures should be taken.

Subject Eleven: If improvement was needed, I expect the administration would help that person to improve and evaluate as needed to see if improvement is made. If over time the staff member showed no initiative to change/improve and no improvement was made, administration would have to evaluate what is best for the students and staff of SRMCS and act accordingly.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject alludes to termination if improvement is not made.

Subject Twelve: It’s reasonable that administration can ask employees to work on any weaknesses or have goals for improvement, especially if there is a time-frame with measurable goals.

Researcher’s Summary: Employees should be provided with specific measurable goals and a time frame to meet these goals.

Subject Thirteen: I would hope that the administration would suggest ways to fix the problem(s) and give them a certain amount of time to get with the program.
Researcher’s Summary: Administration should provide time and opportunities for employee improvement.

Subject Fourteen: Yes I do. I feel that if there aren’t any actions/expectations, then there isn’t much point to an evaluation. I think if a review has gone well, there needs to be acknowledgement of the job being done. I’m not sure what form that could take, raise maybe? On the other hand if it hasn’t gone well, there needs to be a plan, support and a probationary period with the realization at the end that if expectations aren’t met there will be consequences, i.e. pay cut, no job the following year.

Researcher’s Summary: Reward/punishment system.

QUESTION EIGHT SUMMARY:

Of the fourteen responses, five subjects cited offering time as a critical component to administrative action. Staff should be given a specific time period to show growth/improvement. Four subjects alluded to termination if growth is not measured within the cited time frame. Six subjects believe that stated goals must be provided with the expectation that growth will occur.
**QUESTION NINE:** In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to evaluate if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

Subject One: I would start with clear job descriptions, then I would have the director interview those interested, and then have the candidates job shadow.

Researcher’s Summary: Outline job duties, head superior interviews. Top candidates would shadow a similar position.

Subject Two: I feel that teachers should be hired based on their previous performance through observation. Anyone can score high on question/answer interviews but that doesn’t mean they will be a great classroom teacher.

Researcher’s Summary: Potential candidates should be observed in a classroom setting.

Subject Three: I like the current model. It says to prospective employees that you take this decision seriously. I thought that I had time to articulate what was needed with the thoughtful questions you provided.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current hiring system.

Subject Four: Again, I think it is important to have a clear mission and vision. I think it depends on the role, on the kinds of skills our school is looking for. Can a person be trained for the job or are there certain characteristics that a candidate needs for the role.

Researcher’s Summary: Candidate must be able to support the school’s mission and vision.

Subject Five: I think it is ideal if all of the current employees who would be working in close contact with the potential candidate have the opportunity to screen resumes and be a part of the interviewing process.

Researcher’s Summary: Team interview by those employees that will be in direct contact with this job position should be part of the hiring process.

Subject Six: The ideal hiring practice would be to be able to observe the person on the job. The way our employees treat others is important to the success of SRMCS. We are educators, but we offer a service and we should also be modeling how to treat others at all times. Also, for non Montessorians, there would be an introductory Montessori Workshop.

Researcher’s Summary: Potential candidates should be observed in a classroom setting and/or receive training on the Montessori method.

Subject Seven: I think that the hiring process is working well at Swan River. The opening is posted on certain web sites. The resumes are reviewed and potential candidates are scheduled
for an interview. The appropriate staff participates in the interview. A decision is then made after careful review of the data. The employee is then offered the position.

Researcher’s Summary: Subject is satisfied with current hiring system.

Subject Eight: I like the way I was interviewed with both Katie and Sandy. I think having two people doing the interview gives more opportunity for discussion and feedback. I also believe in contacting former employers, although they can’t give much info, they can give the basics, such as if an employee is eligible for rehire. That can be telling, depending on the reason. I also believe that how an employee leaves and or talks about a former employer should be taken into consideration.

Researcher’s Summary: Focus on the interview questions and recommendations of previous employers.

Subject Nine: Post job opening. Interview with small group such as director, team of teachers-the employees that will closely work with the new employee. Follow-up interview with top candidates.

Researcher’s Summary: Team interview followed by second interview for top candidates.

Subject Ten: For a lead Montessori teacher hiring for an assistant, they, along with the director, should be in the process. The lead Montessori teacher should also be allowed to have their own set of questions given to the potential new hire. For a specialist hiring i.e. music teacher or an art teacher, all Montessori teachers should be present. They should be able to sit on a panel, but not have the right to ask questions during the process. They should be able to vote unanimously and give comments. The director then could either use those votes to make her decision or let those votes weigh in on her decision.

Researcher’s Summary: Team interview followed by final decision made by school director.

Subject Eleven: I’m not sure what you are looking for in the hiring process, but I believe a candidate would need to show a true desire to work at SRMCS, not just be looking for a “job”. The person needs to have enthusiasm and experience working with children and new situations. They must also show flexibility as many situations arise that need to be worked through – changes in schedule, the multi-age classroom and the wide range of abilities this includes, etc.

Researcher’s Summary: Potential candidates should want a job at SRMCS, not just a job.

Subject Twelve: I think it would be helpful for E2 teachers to help interview E2 teachers, E1 teachers to help interview E1 teachers, and Early Childhood to interview EC teachers. It’s important that the interviewee understands that Charter School teachers probably put in more time after-hours than a regular public school district teacher. The candidate should have the proper Montessori training or be willing to get it.
Researcher’s Summary: Team interviews based on age/grade level of the students s/he would be interacting with. Knowledge of charter schools and of the Montessori Method.

Subject Thirteen: (Did not respond to question.)

Subject Fourteen: I think a series of interviews work well. Also a group interview allows both sides a sense of how they would work together.

Researcher’s Summary: Team interviews

QUESTION NINE SUMMARY:

Five of fourteen subjects stated that interviews should be done in a team format. Two stated that the potential candidate should be observed in a classroom setting. Two subjects cited that they were satisfied with the current hiring system at Swan River.
QUESTION TEN: What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these, characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

Subject One: An assistant must compliment the lead teacher. They need to follow sometimes, then lead and (at times) anticipate the needs of the students and teacher (sometimes without verbal cues.) They become the link between directions given and support needed. The most important characteristic needed for this job would be a heightened skill in observation. The assistant needs to be able to multi-task. Experience in the classroom would help, but being able to “think outside the box” is just as important. Being a parent is helpful, but not a necessity.

Researcher’s Summary: Taking direction, anticipation of needs, good observer, multi-tasker, experience in classroom, thinking outside the box, parental insight.

Subject Two: Outgoing, creative, consistent, thorough, positive, receptive, willing to make changes, thrive on challenge, sense of humor, pleasant, good role model inside and outside of school, active in the community.

Researcher’s Summary: Extroverted, positive, happy and able to role model effectively.

Subject Three: Look for employees that emulate the characteristics of our present staff. Experience, reason, compassion, order and cleverness. Try to pick the most flexible or open minded choice. How positive or negative is your candidate? If they express negative views at the interview, they will most likely surface during work. While we all need to address issues from time to time, negativity need not cloud an interview unless it is an inherent personality component. Job history. How many jobs have they worked at in x amount of time. Job unrest could indicate trouble relating to coworkers

Researcher’s Summary: Experience, attitude, job history.

Subject Four: For an assistant role I think the person needs to be a good fit with the teacher, having compatible skills, able to take direction, able to work with children. As far as a Montessori school, I think the candidate must be open to learning the method and work with the teacher and students according to the method. I see the assistant’s role as a supportive role to the teacher and students. I feel that each classroom might need something different in an assistant depending on the needs of the teacher. Some of the qualities I value are an ability to connect with children, ability to work with a teacher.

Researcher’s Summary: Compatibility with lead teacher, takes direction, understanding of Montessori Method, supportive, connection with children.

Subject Five: I personally value someone with prior experience and someone who presents themselves as being very professional. I work with young children so I think it is important that the candidate be a warm, caring person while at the same time he or she knows how to be respectfully firm and consistent with children. I also value someone who holds high expectations for the children and for the school in which they work. A good work ethic is a plus.
I think flexibility and a positive attitude make good qualities in a co worker. Creativity and a willingness to share good ideas, materials, etc., with others is a plus. Professionalism is probably the most important, while willingness to share is the least important.

Researcher’s Summary: Experience, professionalism, firm/consistent with children, work ethic, and willingness to share.

Subject Six: An understanding of Montessori method and someone who believes in the Montessori method. A person with good listening skills. I think the person should be someone who has a steady disposition and treats employees, students, and parents with respect. The person should model the Montessori method when dealing with others. The person should be able to delegate duties and have good organizational skills. Also, the Director should be able to motivate the staff.

Researcher’s Summary: Understanding Montessori method, good listening skills, respectful, organized, and able to delegate and motivate others.

Subject Seven:
1. Organized with a background in business and/or school office knowledge.
2. Customer oriented.
4. Can focus on meeting deadlines.
5. Able to multi-task.

All of the qualities are needed in this job function.

Researcher’s Summary: Organized, computer literate, punctual, multitasker.

Subject Eight: Someone who can multitask, willing to learn new things, not easily stressed out and can roll with changes. Most important I think maybe be a level headed person who can multitask.

Researcher’s Summary: Multitasker, attitude, willingness to learn.

Subject Nine: Qualifications- training
   Experience
   Flexibility to help out when needed, show up to parent nights, etc.
   Love of children
   Desire to create a positive Montessori environment for the children.

Researcher’s Summary: Understanding Montessori method, experience, flexibility, love for children.

Subject Ten: I would want to know their years of teaching Montessori, request many references, level of respect given to children, how true they stay to the Montessori method, what previous
schools they have taught at, where they got their training, if they are dressed professionally and use proper grammar.

Researcher’s Summary: Job history, understanding of the Montessori Method, professionalism.

Subject Eleven: In order most to least important - knowledge of the subject area and how to bring that knowledge to various age levels, lots of energy, creativity, organization, flexibility.

Researcher’s Summary: Understanding of the Montessori Method, knowledge of age groups, energy, and flexibility.

Subject Twelve: I would like them to be a team player. Someone who is willing to share ideas and/or materials and work together. I think it is also important that they realize there is a huge range in maturity from beginning 4th year students to ending 6th year students. I think it would be very important for the candidate to have some experience working with this age group. I think there is a big difference in personalities that work well with older children versus younger children. It might also be important for them to realize that we go to the Audubon once a year in case they aren’t the outdoors type!

Researcher’s Summary: Team player, willingness to share, experience with specific age group.

Subject Thirteen: (Did not respond to question.)

Subject Fourteen: I would look for experience, enthusiasm, knowledge base, composure, willingness to be involved in the community, openness to new ideas and ability to integrate them. I guess experience is actually one of the least important but still a necessary quality. Even though someone may have been in a school/teaching environment for a long time doesn’t automatically equate to being a good teacher or more specifically a good fit for this environment. Not sure which would be the most important because I feel you need a combination and a balance of the others.

Researcher’s Summary: Experience, knowledge, enthusiasm.

QUESTION TEN SUMMARY:

Seven of the fourteen responses indicated experience as being a critical quality when selecting a candidate for a position at Swan River. Five sited an understanding of the Montessori method as being of importance. Three sited multitasking. The remaining responses included characteristics such as extroverted, willingness to share, organized, takes direction, professionalism, and being a team player.
Compilation of Data

The following table provides a simplified summary of the data collected from the employees of SRMCS. They are divided by survey question with the responses listed from greatest to least.

**TABLE ONE**

**QUESTION ONE:** Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

Summary of Data:
1. 11 of 14 stated direct superior(s)
2. 4 of 14 stated peers
3. 2 of 14 stated all those in contact with that specific job position

**QUESTION TWO:** When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

Summary of Data:
1. 8 of 14 stated bi-annually or twice per academic year
2. 7 of 14 stated annually or once per academic year

**QUESTION THREE:** In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

Summary of Data:
1. 6 of 14 stated as determined by the researcher as “teaching skills”
2. 4 of 14 stated organizational skills
3. 2 of 14 stated an understanding of the Montessori Method
4. 2 of 14 stated they were satisfied with current evaluation system

**QUESTION FOUR:** What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

Summary of Data:
1. 10 of 14 support peer evaluation
2. 2 of 14 oppose peer evaluation
3. 1 of 14 is undecided at this time
QUESTION FIVE: How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

Summary of Data:
1. 6 of 14 stated both written and verbal formats
2. 4 of 14 stated written format
3. 3 of 14 stated verbal

QUESTION SIX: What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

Summary of Data:
1. 5 of 14 stated provide/fund more continuing education opportunities for staff
2. 3 of 14 stated they were satisfied with current provisions

QUESTION SEVEN: If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Summary of Data:
1. 3 of 14 stated they desired a written, quantitative scale format
2. 2 of 14 stated they desired a qualitative system

QUESTION EIGHT: Do you hold any expectation for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

Summary of Data:
1. 6 of 14 stated goals must be provided with expectation that growth will occur
2. 5 of 14 stated offering time to show improvement
3. 4 of 14 stated termination should occur if growth is not measured

QUESTION NINE: In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to evaluate if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

Summary of Data:
1. 5 of 14 stated team format
2. 2 of 14 stated candidate must be observed in classroom setting
3. 2 of 14 stated they are satisfied with the current hiring system
QUESTION TEN: What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these, characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

Summary of Data:
1. 7 of 14 stated experience
2. 5 of 14 stated an understanding of the Montessori Method
3. 3 of 14 stated multi-tasking

Summary of Results

Based on the above data, the following are the parameters or guidelines that, according to the employees of SRMCS, should be included in the newly created job performance evaluation system:

- Question One: The employee’s direct superior should be the primary contributing evaluating member. In the case of SRMCS, this would be the School Director.
- Question Two: Evaluation should take place twice per academic school year.
- Question Three: Employees should be primarily evaluated on their teaching skills, which may include, but are not limited to: meeting the needs of the students, collaboration, sharing of ideas, effective classroom management, ability to engage students, ability to challenge students, ability to plan and be prepared on a daily basis, and building relationships with co-workers, parents, and students.
- Question Four: Peers should be a part of the evaluation process.
- Question Five: Evaluation feedback should be given in both written and verbal formats.
- Question Six: Professional growth is cited as being a need from the employees. Specifically, they desire more than the 16 hours of continuing education opportunities that Swan River currently provides. If SRMCS provided 25 hours per academic year, the
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125 hours required by the State of Minnesota within five years to be re-licensed would be met.

- Question Seven: Format of evaluation system should provide clear job expectations, job performance goals, and should focus on both strengths and areas for improvement that are measurable.

- Question Eight: After an evaluation, there should be clear goals in place and the expectations should be stated by the evaluator as to how and when to meet those goals. If goals are not met, it is the expectation of the staff that action be taken, possibly even termination, if poor performance is ongoing or repeated.

- Question Nine: Potential candidates should be hired via a team interview, which includes the School Director and other employees who will be directly involved with the position once it is filled. The researcher suggests a team consisting of the School Director, the Early Childhood Coordinator, and one to three additional members that would work directly with the job position being filled.

- Question Ten: It is strongly suggested by the employees that any potential candidate have experience relating to the position for which they are interviewing as well as a clear understanding of the Montessori Method of education.

Summary

Summarizing the above employee responses, the employees of SRMCS have provided clear, concise input regarding job performance evaluation and the hiring process. This input includes being formally evaluated by a direct superior twice per year, particularly with regard to teaching skills (meeting the needs of the students, collaboration, sharing of ideas, effective
classroom management, ability to engage students, ability to challenge students, ability to plan and be prepared on a daily basis, and building relationships with co-workers, parents, and students). It is the belief of the researcher that if these ten areas were acted upon, SRMCS would strengthen its level of communication and trust organization-wide – two primary problematic areas. With improvement in effective communication and by building trust, collaboration, cooperation and morale would also see an increase.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In the beginning of this study, one primary research question was cited: What are the critical success factors with regard to leadership and followership that most greatly impact long-term organizational success and how can these factors be applied to Swan River Montessori Charter School’s job performance evaluation system to best promote a double-loop input/feedback structure? Based on the research that was completed, the specific factors relating to leadership include being passionate for the mission and vision, having passion to lead others, the ability to inspire and mobilize, and strengthening the connection with followers. With regard to followership, critical factors included having the courage to assume responsibility, to assume additional workload, to challenge leadership when appropriate, to participate in organizational change and transformation, and to take moral action and to protect the development of the organization. It is only when these success factors are in place that an organization becomes a healthy, interdependent, horizontally-striving culture able to grow and sustain long-term success.

When applying these critical success factors to Swan River Montessori Charter School, there is a distinct correlation. The employees of SRMCS do continually strive to meet many of the above stated factors, particularly regarding assuming additional workloads and participating in organizational transformation (such as what took place the first operational year with the founding School Director). They have repeatedly proven their will to succeed to move forward. However, Swan River needs to place for focus on strengthening the leadership followership relationship. Right now there is a division between the two which has caused a breakdown in communication and trust.
To help SRMCS turn these issues around, a qualitative ten-question survey was distributed. The results of this survey were applied to the creation of a new evaluation system that would provide the employees greater opportunities for structured input and feedback, particularly with the administration. The researcher believes that this type of step will begin to break down the barriers that currently exist between the leaders and followers within Swan River and ultimately promote long term organizational success.

Conclusions

If there were to be one common theme addressed throughout this thesis, it would be the need for trust. It was not only cited as a critical component for both leaders and followers to sustain organizational success, but it was also depicted as an issue by the employees of SRMCS in the surveys they completed. To date, the employees/followers of Swan River feel that they do not have a strong voice nor do they have sufficient opportunities to use this voice. This feeling originated during the first year of operation when Swan River employed a very unstable and often hostile School Director. This experience has had long-term negative effects on the employees who are in the process of trying to rebuild their trust in the current administration.

The employees also desire more clearly defined roles and expectations and require that if these expectations are not met by fellow employees, administration should and must take appropriate corrective action. Again, this cites another area where trust is lacking. The Director is aware of many of the issues going on within the walls of Swan River, but is not taking clear, direct action to address them.

Overall, SRMCS is a good school. They have survived many hardships and have experienced many successes. However, if the specific areas of growth discussed throughout this
study are effectively addressed, Swan River will shift from being just a good school to a great organization.

**Recommendations**

It would be the primary recommendation of the researcher that SRMCS utilize the newly created job performance evaluation system as soon as possible. It is suggested that the administration receive a thorough explanation of the new system by its creator and then communicate this information to the employees. It is crucial that the employees of Swan River be made fully aware of the evaluation change, be introduced to the specifics of the system, and fully understand the formal follow-up procedures, including potential rewards or consequences based on the final job performance evaluation. Ultimately, there should be no surprises on the employee’s behalf.

A second recommendation would include further researching and possibly implementing a 360 degree performance evaluation system. This would offer more valuable support to the newly adapted double-loop input/feedback system that will be initiated via this thesis.

A third possibility to improve communication within the SRMCS organization would include the formation of a “steering committee.” This committee would include a cross-section of employees that represent various job positions within the organization. It would be their primary objective to discuss and problem-solve any issues that the school director is facing and requires additional input on. This will assist in relieving some of the decision-making pressure from the director and place increased power into the hands of the SRMCS employees.

Due to great need for building stronger relationships between the leaders and the followers of Swan River, another recommendation could be to take a more in-depth look at the
current culture. This could be done by completing an organizational lifestyle analysis. The results of this could prove to be very useful in encouraging forward movement and supporting greater levels of collaboration.

Finally, it would also be the recommendation of the researcher that the administration of SRMCS receive on-going management training, particularly with regard to understanding the importance of the above cited critical success factors. Specific key factors with regard to the current leadership of SRMCS would include exerting a passion for leadership openly and learning how to inspire and mobilize the employees effectively. The followers of Swan River, conversely, must focus more on serving their leader(s) through collaboration and teaming efforts. They must become more self-sufficient and learn when it is appropriate to challenge leadership and when it is not. It is the belief of the researcher that if this occurred, the leader/follower relationship would strengthen, trust would be re-established, and, like the domino effect, a positive shift would occur throughout SRMCS promoting long-term organizational growth and success.
APPENDIX A:

Copy of Survey Distributed for the Study
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?
SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?
APPENDIX B:

Copies of the Survey Responses from the Study Participants
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   The director.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   The first year of employment, every two years after that.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   Punctuality, competence with following the directives of the lead teacher, respectful demeanor with staff, students and parents.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I do not feel that staff you work with can evaluate a peer. The smaller the educational setting…the task becomes harder.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

   Verbally, by the director. The evaluation would direct the need for specific continuing educational needs.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

   Funding continuing education.
7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

I would do it differently. I would have everyone start at 100% and assume that they will stay there. Then I would let the staff know when they have not met the expectations detailed in their job description. I would then give the staff opportunities to learn the skills needed.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would expect administrators to have suggestions for improving job performance through in house education.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I would start with clear job descriptions, then I would have the director interview those interested, and then have the candidate job shadow.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

An assistant must compliment the lead teacher. They need to follow sometimes, then lead and (at times) anticipate the needs of the students and teacher (sometimes without verbal cues). They become the link between directions given and support needed. The most important characteristic needed for this job would be a heightened skill in observation. The assistant needs to be able to multi-task. Experience in the classroom would be helpful, but being able to “think outside the box” is just as important. Being a parent is helpful, but not a necessity.

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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   Paraprofessionals, general education teachers, assistants, director, parents. All of these people make the fluency of my job smooth, and they all have a role in my student’s lives. If I do my job well, it makes their job that much easier.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   I feel that the employees should have their jobs evaluated two times a year. There is no reason to keep an ineffective team member employed. There are many highly qualified teachers who are currently unemployed, which allows the ability to select only top notch candidates.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   The ability to present lessons that meet the needs of all types of learners (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc.). Their involvement with their students during work time as well as effective classroom management, positive attitude, enthusiastic, motivational.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I feel that random peer evaluation should be utilized and that it should be unannounced. I feel that teachers put on a show when they know they are being evaluated. If any teacher can be evaluated at any time I think that good work ethic would always be practiced.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?
I feel that feedback should be given confidentially, in a positive format, and included a list of things to work on. I would utilize this feedback by trying to work on each weakness. I feel that the evaluator should remain confidential and the information should remain confidential.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

It could encourage the sharing of ideas and techniques. I also feel that it would create a bond between the staff.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

I would include various questions on performance. It would be in a question/answer format.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

Teachers that are using the evaluation to their advantage and making appropriate corrections should be rewarded, and those that are not meeting expectations should be given an opportunity to change or be replaced.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I feel that teachers should be hired based on their previous performance through observation. Anyone can score high on a question/answer interview but that doesn’t mean they will be a great classroom teacher.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

Outgoing, creative, consistent, thorough, positive, receptive, willing to make changes, thrive on challenge, sense of humor, pleasant, good role model inside and outside of school, active in the community.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   The employees’ superior should know best how those we work with would characterize our strengths and weaknesses pertinent to job performance. We work in a small staff environment thus tensions should be obvious.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   Annually seems good. Never on a Friday. You don’t want to leave an employee time to obsess over some minor constructive criticism.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   Communication skills with staff, i.e. does teacher seek professional help when needed? How willing is the teacher able to try a new method to better approach a students’ needs? Does the teacher collaborate? When advice is given, is it followed? Is the teacher gaining the confidence to make decisions on their own? How much support is needed? Does the teacher create conflict among staff or students or help to minimize it?

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I’m not sure. I think that the criteria have to be clear and evaluated over time in a very unemotional way.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?
It is best to give every worker a list of strengths and a list of goals for improvement. The lists are used as milestones by both sides to be used as comparison to promote growth and improvement.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

I would like to know what you mean as it relates to my job. Do you mean educational opportunities or is it getting advice from colleagues? If it’s the latter, keep up the good work.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

It would include a good description of the worker’s job goals or requirements. A scale to measure how well the goals are being met. (There are templates for this.) The key is that each person has new goals and areas upon which they are commended. Experience doesn’t change the formula, it refines the goals.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

Absolutely. The most recent evaluation is placed side by side with the new one so the evaluator can reflect (celebrate) with the employee on how well they did and help to further stretch and get more out of each employee. I would hope if there was a bigger issue it would be taken care of outside of the evaluation process on a need basis.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I like the current model. It says to prospective employees that you take this decision seriously. I thought that I had time to articulate what was needed with the thoughtful questions you provided.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

Look for employees that emulate the characteristics of our present staff. Experience, reason, compassion, order, and cleverness. Try to pick the most flexible or open minded
candidates. How positive or negative is the candidate? If they express negative views at
the interview, they will most likely surface during work. While we all need to address
issues from time to time, negativity need not cloud an interview unless it is an inherent
personality component. Job history. How many jobs have they worked at in X amount of
time? Job unrest could indicate trouble relating to coworkers.
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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

The lead teacher, the director, and me. The lead teacher sees and works directly with the assistant. I think I should also evaluate my performance based on how I understand expectations and what might be potential barriers for me completing my job.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

Generally twice a year. At the beginning of a school year to lay out expectations, and at the end to see if they are satisfied. I guess if there is a problem sometime in the middle, it would only be fair to meet and discuss the potential concerns. I don’t think concerns should go unmentioned until a performance review, simply because it would not give an employee time to work on or clear up any problems.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

General day to day responsibilities, such as being on time and following basic guidelines, showing up to required meetings, turning in time sheets, etc. The ability to work with teachers and other co-workers. Ability to take direction and complete specific tasks. Ability to work with children and be a support in the classroom. I think an assistant should be evaluated on their work with children.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

I think peer evaluation is good for the sake of strengthening the school and the mission of the school. I think it is good for growth and skill building. I think it absolutely has to have a clear and stated purpose. I think it needs to be obvious what the mission is and understood by the entire staff. I think the purpose of a peer evaluation would be to strengthen the skill set in a staff member towards filling the mission of the school. The issue with peer evaluation comes when one does not know what they are looking for in an
leadership or there is conflict between peers. Then it becomes subjective and unhelpful. I also think the staff being evaluated needs to agree on the criteria so they know what they are being evaluated on.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

I think a performance evaluation should be collaborated. I think it should be for the purpose of professional growth and the to strengthen the school.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

As far as an assistant position, I am not sure. I think that general expectations could be clearer. How do I know if I am doing well or needing improvement?

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

I would state clear direct objectives such as: is able to complete basic tasks, strives to connect with students, is flexible, works well with others. Other indirect measures might include enthusiasm, positive attitude, decision making, objectivity, and punctuality.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I believe for the sake of the school’s success that you have to be in unison with the mission and the staff of the school. What would be the purpose of a job evaluation if there are no expectations? Since our school has a compensation plan that has no bearing on performance, I am not sure what the post-evaluations expectation would be.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

Again, I think it is important to have a clear mission and vision. I think it depends on the role, on the kinds of skills for which our school is looking. Can a person be trained for the job, or are there certain characteristics that a candidate needs for the role?

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?
For an assistant role, I think the person needs to be a good fit with the teacher, have compatible skills, be able to take direction, and be able to work with children. As far as a Montessori school, I think the candidate must be open to learning the method and work with the teacher and students according to the method. I see the assistant’s role as a supportive role to the teacher and students. I feel that each classroom might need something different in an assistant depending on the needs of the teacher. Some of the qualities I value are an ability to connect with children and the ability to work with the teacher.
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Performance Evaluation System

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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   Colleagues who work at my grade level, because they are the most likely to observe and know what and how I am teaching in my classroom. They are more aware of my interactions with the students, their parents, and coworkers. They work directly with me in decision making situations, problem solving, etc. They are familiar with the goals and reasonable expectations specifically dealing with my age group. They have the most contact with me and know me the best. I also think it is important for an administrator to be involved to some extent with employee evaluations.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   End of the year, once a year.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   I think the current employee evaluation lists the same things I would.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I don’t feel qualified to evaluate classrooms that are not at my grade level especially without having that training, although I do think there is merit in observing in peers’ classrooms for the purpose of learning and gaining new insights and ideas. So I would have to say no.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?
I like written and discussion of feedback. Follow up discussion should take place, especially if there are concerns.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

I like the idea of providing time and money to attend workshops, classes, etc. in areas that I find I need more information or education.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

It would look very similar to what we are currently using as I feel what we use is adequate.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would expect that the administrator would communicate with me as to how things were going post evaluation. An example would be that in the section where there are goals/areas to improve, the administrator would be checking with me to see if I had been able to meet the goals I had set for myself.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I think it would be ideal if all of the current employees who would be working in close contact with the potential candidate would have the opportunity to screen resumes and be a part of the interviewing process.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

I personally value someone with prior experience and someone who presents themselves as being very professional. I work with young children so I think it is important that the candidate be a warm, caring person while at the same time he or she knows how to be respectfully firm and consistent with children. I also value someone who holds high expectations for the children and for the school in which they work. A good work ethic is also a plus. I think flexibility and a positive attitude make good qualities in a co-worker. Creativity and a willingness to share good ideas,
materials, etc., with others is a plus. Professionalism is probably the most important, while the willingness to share is the least important.
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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   Board of Directors, Staff, and parents.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   Administration and facilities – after 3 months, then annually. Teaching Staff – twice a year in November and April.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I think that it can be the best evaluation and it should be used. I think some discussion or training on how to evaluate should take place.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

   In writing and verbally. It should be used to set goals and measure growth.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

   Offer opportunities for networking as well as feedback.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?
Strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would expect to be held accountable to meet expectations once I was made aware of the areas of weakness and a plan of action was formed. If positive growth was not attained, I would expect to be let go.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

The ideal hiring practice would be to be able to observe the person on the job. The way our employees treat others is important to the success of SRMCS. We are educators, but we offer a service and we should also be modeling how to treat others at all times. For non Montessorians, there would be an introductory Montessori Workshop.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

An understanding of Montessori method and someone who believes in the Montessori method. A person with good listening skills. I think the person should be someone who has a steady disposition and treats employees, students, and parents with respect. The person should model the Montessori method when dealing with others. The person should be able to delegate duties and have good organizational skills. The Director should be able to motivate the staff.
Survey:  
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Performance Evaluation System  

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SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   Besides the immediate supervisor, I think that the employee should be given the option to request feedback from their peers. This can provide the employee with valuable input. They can then assess what steps to take if there are areas that need improvement.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   Annually. The appraisal should be done before the budget is determined for the next fiscal year.

   Naturally, objectives would be set at the beginning of the school year. I recommend informal quarterly reviews to discuss the progress made on the objectives/goals. The “formal” annual appraisal should contain NO surprises.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   1. Ensure the safety of the children during the school day. This includes verifying who is entering the school. Maintaining a safe and secure environment so that the children can flourish in a calm setting.

   2. Customer responsiveness. My customers are the parents and the children attending the school. My goal is to respond and get back to the parents if they have any questions and/or concerns. I think that everyone at Swan River needs to respond to E Mails and telephone calls within 8 hours. This would be the maximum time in responding.

   3. Meet or exceed all due dates set by the Dept. of Education (MDE) for reports due to the state.
4. **Report to the Dept of Health the annual immunization data.**

5. **Process all billing and mail to School Business Solutions based on the agreement between Swan River and SBS. Respond to any questions in regards to outstanding bills. Verify that the Payment Disbursement Forms contain all the correct data.**

6. **Respond to any queries about Swan River from interested parents in enrolling their child at the school.**

7. **Partner with District 882 the busing of the children who live in the Monticello 882 school district.**

8. **Provide records/information to other school districts.**

9. **Prepare for and participate in the annual audit.**

4. **What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?**

   I think that Peer evaluation can be a positive tool. I think that it should be utilized at Swan River. Peer evaluation is a risk taking step. It can, though, give an individual an opportunity to obtain more in-depth feedback. In a work setting, it is sometimes difficult to know how an individual is perceived. With peer evaluation, “blind spots” can be identified. It can also provide positive feedback which is something that everyone needs. People sometimes do not realize the impact that they have on others. The more open that we are to receiving respectful and thoughtful feedback can provide us with a wealth of knowledge.

   I do NOT think, though, that the peer evaluation should determine the pay treatment at the beginning of this process. If the goal is to eventually utilize the peer evaluation in the pay treatment, then the process should be introduced and employees become accustomed to this method over a period of time. For example, take about three appraisal years before including the peer evaluation as a portion of the pay treatment.

5. **How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should utilized by the evaluator?**

   The feedback would be in writing. It would be given directly to the individual. The evaluator would not see the feedback until the third year. In this way, everyone would become accustomed to receiving the feedback. It would also allow the establishment of a time frame to include this feedback in the pay treatment.

   I also think that the employee should provide feedback to the supervisor. An appraisal should be a “two way street”.
6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

The Swan River Staff Family has been tremendously supportive of my role at the school. My professional needs are met through seminars/conferences held at MDE.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

(You are asking for a lot!!) I would include subject headings and room for comments. The statements would be appropriate for the particular job function. I would have a box to check to show that the individual did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations. The last page would leave room for evaluator and employee comments.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would expect that if I was not meeting expectations that an action plan would be established. Again, I must emphasize that the appraisal should NOT have any surprises. If the employee is performing below expectations, then the supervisor should have taken steps throughout the school year. If progress has not been made, then the appraisal and pay treatment would reflect the job performance.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I think that the hiring process is working well at Swan River. The opening is posted on certain web sites. The resumes are reviewed and potential candidates are scheduled for an interview. The appropriate staff participates in the interview. A decision is then made after careful review of the data. The employee is then offered the position.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to you own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

1. Organized with a background in business and/or school office knowledge.
2. Customer oriented.
4. Can focus on meeting deadlines.
5. Able to multi-task.

All of the qualities are needed in this job function.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   The teachers, in that if I’m running late with lunch, it puts their schedule off. Cathy, Katie and Sandy… they are all in a position to listen and watch how I do my job and best able to point out good and bad of that performance.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   Informal evaluation at 3 months for new employee, 6 month evaluation if necessary, based on job performance, otherwise 1 one-year formal written evaluation.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   Accuracy of office work (phone messages, data entry, etc). Maintaining a smooth running lunch program, accurate lunch counts to reduce waste, being sure the numbers are correct in the system, and accurately reporting those numbers in a timely manner to the state.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   If a peer were to give input for an evaluation to my supervisor and it was worked into my evaluation, then I don’t have a problem with that. I do believe that the use of peer evaluations can build animosity and conflict over time, based on past experiences.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

   Feedback should be given as written topics with verbal explanation. I would put any feedback to use in order to improve my job performance. I think feedback should be utilized as a tool to improve performance and correct poor performance.
6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

Provide positive feedback when deserved and guidance when needed and / or requested.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

I would like to see something that reflects the job description. I am not in favor of rating systems. I like having text with the good and bad spelled out as well as opportunities that I may have missed and things that I have done well, but were unexpected.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

If I need improvement, I expect to be held to that and to follow up on those areas in 90 days. If I have done well then pay increases are always welcome!

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I like the way I was interviewed with both Katie and Sandy. I think having two people doing the interview gives more opportunity for discussion and feedback. I also believe in contacting former employers. Although they can’t give much info, they can give the basics, such as if an employee is eligible for rehire. That can be telling, depending on the reason. I also believe that how an employee leaves and or talks about a former employer should be taken into consideration.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

Someone who can multitask, willing to learn new things, not easily stressed out and can roll with changes. Most important, being a level headed person who can multitask.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

Mainly the director, but also peers, since they need to work together to make the school successful. Peers can also contribute information on where the employee shines and what they might need help working on.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

I believe that employees should be evaluated twice during the year. Half way through the year and again at the end of the year.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   Following the Montessori Philosophy.
   Classroom management, flow of the environment.
   Performance ability to meet job requirements.
   Ability to work with your team.
   Dependability.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

I think it should be used since peers work together to create a team. If a team member is not contributing to the team it cannot create success. I do believe though that the director should have the most say in an evaluation to even out any bias.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?
Meet with the individual receiving feedback with suggestions and comments in writing so it is easier to remember and make follow up.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

Continue to provide opportunities for continuing education like in the past for classroom management, mental health, etc.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Job duties summary. Area for comments and suggestions.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would want to see that they are helping the individual grow to a better member of the SRMCS family. Follow up with ideas in which they can be more successful.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

Post job opening. Interview with small groups such as director and a team of teachers. The employees that will closely work with the new employee. Follow-up interview with top candidates.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

- Qualifications- training.
- Experience.
- Flexibility to help out when needed, show up to parent nights, etc.
- Love of children.
- Desire to create a positive Montessori environment for the children.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   I think with my position as a lead Montessori teacher that the director should be the contributing member. For assistant teachers, I think it should be the lead Montessori teacher they work with and the director. I feel the lead teachers know how the assistant performs their job more than the director due to the fact that the lead teacher spends the entire day with her assistant.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   I think the employees of Swan River should be evaluated twice a year; in the months of January and May.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   A teacher in a lead Montessori role should be evaluated on: preparedness for the day, professionalism with peers, professionalism with parents, respect of children, appropriate level of discipline given, knowledge of where their students are academically, communication with parents, order and cleanliness of room, promptness of deadlines, new work or ideas created yearly, record keeping, level of happiness, respect given from parents, knowledge of materials and respect for the method.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   I do think that peers definitely THINK they have correct opinions of their peers. However, I don’t think that peers evaluation would be helpful. I do agree with the saying, “Sometimes the truth hurts.” Sometimes one needs to hear the truth. In a professional setting though I would be afraid it would create hard feelings. I would
not be for peer evaluation. I would however be open to hearing the argument of those who would be for it.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

I think the performance evaluations should be given in a sit down eyeball to eyeball meeting. To be given the evaluation in a sealed envelope without any discussion over it would not be productive. I utilize the concerns on the evaluation by making them goals for the following year. I take the positive feedback and build even more on them. I think the evaluator should keep the evaluation from year to year to ensure the areas of concern are improved upon, and that everything else stays consistent.

6. What can this organization do to support you’re and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

SRMCS could support me by listening to my suggestions on issues that a teacher should and does know better then administrative personal. For example, kindergartner’s placement into first grade for the following year. To maybe hear a compliment, not only during evaluations, would help teachers feel better about what they do everyday.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Ahhh....Duh......Dunno know....... 

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

This is one I feel strongly about. Yes, I do believe there should be a post-evaluation after an evaluation that has concerns. There should be a time table set, say 6 weeks, to make the concern a non-concern or to show that there has been significant progress made. It should also be looked at again at the following evaluation. I do not believe when children's educations are at stake that there should ever be a, "wait and see" kind of attitude. A teacher should be performing at their best and not given vast amounts of time to improve.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

For a lead Montessori teacher hiring for an assistant, they along with the director should be in the process. The lead Montessori teacher should also be allowed to have her own set
of questions given to the potential new hire. For a specialist hiring i.e. music teacher or an art teacher, all Montessori teachers should be present. They should be able to sit on a panel, but not have the right to ask questions during the process. They should be able to vote unanimously and give comments. The director then could either use those votes to make her decision or let those votes weigh in on her decision.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

   I would want to know their years of teaching Montessori, request many references, level of respect given to children, how true they stay to the Montessori method, what were the previous schools they have taught, where they got their training, if they are dressed professionally and use proper grammar.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

Sandy and Katie because they are the ones who oversee the entire school and most held accountable to “higher ups”. I also believe that peer evaluation can be useful, but it can also be harmful. For example, if an evaluator is great buddies with the teacher or vice versa, that can get in the way of a “constructive” evaluation. Great caution needs to be taken if this were to be a factor in the evaluation of an employee. With proper training focused on the students while evaluating, peer evaluation could also be considered.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

Once a year? Maybe less if a teacher or other employee has been there longer (3 –5 years?) and had good reviews throughout that time.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

Ability to engage the students, appropriately challenging the students, seeing student improvement and learning throughout the year, the ability to plan and be prepared daily, flexibility in changing a lesson when it’s not going as planned, flexibility to change schedule to accommodate the school as a whole, communication with parents and/or other school employees.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

Ooh, see number 1!
5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

In person from at least one the evaluators. I would try to improve my lessons and interactions with students, parents, and staff members as needed. The evaluator could use this to see a “big picture” of the staff as a whole and how things are going with student progress, overall school climate, and where there is need for improvement in specific areas (i.e. a subject area, planning, communication among staff, etc.)

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

Let me know when I’ve done something that is really liked or when student progress is seen. If I am doing something that needs improvement, approach me about it (kindly please), but also have ideas to help me improve. Keep me informed of any/all opportunities for staff development (classes, clock hours, etc.). Does the school pay for any staff development opportunities outside of the school day? For example, the Music Educator’s Convention in February in Minneapolis?

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Sorry Katie, I’m going to skip this one as I really don’t know!

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

If improvement was needed, I expect the administration would help that person to improve and evaluate as needed to see if improvement is made. If, over time, the staff member showed no initiative to change/improve and no improvement was made, administration would have to evaluate what is best for the students and staff of SRMCS and act accordingly.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I am not sure what you are looking for in the hiring process, but I believe a candidate would need to show a true to desire to work at SRMCS, not just be looking for a “job”. The person needs to have enthusiasm and experience working with children and new situations. They must also show flexibility as many situations arise that need to be worked through – changes in schedule, the multi-age classroom and the wide range of abilities this includes, etc.
2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?

In order most to least important - knowledge of the subject area and how to bring that knowledge to various age levels, lots of energy, creativity, organization, flexibility.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?
   Sandy. She’s the director of Swan River. Possibly Katie, but I think Sandy would be better because of her elementary experience in a Montessori classroom.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?
   Once or twice a year. It might be good to have one of the observations with notice that you were going to be observed. It seems like Murphy’s Law sometimes that things don’t go as expected when you are being observed without notice.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.
   I think the current evaluation form is very thorough: professional knowledge, responsibility, initiative, interpersonal relations, etc. Sometimes I find it difficult to rate my performance on so many specific items. Maybe we could use a checklist as a guideline and write about each category in regards to strengths and possible weaknesses in each area.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?
   I think it is okay on an informal basis as in observations, but not as part of a formal evaluation.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?
It is helpful to read over a written evaluation before talking in person with the director. Hopefully I would learn from constructive criticism. I think having goals for what you want the employee to work on is helpful.

6. **What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?**

Keep looking for workshops that are available that might interest Montessori teachers. It is nice to know when Swan River is willing to pay all or part of the cost of the workshop.

7. **If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?**

I think it should focus on strengths and weaknesses in different categories. Sometimes it’s hard to rate yourself on checklists. It might have a section for writing about strengths and weaknesses.

8. **Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?**

It’s reasonable that administration can ask employees to work on any weaknesses or have goals for improvement, especially if there is a time-frame with measurable goals.

**SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS**

1. **In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to evaluate if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?**

I think it would be helpful for E2 teachers to help interview E2 teachers, E1 teachers to help interview E1 teachers, and Early Childhood to interview EC teachers. It’s important that the interviewee understands that Charter School teachers probably put in more time after-hours than a regular public school district teacher. The candidate should have the proper Montessori training or be willing to get it.

2. **What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to your own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?**

I would like them to be a team player. Someone who is willing to share ideas and/or materials and work together. I think it is also important that they realize there is a huge range in maturity from beginning 4th year students to ending 6th year students. I think it would be very important for the candidate to have some experience working with this age group. I think there is a big difference in personalities that work well with older children.
versus younger children. It might also be important for them to realize that we go to the Audubon once a year in case they aren’t the outdoors type!
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

   Sandy and two or three assistance. No one (from SRMCS) really sees me teaching at the MCC. The assistants sometimes see a beginning or an end to my class as well as Sandy because she is the director and is my boss.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

   I think employees should be evaluated twice a year their first two years at SRMCS and then once a year after that. The first evaluation should be within the first four months of school starting and the other two the three months after that.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

   Class management, improvement in a percentage of the children’s fitness from beginning of year until the end

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

   Yes, it would be great to hear what my peers see and think. Only if you can handle the feedback from a peer, not everyone can. Maybe have the responses typed with no names.

5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

   I would like it in a sealed envelope, with the feedback typed. I would use it to improve my teaching abilities so I can better my student’s lives.
6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

SRMCS has done so much to support me already! Get a bigger school with their own gym. (J/K) The staff does a great job bringing the students on time and keeping them quiet till they get in the gym.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

Classroom management, meeting the needs of the children in that subject matter, communicates well with parents when needed, communicates well with the staff. A number chart where 1 equals poor and 5 equals exceeds

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

I would hope that the administration would suggest ways to fix the problem(s) and give them a certain amount of time to get with the program.
Survey:
Swan River Montessori Charter School
Performance Evaluation System

Please complete the following survey. You are encouraged to give specific and honest answers and be as detailed as possible. When completed, please email (as an attachment) to Katie Curtis at katiejanecurtis@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your input. It is greatly appreciated.

SECTION ONE: JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

1. Who do you think should be a contributing member(s) to your job performance evaluation at Swan River? Why?

The director and a peer teacher because they have the best understanding of the position and job description.

2. When and how often do you think employees of Swan River should be formally evaluated on their job performance?

I am somewhat inclined to say twice a year, once in the winter and again at the end of the year. My feeling is that if there are things to be improved upon, the staff member then has the remainder of the year to improve before the decision is made for the following year.

3. In which specific areas do you think an employee, in a similar role as you, should be evaluated? Please list as many as necessary and be as specific as possible.

Relationships with students, parents, fellow staff members such as how well do you communicate with each and what are their feelings towards you. Effectiveness with curriculum such as how well do you get through what you are supposed to do? Contribution to school community such as attendance at events as well as attendance on school days.

4. What is your opinion on peer evaluation? Should it be utilized at SRMCS? Why or why not?

I think peer evaluation is quite valuable. The feedback that you can get from peers is different than what you might hear from a supervisor. Yes, I think it should be utilized at SRMCS because I feel that it could make us a stronger staff and encourage more collaboration. On the other hand, it could divide such a small staff if people have a hard time receiving feedback from peers.
5. How should feedback on your performance evaluation be given to you? How would you utilize this feedback? How do you think this feedback should be utilized by the evaluator?

I would like my feedback in a meeting with my supervisor, along with suggestions for areas of improvement and how to accomplish that. I then use it for self reflection and guidance to improve my job performance.

6. What can this organization do to support you and to encourage professional growth in your current role?

We have made some changes this year that have already begun to help me such as weekly meetings with the staff at the same level and a scope and sequence we developed together. I would like to have more observations by my supervisor and peers and of my peers to gather ideas for how to handle things in my classroom.

7. If you were in charge of creating a job performance evaluation system for SRMCS, what would it include? What would it look like?

I think there would be a self-evaluation component, peer review, observations by supervisor and peers and a meeting with my supervisor. I’m not sure exactly what it would look like.

8. Do you hold any expectations for administrative action based on the results of a job performance evaluation, i.e. post-evaluation expectations? If so, what would they be?

Yes I do. I feel that if there aren’t any actions/expectations, then there isn’t much point to an evaluation. I think if a review has gone well, there needs to be acknowledgement of the job being done. I’m not sure what form that could take, maybe a raise? On the other hand if it hasn’t gone well, there needs to be a plan, support and a probationary period with the realization at the end that if expectations aren’t met there will be consequences, i.e. pay cut, no job the following year.

SECTION TWO: THE HIRING PROCESS

1. In your opinion, what would the ideal hiring process for new employees look like? What is the best way to ascertain if a potential candidate would be a good fit for the SRMCS organization?

I think a series of interviews work well. Also a group interview allows both sides a sense of how they would work together.

2. What characteristics/qualities would you look for when hiring a person for a position similar to you own? Of these characteristics/qualities, what are the most/least important when selecting a candidate?
I would look for experience, enthusiasm, knowledge base, composure, willingness to be involved in the community, openness to new ideas and ability to integrate them. I guess experience is actually one of the least important but still a necessary quality. Though someone may have been in a school/teaching environment for a long time doesn’t automatically equate to being a good teacher or more specifically a good fit for this environment. Not sure which would be the most important because I feel you need a combination and a balance of the others.
APPENDIX C:

Copy of the Current Job Performance Evaluation System for SRMCS
Swan River Montessori Charter School  
Teacher Performance Evaluation 2007-2008

**Employee:** ________________________________  **Date:** __________

**Supervisor:** ________________________________

**Job Title:** ________________________________

<table>
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<th>Rating Code – Teacher</th>
<th>Rating Code - Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - I need considerable improvement</td>
<td>1 - Consistently poor performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - My present performance is marginal; I need to improve</td>
<td>2 - Needs improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - My present performance is acceptable</td>
<td>3 - Present performance is acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - My performance is very good</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5 - Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Job and Professional Knowledge**

Follows Swan River Montessori Charter School’s Mission and Vision and is able to articulate the Mission and Vision.

Positive attitude toward duties

Seeks skill improvement and ongoing training including participation in at least one professional development program (class, workshop, etc.) each year.

**Responsibility**

Reliable in attendance.

Arrives on time.

Accepts assigned tasks.

Meets consistently with assistant to discuss observations and plans.

Documents all required incident reports. Prepares the written report stating date, time, nature of incident, and action taken.

Is prepared for day’s activities.

Responsible with assistant to assure students are supervised at all times.

**Initiative**

Adaptable, flexible with schedule and assignments.

Looks for ways to improve program(s).
Open to new ideas and willing to implement new ideas.

Assumes fair share of work.

**Interpersonal Relations**

- Works in cooperative spirit with coworkers.
- Is helpful, sharing, and respectful with others.
- Communicates directly, avoids gossip.
- Maintains a professional manner and confidentiality.
- Approaches criticism with a learning attitude.
- Communicate with director or early childhood coordination on all matters concerning parents, students, and staff.

**Children**

- Friendly, warm with children.
- Respect for individual.
- Appropriate tone in communication, promoting self esteem.
- Aware of developmental levels and changes.
- Encourages independence, limits problem solving intervention.
- Reinforces positive behavior.
- Has a good understanding of individual children’s needs and assigns work accordingly.
- Maintains academic and attendance records.
- Maintains student portfolios.
- Provides developmentally appropriate activities.

**Room**

- Creates an inviting room arrangement and learning experience.
- Materials kept in good repair and room well maintained.
- Adequately cares for all living things in the classroom, including animals and plants.
- Provides materials for all key experiences.
Handles transitions well.

Aware of overall room activity when working with individuals.

Train and supervise students in the execution of fire and tornado drills.

**Parents/Guardians**

Available to and approachable with parents/guardians.

Is tactful and maintains confidentiality at all times.

Assists the director or assistant director in developing and implementing parent education programs.

Attends staff meetings, parent meetings and family events.

Holds scheduled parent/teacher conferences. Meets with each family at least once a year.

Additional Comments:

Teacher’s signature ________________________________________________

Date ______________

Supervisor’s signature ________________________________________________

Date ______________
APPENDIX D:

Copy of the Newly Created Job Performance Evaluation System for SRMCS
Swan River Montessori Charter School & Children’s House Program

Employee Job Performance Evaluation

Employee Name ______________________   Job Title ___________________________
Evaluator ____________________________  Date of Evaluation Meeting ___________

Evaluation Standards: Please rate performance using the following codes.

1 – Needs significant improvement; far below standard
2 – Needs improvement to meet standard
3 – Meets standard
4 – Highly effective; consistently exceeds standard
5 – Not applicable

The Evaluation Process:

Part One: The employee completes his/her portion of this form, including the self-rating and comments sections for each category. The form must be returned to the evaluator by the specified date. Please note that all comments are welcome, but are only required on any score below 3.

Part Two: The evaluator completes his/her portion of this form, including comments and Strengths and Development Needs sections.

Part Three: The employee and evaluator meet to discuss the outcome of the evaluation. Strengths and areas for improvement will be highlighted along with an action plan for improvement, if necessary.

Part Four: A copy of this form will be given to the employee. The original will be placed in the employee’s file.

Part Five: Any required follow up meetings will be scheduled and completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Evaluator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 JOB/PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands &amp; articulates the mission &amp; vision of SRMCS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands &amp; accepts all assigned duties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remains current on Minnesota licensing standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remains authentic to Montessori philosophy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains positive attitude toward job duties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeks skill improvement &amp; ongoing professional training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assists others with skill improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remains current on Minnesota academic standards.</td>
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</table>

Employee Comments:    Evaluator Comments:
### WORK ETHIC

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<tr>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is reliable regarding attendance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrives to work on time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is prepared for the day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meets deadlines &amp; commitments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is open to new ideas &amp; suggests ways to make improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is adaptable &amp; flexible with schedule and assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumes fair share of work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises good judgment regularly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is responsive to administrative direction.</td>
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**Employee Comments:**

**Evaluator Comments:**

### INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Works cooperatively with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is willing to share ideas with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicates directly with others &amp; avoids gossip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains a high level of professionalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practices confidentiality whenever it applies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approaches criticism with a learning attitude.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicates with appropriate staff members about concerns regarding parents, students &amp; staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directs concerns/questions to administration when appropriate.</td>
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**Employee Comments:**

**Evaluator Comments:**

### CHILDREN

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluator</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is friendly, respectful &amp; warm with children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate tone with children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands the planes of child development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourages independence &amp; limits problem-solving intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands the needs of individual children &amp; assigns work accordingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Models and reinforces positive, healthy behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Models purposeful movement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains academic &amp; attendance records.</td>
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**Employee Comments:**

**Evaluator Comments:**
### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Creates &amp; maintains an inviting &amp; warm classroom.</td>
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<td>Materials are kept in good repair.</td>
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<td>Creates new materials for classroom use on ongoing basis.</td>
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<td>Adequately cares for all living things in the classroom, including plants &amp; animals.</td>
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<td>Regularly cleans &amp; sanitizes classroom to reduce the spread of germs.</td>
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<td>Classroom is prepared for the children each day.</td>
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<td>Classroom is organized and attractive.</td>
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<td>Office space is organized &amp; clean.</td>
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Employee Comments:  
Evaluator Comments:

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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<th>Employee</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Is available and approachable to parents/guardians.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is professional &amp; maintains confidentiality at all times.</td>
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<td>Holds scheduled parent/teacher conferences. Meets with each family at least twice per year.</td>
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<td>Responds promptly to parents via phone, email, etc.</td>
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<td>Addresses student questions &amp; concerns with parents in a tactful manner.</td>
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<td>Educates parents about Montessori Method when appropriate.</td>
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<td>Works in collaboration with parents to best meet the needs of the child.</td>
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Employee Comments:  
Evaluator Comments:

### OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

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<tr>
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<td>Develops &amp; implements parent education programs.</td>
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<td>Attends &amp; participates in staff meetings &amp; workshops.</td>
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<td>Attends &amp; participates in assigned committees.</td>
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<td>Attends &amp; participates in family/school events.</td>
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<td>Assists in maintaining/cleaning/organizing the shared space in the school (hallway, kitchen, playground, work room etc.).</td>
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<td>Retains CPR &amp; first aid certification.</td>
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<td>Responds to administrative requests in a timely manner.</td>
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Employee Comments:  
Evaluator Comments:
STRENGTHS AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

STRENGTHS: Cite at least three employee strengths and/or accomplishments since the previous employee evaluation.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS: Describe any areas where further job/professional development is recommended or required.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

ACTION PLAN: List any recommended or required actions the employee must take to improve the development needs cited above. Include a mutually agreed upon target date.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________

OTHER COMMENTS: ________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Swan River Montessori thanks you for your participation in this evaluation process.

______________________________________  ________________________
Employee Signature       Date

______________________________________  ________________________
Evaluator Signature        Date
REFERENCES


