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**Executive Director**  
Gary Bowman, M.S. Ed.

9 September 2011

Dear Members of the CMP Learning Community,

Last Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, Kim Aldridge (CMP-Carmichael Principal) and I had the pleasure of meeting with parents and staff at the Gibbons West meeting room of the La Sierra Community Center. The meeting was well-attended, as the community gathered to learn more about the new campus, and to ask questions.

I shared a brief history of the California Charter School movement, as well as the founding and development of California Montessori Project (much of this information can be found in our charter documents posted on the CMP website). I also addressed CMP's continued commitment to providing an exceptional program, even in the midst of state budget cuts.

Of special interest to a number of attendees was the process of facilities acquisition. Currently, the three CMP-San Juan schools are leased, as follows: CMP-American River has a Proposition 39 agreement with San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) for use of the Leighton Littlejohn campus; CMP-Orangevale has a non-Proposition 39 Public Entity lease with SJUSD for the use of the Thomas Coleman campus; CMP-Carmichael has an agreement with the Carmichael Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) for partial use of the La Sierra Community Center. Currently, the CMP-Carmichael lease is a 5-year lease, with first rights for an additional five years, as desired. During the past eight years, Kim and I have explored alternatives to the previous CMP-Carmichael facility, located at 4718 Engle Road. This search included ongoing discussions with SJUSD as well as tours of vacated commercial facilities. At the time of our decision to move to La Sierra, there were no District offers for facilities. Generally speaking, commercial facilities require extensive renovation and fire upgrades, and lack green play areas, drop-off/pick-up lanes, adequate parking, etc. And, it should be noted, a commercial facility is operated in order to provide a comfortable profit margin for the property owner.

As stated at our community meeting, I am very excited about the move to LSCC for several reasons (Please note: the amenities associated with the new site, as presented at the meeting, are detailed later in this communication). First, our tenancy at 4718 Engle Road was cost-prohibitive, and we were being faced with a substantial increase in rent for the 2011-12 school year. Second, our rate of growth was limited at the prior campus, jeopardizing our ability to provide full enrollment of kindergarten students. The negotiations with CRPD, for the use of LSCC, began last December. Those negotiations took

The Mission of the California Montessori Project:  
To Offer a Quality, Tuition-Free, Montessori Education to Every Student

many twist and turns, and were very complex, involving multiple entities. Uncertainties included the space CMP would occupy, as well as who the co-tenants would be. I know the community desired greater transparency, and I apologize that our communications were not more pro-active. Kim and I understand that, even with the uncertain outcome of the negotiations, more timely communications would have allowed parents to choose an alternate school, if they so desired.

Our two primary co-tenants at La Sierra Community Center are the Gateway Community Collaborative Charter School and the Laureate Learning Center.

The Community Collaborative Charter School (CCCS) currently resides in the lower 600 wing. CCCS ( <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/sd/details.asp?cds=34765050108837&Public=Y> ) is a K - 8th grade program utilizing home-school and independent study as an innovative and creative full service program dedicated to meeting the needs of the whole child by partnering with community resource providers. It is the mission of CCCS to provide high quality curriculum, instructional support, and community and social resources to families and students.

Laureate (<http://www.greatschools.org/california/carmichael/16405-Laureate-Learning-Center/>) is located in the 200 wing, with some of their administrative and counseling offices located in the 800 wing. Laureate is a private school, serving males 12-18 years with serious emotional disturbances/ behavior disorders which preclude them from being appropriately served in public schools. This includes adjudicated youth at risk of, or who have a history of, sexual abuse/offenses, delinquent social-emotional developmental and educational assessments; speech and language assessment and therapy; individual and group psychological counseling; independent living skills training; therapeutic recreation. These clinical-related services support each student's individual need for education, supervision and treatment as identified in his IEP. The students are transported from their Mathiot (<http://mathiot.org/>) group homes on a daily basis to their educational program at LSCC. The Mission of Laureate is "To provide a safe, intensive treatment environment where children can learn dignity, courage, and appreciation for themselves and others."

I have had the privilege of visiting both schools, and meeting with administration and staff. I am impressed with the quality of their programs, the dedication of their staffs, and the commitment of their students.

Having previously provided oversight at 'shared campuses,' I am aware of the concerns related to sharing facilities with other programs. Accordingly, Kim and I have developed a plan to incorporate numerous safety processes at the new site, as follows:

**Direct Supervision of CMP Students** – First, and foremost, CMP staff are expected to provide a high level of direct supervision for all students.

**Hiring of addition CMP Supervisory Staff** – Additional staff have been hired with the specific purpose of providing greater supervision during the lunch and recess times.

**Use of 2-Way Radio Communications** – Each classroom and yard supervisor, as well as the administrative staff, have access to 2-way radio communications.

**Hiring of Security Officer** – The presence of Officer Devon provides an additional layer of security for the students and staff at the new campus.

**Permanent Gate Closure/Visual Barrier in Hallway** – As access is unnecessary, the gate separating the 200 wing and the 300 wing is secure, and a visual barrier has been placed in the hallway; a visual barrier will also be placed at the gate separating the 300 corridor and the 800 wing.

**Alarmed Emergency Exit Double-doors: 400, 500** – Each set of double doors connecting the 800 corridor will be deemed for use as "Emergency Exit Only" with appropriate signage and an alarm system.

**Articulated Use of Fields** – CRPD and Kim have developed a schedule which allows for coordinated usage of the fields by each of the La Sierra programs.

**Re-location of CMP-CAR Administrative Office to the 700 Wing** – CMP and CRPD have reached an agreement for CMP's use of the Gibbons Room West and 700 wing, effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. With the

relocation of the CMP-Carmichael office staff, CMP staff, students and families will no longer require access to the 800 wing. Drop-off and pick-up loops will be adjusted, once the office staff have completed their move.

At our community meeting, I really enjoyed the opportunity to share a few of the amenities which are present at our new site at La Sierra Community Center, as follows:

**Gymnasium & Large Fields:** Kim has collaboratively designed a schedule for field usage, and teachers are currently coordinating their plans for use of the gymnasium for Physical Education.

**Lunch Room & Meeting Room:** Effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, CMP will have use of the Gibbons West Room. This space will serve as a multi-purpose room, including 'rainy-day' lunchroom, and meeting room.

**Playground Structure:** The new playground structure will be co-funded (CMP/CRPD), and will be assembled in a common-use area; I anticipate the opening of the new playground in spring, 2012.

**Club Montessori:** We will be developing an 'exclusive use' space for CMP's Club M program.

**Nature Reserve:** We will be collaborating with the coordinators of the Earl Koobs Nature Area to provide student access and opportunities for class projects.

**Library:** As space becomes available, we will be developing an 'exclusive use' Library Area.

**Science Resource Center:** We will be enhancing our existing Science program with the addition of an 'exclusive use' Science Resource Center, scheduled to open in time for the 2012-13 school year.

**Art & Music Lab:** With the pending renovation of additional rooms, we will be setting up Art & Music Labs (tentatively scheduled to open in time for the 2013-14 school year).

**Chataqua Playhouse/Sacramento Fine Arts Center:** We will be building relationships with both of these programs, in the coming months.

**Skate Park:** CRPD has provided us with access to the La Sierra Skate Park. We will be evaluating usage of the Skate Park in the coming months.

I hope this communication promotes a greater understanding of the process of site selection and acquisition, as well as the vision (both short-term and long-term) for providing an exceptional learning opportunity for students. The negotiations, planning, classroom renovations, and the move, itself, have been 'consuming,' and, I believe, well worth the effort. Thanks to CRPD and CMP staff, parents and students for your contributions to this mighty project. Kim and I look forward to having another community meeting with you in the fall! With your continued support and involvement, I am convinced that CMP-Carmichael will be the jewel of the community!

Let's have a great year!

Sincerely,



Gary S. Bowman, M.S. Ed.  
Executive Director/Superintendent, CMP