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Directions: Please provide a narrative response for Sections A-I.

LETRS Questions:

- How many teachers in your school have completed Volume 1 ONLY of LETRS? 10
- How many teachers in your school have completed Volumes 1 and 2 of LETRS? 0
- How many teachers in your school are beginning Volume 1 of LETRS this year? 2
- How many teachers in your school are beginning Volume 2 of LETRS this year? 8
- How many CERDEP PreK teachers in your school have completed EC LETRS? N/A
- How many CERDEP PreK teachers in your school are beginning EC LETRS this year? N/A

Section A: Describe how reading assessment and instruction for all PreK-5th grade students in the school includes oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to aid in the comprehension of texts to meet grade-level English/Language Arts standards.

At Coastal Montessori Charter School, teachers have Montessori Philosophy and Curriculum among their many Montessori Albums that is American Montessori Society sanctioned and CMTI (Coastal Montessori Training Institute and Montessori Accreditation

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Council for Teacher Education) accredited. Another of those Albums is the Crosswalk between Montessori and the South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards that they include in their planning process for teaching. This Crosswalk has been updated as of August 2025 and reflects the most current State Standards available. Teachers understand as a result of their many years of Montessori Training that these Standards are mostly already embedded in their Montessori Teaching Albums. All trained teachers learned how this is part of Dr. Maria Montessori's Montessori Methodology in teaching and do not take it for granted, rather, they by training's sake organically incorporate these standards into their everyday teaching and facilitating for learning.

Reading assessment and instruction for all 1st-5th grade students in the school is given through teacher observation and oral administration as part of the Three Period Lesson (This is _____. Show me _____. What is _____?) for individual students as part of the Montessori Method. The third period of the Three Period Lesson serves as an oral assessment, during which the educator asks the child to independently name the object or concept previously introduced and recognized. This "recall" period assesses the child's comprehension and mastery by observing if they can successfully articulate the name of the object/subject in question when presented with the item, ensuring they have truly assimilated the new information.

The Five Pillars of Reading otherwise known as foundations in reading are inclusive of *phonemic awareness*, *phonics*, *fluency*, *vocabulary* and *comprehension* and can be expressed through the Montessori Method, which makes use of these foundations through the following:

- **Oral Language:**

- **Three Period Lessons** with objects, images, or word cards to build naming and description skills.
- **Storytelling & Discussions** based on the **Imaginary Island** or **Farm** activities, where students create stories, develop characters, and share ideas aloud. Here, *imaginative* play is especially of importance because it helps students process their own understanding of the world, supports creativity and the development of social and emotional intelligence.
- **Dramatic play** using Montessori props (e.g., farm animals, miniature landscapes) to encourage dialogue, sequencing, and oral narrative skills. Again, *imaginative* play works here as a springboard for oral language development.

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- **Phonological Awareness:**
 - **Montessori Sandpaper Letters** for tactile letter-sound recognition.
 - **Sound games** like rhyming baskets, initial/final sound matching, or clapping syllables.
 - **Phonemic sorting activities** using small objects or picture cards to isolate beginning, middle, and ending sounds.
- **Phonics:**
 - **Moveable Alphabet** activities for building words and experimenting with spelling.
 - **Phonogram boxes** to practice blending sounds into words.
 - **Object-to-word matching trays** that reinforce phonics patterns through hands-on manipulation.
- **Fluency:**
 - **Guided reading with leveled Montessori readers** to practice smooth and fluent expressive reading.
 - **Reading aloud** in small groups or one-on-one sessions to model pacing, expression, fluency and accuracy.
 - **Performance tasks** like reading scripts or presenting a story from Imaginary Island or Farm scenarios to peers.
- **Vocabulary:**
 - **Oral labeling** of objects, pictures, and materials (farm animals, plants, island features) during lessons.
 - **Word and picture cards** associated with Imaginary Island and Farm stories for matching, categorizing, and discussion.
 - **Discussion-based activities** during which students explain story elements, settings, and character traits using newly learned vocabulary.

In Grades 3-5, all programs engage students in novel studies using a Socratic process of questioning, which not only deepens comprehension but also cultivates critical thinking by requiring students to analyze text, consider multiple perspectives, support their ideas with evidence, and articulate reasoning in dialogue with peers.

Another vital piece of the assessment process is in the form of a CBM or curriculum-based measure, both made by the teacher and found online, as in easycbm.com, which is norms-based. Specific CBM measures and progress monitoring measures may be required for Individualized Education Program purposes in accordance with school-based leadership team policies determination. However, Coastal Montessori Charter remains true to the Montessori Method by utilizing Montessori education, and more often

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than not utilizes direct observation, anecdotal records, portfolios of student work, performance tasks, and one-on-one discussions to gauge a child's progress in real-time. Although i-Ready screener diagnostic for BOY, MOY and EOY for all students and intermittent Growth Monitoring are administered throughout the school year for students falling below grade level to closely monitor their progress, these are supplementary and used to provide additional data, rather than as the core of the assessment process.

Evaluation Against Other Programs:

Compared to other Montessori environments, Coastal Montessori's intentional adoption of i-Ready Literacy Tasks adds a research-based, standardized assessment component that enhances alignment with the Science of Reading while still preserving the Montessori principle of observation-led assessment. Relative to purely SoR-based programs, the Montessori approach offers unique strengths: multisensory materials (e.g., sandpaper letters, movable alphabet), integration of reading and writing within a rich prepared environment, and individualized pacing. These features provide not only compliance with SoR/SL principles but also a holistic developmental context that fosters independence, intrinsic motivation, and cross-curricular literacy integration.

Section B: Document how Word Recognition assessment and instruction for PreK-5th grade students are further aligned to the science of reading, structured literacy and foundational literacy skills.

Utilizing Word Recognition Assessment in grades 1-5 using the Montessori Method involves continuous observation of student interaction with phonetic reading materials and the use of the Three Period or Three Part Lesson. This *focus on phonics* involves the *observing* of a student's ability to recognize and then name objects using the printed word, matching words to objects, and blending sounds into words, which, as an *authentic assessment*, illustrates a deeper individualized understanding and meaning than using traditional assessments. These are the key principles of Montessori word recognition assessment.

Along these same lines, the Montessori Method utilizes assessment activities in the form of reading phonetic words, the Three Period or Part Lesson application, use of phonetic and phonogram materials, and the writing and reading connection.

For Grades 1 and 2 at Coastal Montessori, Word Recognition assessment has previously been assessed using DIBELS but has, as of the 2025-26 school year been replaced by i-Ready's Literacy Tasks components, of which Word Recognition Fluency is the core task

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in word recognition assessment. For instructional purposes, the word recognition assessment and instruction within the Montessori Method align well with the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy, as they incorporate the crucial foundational skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, and sight word recognition using multisensory, hands-on, and systematic approaches. Montessori's emphasis on explicit sound-letter relationships, observation-based assessment, and a gradual progression from sound to word to sentence directly supports the evidence-based principles of the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy.

For Grades 3-5, word recognition assessment involves continuous observation of independent work and one-on-one conferencing by the guide (teacher) to identify specific patterns and challenges, rather than only standardized tests. Instruction builds off Sandpaper Letters and the Movable Alphabet, which emphasizes phonics and decoding strategies like identifying root words and building sight vocabulary, integrating reading and writing through activities such as the use of Word Study and providing access to meticulously-sequenced language materials in the prepared environment.

How Montessori specifically aligns with the Science of Reading, Structured Literacy and Foundational Literacy Skills:

Alignment with the Science of Reading (SoR)

- Phonemic Awareness and Phonics: Montessori begins by teaching letter sounds through tactile Sandpaper Letters, which directly supports the SoR's emphasis on developing phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and manipulate sounds) and phonics (sound-letter relationships).
- Explicit and Systematic Instruction: The Montessori approach introduces foundational literacy skills in a structured, logical sequence, moving from isolated sounds to blending and word blending, a core tenet of the Science of Reading.
- Multisensory Learning: Tracing Sandpaper Letters and using the Movable Alphabet involves auditory, tactile, and visual senses, which aids in the internalization of phonics and decoding skills.

Alignment with Structured Literacy (SL)

- Cumulative Progression: SL Principles are reflected in the Montessori curriculum, where new knowledge (like letter sounds) builds on previous understanding to learn more complex skills (like blending sounds into words).

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- Systematic Instruction: The Montessori sequence of materials and lessons—from Sandpaper Letters to the Moveable Alphabet to Word Study—provides a deliberate, step-by-step path to developing word recognition.
- Explicit Instruction: Montessori teachers (Guides) explicitly teach letter sounds and their corresponding symbols, and later, rules for syllable types and word patterns, which is central to Structured Literacy.

Alignment with Foundational Literacy Skills

- Phonological Awareness: Through activities like the Sound Cylinders and Sandpaper Letters. Children develop the ability to discriminate sounds, a crucial component of phonological awareness.
- Orthographic Mapping: The use of the Moveable Alphabet allows children to “make words” by listening to and segmenting sounds in words, which builds the capacity for orthographic mapping—the process of developing a permanent storage of word spellings for instant recognition.
- Decoding and Encoding: Children practice decoding (reading words) and encoding (spelling words) using the concrete, hands-on materials in the Montessori language area, connecting spoken sounds with written symbols.

Section C: Document how the school uses universal screener data and diagnostic assessment data to determine targeted pathways of intervention (word recognition or language comprehension) for students in PreK-5th grade who have failed to demonstrate grade-level reading proficiency.

Coastal Montessori utilizes universal screener data and diagnostic assessment data to serve as the catalyst for making our intervention services, whether that be through classroom Tier 1 or Tier 2 intervention groups, Tier 3 Intervention support through the school’s academic interventionist, or to include as a part of the school intervention team’s MTSS services in determining

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Individualized Education Plans or 504 plans for students in need, work efficiently and effectively for our student achievement and overall success in school. For the students in need of these intervention services to support comprehension and word recognition, the Montessori Method includes fostering a rich oral language environment, explicit phonemic awareness (like sound games), and multisensory activities with sandpaper letters and the moveable alphabet. These methods are integrated with phonetic reading materials, grammar lessons, and opportunities for independent word and sentence construction, all supported by assessments that identify student needs and tailor instruction to promote reading and writing fluency. I-Ready assessment data guides instructional decisions and helps identify targeted strategies for each student. Targeted strategies are then used in goal-oriented instruction to determine whether intervention is needed for word recognition or language comprehension and is provided as needed through individualized instruction. Individualized guidance is provided daily as part of the Montessori Method and is an integral part of IEP and 504 plans as well.

Section D: Describe the system in place to help parents in your school understand how they can support the student as a reader and writer at home.

The system in place at Coastal Montessori to assist parents of our students in better understanding ways they can support their children as readers and writers at home includes our weekly Monday online addition to our school newsletter during which the Director details specifics for the week and any special activities. The school newsletter highlights academic activities occurring that include **reading and writing activities as extension activities** at Coastal Montessori (CMCS), such as just-completed Silent Journey of the Sea (which families attended); sometimes weekly and always monthly field trips highlighting learning in history, science and geography; MMUN (Montessori Model United Nations) in-school units of study; our After School Clubs (i.e., Advanced Art Club, Creation Club, After School Tutoring, and STEM Club) that can be utilized along with Practical Life skills and writing and reading to bridge learning from school to home. Also heavily utilized are the school's communication/e-mail system, **bloomz**, in regards to communications among parents and staff. They openly communicate about the students' academic day, sometimes each day, with regards to progress in reading and writing in the classroom and bridging whatever activities have been practiced in class with what and how that can be continued during home activities through Practical Life skills. And it is through Practical Life skills that so very much of Montessori learning takes place. The connection here between Reading, Writing and Practical Life is a hugely strong one. Here is how: in Montessori, Practical Life Skills are foundational, indirectly preparing children for Reading and Writing by developing their coordination, concentration, independence, and sense of order. Through the continued engagement of

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purposeful, hands-on tasks, students are building fine motor skills, sequencing abilities and the focus needed to acquire successful writing, then reading, skillsets and growth potential. In the Montessori Method, reading is a natural outcome of developing the skills associated with writing. The foundational skills developed through practical life activities directly support this process. As Guides (teachers) present practical life lessons, they use precise language to describe the materials and actions, naturally building the child's vocabulary. This ideal is communicated during continuing conversations had with parents through **bloomz**, over the phone, in person during after-school activities hosted by the school and through our school's Facebook page.

Section E: Document how the school provides for the monitoring of reading achievement and growth at the classroom and school level with decisions about PreK-5th grade intervention based on all available data to ensure grade-level proficiency in reading.

At the school and classroom level, continual, methodical monitoring of reading achievement and growth are conducted. At the classroom level, teachers utilize Reading Growth Monitoring through i-Ready, which is evidence-based in progress monitoring and designed to track and project student reading abilities. This allows teachers to identify students who are on track for end-of-year growth targets and to inform interventions for students at risk of academic failure. Intuitive, real-time reports at the student and class levels analyzes student strengths and challenges to highlight their progress toward growth goals.

At the school level, i-Ready involves using intermittent but periodic computer-delivered assessments to track student progress toward their end-of-year growth goals, using typical and stretch growth benchmarks, from which school level reports can be generated. These reports include multiple assessment periods in growth monitoring to illustrate patterns of growth and overall progress towards target goals between Diagnostic Assessments BOY, MOY, and EOY.

As such, individual teachers and Coastal Montessori have an efficient, effective way to measure progress in reading (phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension) as often as needed. Because of the frequency that Growth Monitoring offers, student intervention needs can continually methodically be addressed, which is at the heart of Montessori and satisfies the MTSS/RtI requirements and process. Teachers like being able to monitor the on-track status of their students in the quest to meet or exceed their typical or stretch growth goals for the school year.

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Section F: Describe how the school provides teacher training based in the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills to support all students in PreK-5th grade.

Ongoing teacher training is continually provided through the local school district with LETRS Training for teachers at the school level. LETRS Training is held at school first and foremost with the support of the Literacy Coach and Assistant Director for Curriculum and Instruction, and is supported with district meetings. Most teachers are in year two; however, there are two who are now in year one of training. Also provided for varying groups of educators is District-led Professional Development, targeting the expertise and subject-area of each, which ranges from Media Center Specialist training to Special Education/Gifted and Talented to Science, Social Studies, Elementary and Intermediate that utilize teaching skillsets and strategic behaviors to support all students in grades 1-5. Embedded in the PD as an ongoing part of training are Science of Reading, Structured Literacy and Foundations in Literacy since all teachers of these grade levels utilize Writing and Reading as the anchors to daily class instruction and activity. These teachers utilize the skillsets and strategies attained. These are the in-school experiences that mirror what teachers are learning and using with students in Science of Reading, Structured Literacy and Foundations as a matter of course to continue a seamless teaching-learning process.

Professional development continues at the Montessori level as well in utilizing SoR, SL and Foundational Literacy Skills, as educators access their American Montessori Society membership to continue their learning journeys using the Montessori Method. As members, they have access to many varied professional development courses free to them that connect Science of Reading, Structured Literacy and Foundations in Literacy with Montessori philosophy and practice.

Despite being over a century old, the Montessori Method embraces many of the same principles as SoR, because both follow a structured, phonics-based, multisensory, sequential approach. Montessori utilizes manipulatives like the Movable Alphabet, to help students break apart multisyllabic words into smaller parts to strategically assist in decoding and spelling, developing semantic awareness by focusing on key vocabulary, word meanings and comprehension strategies, part of the structured literacy approach. As an integral part of foundations in literacy, the Montessori Method teaches students to write first before they learn to read, an

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organic approach. Students put together letters for the sounds they know before they are ready to make an interpretation and string together the sounds of words on a page. Teachers get more of this PD as members of AMS.

In addition to embedded professional development in the form of school PLCs held once weekly during which Montessori target goals for students are discussed and problem solved through discussion and inquiry, teachers are integral in their roles as educators of SoR, SL and Foundations in Literacy during FUNdational Fridays, held each week at Coastal Montessori. Students are grouped in Tier 2, Tier 3 and Talented and Gifted with instructional opportunities, during which they learn utilizing the above through hands-on manipulatives, tech, activities and learning games, all designed to target the challenges identified by the teacher, interventionist and literacy coach (through use of observation, CBMs and i-Ready).

Section G: Analysis of Data

Strengths	Possibilities for Growth
• Science of Reading, Structured Literacy, and Foundations of Literacy are embedded in the Montessori Method through daily teacher practices and support staff and Leadership Team members, with LETRS emphasis. • I-Ready Reading achievement school-wide is above average. 63% of 2024-25 students were at or above	• Overall Comprehension is at 38% school-wide as of 2024-25 based on i-Ready. • Vocabulary is at 39% school-wide as of 2024-25 based on i-Ready.

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grade level. Typical growth was 121%. Stretch growth was 62%. I-Ready percentages in two key areas are the strongest, with high-frequency words at 89% at mid or above; Comprehension/Literature at 47% at mid or above at school level.	Informational text is at 35% school-wide as of 2024-25 based on i-Ready.
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Section H: Previous School Year SMART Goals and Progress Toward Those Goals

- Please provide your school's goals from last school year and the progress your school has made towards these goals. Utilize quantitative and qualitative data to determine progress toward the goal (s). As a reminder, all schools serving third grade were required to use Goal #1 (below).

Goals	Progress
<u>Previous Goal #1 (Third Grade Goal):</u> Reduce the percentage of third graders scoring Does Not Meet in the spring of [two school years prior] as determined by SC READY from __25____ % to _20____ % in the spring of [previous school year].	Not Met. Low performances across Reading categories (Literary text, Informational Text, and Reading (vocabulary) across Genres was 40%, 31.4% and 28.6% respectively.
<u>Previous Goal #2:</u> Increase the percentage of third grade students scoring On Grade Level or Above in Vocabulary from Spring 2023-24 from 58% to 65%.	Not Met. Reading (vocabulary) high performance on SC Ready 2024-25 was 48.6%.

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<u>Previous Goal #3:</u>	

Section I: Current SMART Goals and Action Steps Based on Analysis of Data

- All schools serving students in third grade MUST respond to the third grade reading proficiency goal. ***Note the change in language for the 3rd grade goal to align with the 2030 vision of 75% of students at or above grade level.*** Schools that do not serve third grade students may choose a different goal. Goals should be academically measurable. **All goals should align with academic growth or achievement.** Schools must provide a minimum of two goals.
- Schools are strongly encouraged to incorporate goals from the school renewal plan. Utilize a triangulation of appropriate and available data (i.e. SC READY, screeners, MTSS progress monitoring, benchmark assessments, and observational data) to set reasonable goal(s) for the current school year.

Goals	Action Steps
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<u>Current Goal #1 (Third Grade Goal):</u> Increase the percentage of third graders scoring Meets and Exceeds in the spring of [previous school year] as determined by SC READY from ___40%___ % to _45%___ % in Reading Literary Text.	All stakeholders (teachers, interventionist, literacy coach, Assistant Director and Director) will implement a series of steps which is research-based and best practices proven, by which students can and should build onto skillsets and strategic behaviors at the point of difficulty in problem solving to successfully achieve this increase. This series includes but is not limited to strong Tier 1 instruction at the classroom level; strong Tier 2 instructional intervention at the classroom level; strong Tier 3 instructional intervention with the school reading interventionist; strong ongoing teacher and small groups instructional practices with students by the school literacy coach; strong continuous programs, such as FUNdamental Fridays, that bolster what students know and teach for what they almost know by the Assistant Director; strong continual leadership practices that filter out to all staff to continue the most efficient and effective teaching practices for student success by the Director.
<u>Current Goal #2:</u> Increase the percentage of third graders scoring Meets and Exceeds in the spring of [previous school year] as determined by SC READY from _28.6%___ to ___33.6%___ in Reading Vocabulary.	All stakeholders (teachers, interventionist, literacy coach, Assistant Director and Director) will implement research-based and best practices proven instructional techniques and methods along with teaching for skillsets and strategic behaviors to utilize that will foster the development and retention of increasing vocabulary attainment and use by

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	students. These include but are not limited to the teaching for vocabulary through instructional games, technology, field experiences and through instructional practices during the Work Cycle that incorporate more vocabulary words, more use of complex vocabulary by the teacher, and fostering more complex vocabulary use by the student on a daily basis.
<u>Current Goal #3:</u>	