Downtown Montessori Academy

Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

2013–14 School Year

Report Date: September 2014

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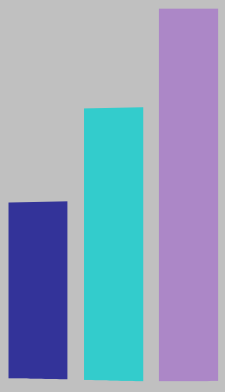

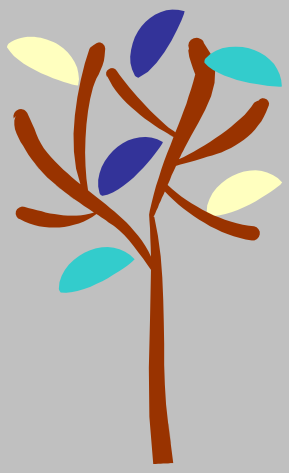

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY i

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE 2
- A. Board of Directors 2
- B. Philosophy and Description of Educational Methodology 3
  - 1. Montessori Approach 3
  - 2. Teacher/Instructional Staff Information 6
  - 3. Parental Involvement 8
  - 4. Discipline Policy 9
  - 5. Waiting List 11
- C. Student Population 11
- D. Hours of Instruction 13
- E. Computer/Technology Capability 13
- F. Activities for Continuous School Improvement 14
- G. Graduation and High School Guidance Information 15

III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE 16
- A. Attendance 16
- B. Parent Conferences and Contracts 17
- C. Special Education Student Records 17
- D. Local Measures of Educational Performance 18
  - 1. Progress Reports for K3 Through K5 18
  - 2. Reading, Writing, and Math Progress for First Through Eighth Grades 20
    - a. Reading Skills 20
      - i. Students at or Above Grade Level 21
      - ii. Students Below Grade Level 22
    - b. Writing Skills 23
    - c. Math Skills 24
  - 3. Special Education Student Progress 25
- E. Standardized Measures of Educational Performance 26
  - 1. PALS for K4 Through Second Graders 26
    - a. PALS-PreK 28
    - b. PALS-K and PALS 1–3 29
  - 2. WKCE for Third Through Eighth Graders 30
    - a. Reading 31
    - b. Math 32
    - c. Language Arts 34
    - d. Writing 36

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TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

F. Multiple-Year Student Progress 36
1. Multiple-Year Student Progress for Fourth Through Eighth Graders Using Former WKCE Cut Scores 37
a. Students Who Met Proficiency-Level Expectations (Former Cut Scores) 38
b. Students Who Did Not Meet Proficiency-Level Expectations (Former Cut Scores) 39
2. Multiple-Year Student Progress for Fourth Through Eighth Graders Using Revised Cut Scores 40
a. Students Who Met Proficiency-Level Expectations (Revised Cut Scores) 40
b. Students Who Did Not Meet Proficiency-Level Expectations (Revised Cut Scores) 41
G. CSRC School Scorecard 43
H. DPI School Report Card 44
I. Parent/Teacher/Board Satisfaction Regarding Student Academic Progress 45

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS 46

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Contract Compliance Chart
Appendix B: Outcome Measures Agreement Memo
Appendix C: Trend Information
Appendix D: CSRC School Scorecards
Appendix E: 2012–13 DPI Report Card
Appendix F: Teacher Interview Results
Appendix G: Parent Survey Results
Appendix H: Student Interview Results
Appendix I: Board Member Interview Results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
for
Downtown Montessori Academy
2013–14

This is the 16th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, a City of Milwaukee charter school.[1] It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and the NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC). Based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report, CRC has determined the following findings.

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

Downtown Montessori met all of the educational provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent CSRC requirements.

See Appendix A for a list of contract provisions and report page references.

II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

A. Local Measures

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

CSRC requires the school to track student progress in reading, writing, and mathematics throughout the year to identify students in need of additional help and to assist teachers in developing strategies to improve the academic performance of all students. This year, Downtown Montessori's local measures of academic progress resulted in the following outcomes.

All (100.0%) prekindergarten and kindergarten students showed progress or were proficient in all language and sensorial skills, math and/or practical life skills, and cultural skills.

Reading

- All 79 (100.0%) first- through eighth-grade students who scored at or above their grade level in reading on the fall test maintained at or above grade-level status on the spring reading test.

- Of the 52 first- through eighth-grade students who scored below their grade level on the fall reading test, 47 (90.4%) improved their scores by at least one grade level on the spring test.

- Overall, 126 (96.2%) of the 131 first- through eighth-grade students met their local measure goal for reading.

[1] The City of Milwaukee Common Council chartered 10 schools in the 2013–14 academic year.

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Math

- All 113 (100.0%) first through sixth graders reached proficient or showed progress on grade-level math skills.
- Nine (90.0%) of 10 seventh and eighth graders who scored 85.0% or better on the first chapter test scored 85.0% or better on the final chapter test.
- Overall, 128 (98.5%) of 130 first- through eighth-grade students met their goal for math.

Writing

- Overall, 115 (87.8%) of 131 of first- through eighth-grade students achieved an overall score of three or higher on the spring writing sample.

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2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, Downtown Montessori identified measurable education-related outcomes in attendance, parent involvement, and special education student records.

The school met its goals in all of these outcomes.

3. School Scorecard

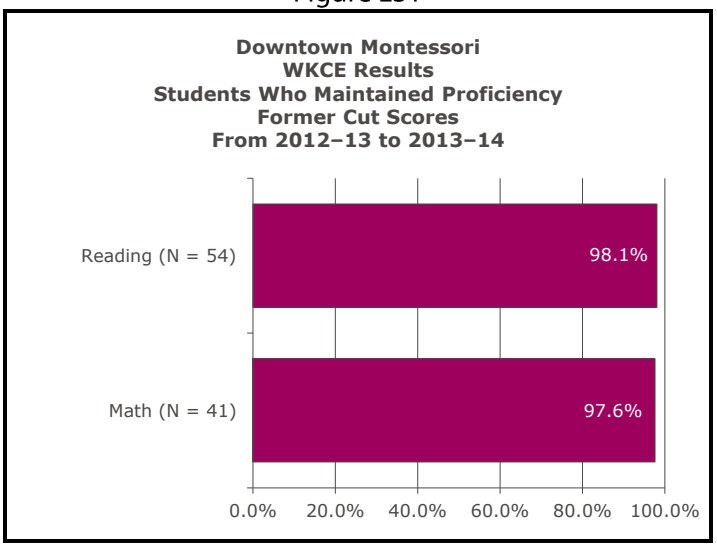
This year, the school scored 89.3% on the school scorecard based on the former Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) cut scores.

B. Year-to-Year Academic Achievement on Standardized Tests

Downtown Montessori administered all required standardized tests noted in their contract with the City of Milwaukee. Multiple-year student progress is described below.

- Of 54 fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in 2012–13, 98.1% maintained proficiency in reading, and 97.6% of 41 students maintained proficiency in math, based on former proficiency cut scores used up until the 2012–13 school year. The CSRC goal is 75.0% (Figure ES1).

Figure ES1



- Of 20 fourth- through eighth-grade students who were below proficient in math, 60.0% showed improvement based on former proficiency cut scores during the 2013–14 school year. The CSRC goal is 60.0%. Only seven students scored minimal or

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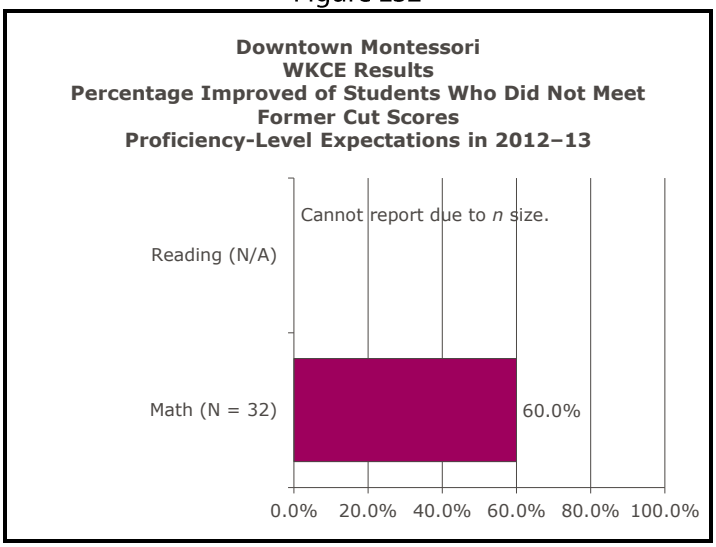
basic on the 2012–13 WKCE reading test. Due to the small size of the cohort, results could not be included in this report (Figure ES2).

Figure ES2



III. SURVEY/INTERVIEW RESULTS

Every other year, CRC conducts parent surveys and interviews board members, teachers, and students to obtain feedback on their perceptions about the school. Some of the key results include the following.

- CRC received 112 parent surveys , representing 112 (68.7%) of 163 families. Of these:
  - » Most (93.8%) parents would recommend this school to other parents; and
  - » Nearly all parents (94.6%) rated the school's overall contribution to their child's learning as excellent or good.
- Six of seven board members participated in interviews. Of these:
  - » All six board members (100.0%) rated the school as excellent or good overall; and
  - » All six board members (100.0%) liked the lack of gym, lunch, and playground room least about the school.
- A total of 10 instructional staff participated in interviews. Of these:

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- » Five (50.0%) teachers listed the school's progress toward becoming an excellent school as excellent, and five (50.0%) of the teachers listed the school's progress as good; and

- » Six (60.0%) rated the school's contribution to students' academic progress as excellent and the remaining four (40.0%) rated the contribution as good.

- There were 16 seventh- and eighth-grade students interviewed. Of these:

  - » A total of 15 (93.8%) students who responded indicated they had improved in reading and 75.0% improved in math at the school;

  - » There were 14 (87.5%) students who said they felt safe in school; and

  - » All (100.0%) of the students felt the marks they received on their classwork, homework, and report cards were fair.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Downtown Montessori addressed all of the recommendations in its 2012–13 programmatic profile and educational performance report. Based on results in this report and in consultation with school staff, CRC recommends that the school continue a focused improvement plan by engaging in the following activities during the 2014-15 school year.

- Develop strategies to support those families struggling with attendance, for example continue to work with families who have economic needs or lack a support system.

- Continue to focus on math development.

- Strengthen parent involvement as the school grows.

V. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND CHARTER RENEWAL

Based on current and past contract compliance and the scorecard results, CRC recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) and the NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC).[2] It is one component of the program CSRC uses to monitor performance of all schools chartered by the city.

The process to gather the information in this report included the following steps.

- CRC staff visited the school in the fall and conducted a structured interview with the head of the school. Critical documents were reviewed and copies were obtained for CRC files.
- CRC staff assisted the school in developing its outcome measures for the annual learning memo.
- Additional site visits included classroom instruction observation and note taking on such issues as classroom setup, number of students and teachers, and student engagement in learning activities.
- CRC staff read case files for selected special education students to ensure that individualized education programs (IEP) were updated.
- CRC staff verified the presence of current licenses or permits for all of the school's instructional staff using the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) teacher license website.
- CRC staff conducted a structured, end-of-the-year interview with the head of school.
- CRC staff conducted interviews with all of the seventh- and eighth- grade students, 10 teachers, and members of the school's board of directors.
- CRC conducted a survey of parents of all students enrolled in the school.
- CRC staff, and the CSRC chair attended a meeting of the school's board of directors to improve communications regarding the role of CSRC and CRC as the educational monitors and the expectations regarding board member involvement.
- The school provided electronic data to CRC.
- CRC staff compiled and analyzed results and produced this annual report.

[2] CRC is a center of the nonprofit National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). NCCD promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice.

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II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy
2507 South Graham St.
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Telephone: (414) 744-6005
Website: http://downtownmontessori.com

Head of School: Ms. Virginia Flynn
Executive Director: Mr. Ian Spanic

Downtown Montessori Academy is located in the Bay View neighborhood near the Port of Milwaukee on the southeast side of the city.[3] The academy has been at its current location since the fall of 2006 and recently purchased the building that houses the school.

A. Board of Directors[4]

Downtown Montessori Academy is governed by a volunteer board of directors. The Downtown Montessori Academy Board of Directors provides strategic leadership in support of the school's mission, philosophy, and goals. The board makes long-term decisions, provides financial management, and communicates regularly with the executive director and the head of school to ensure that the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter and that the school is a viable organization.

As the head of school and executive director manage the day-to-day activities, the board's mission is to preserve and protect the financial health and well-being of the school and to work with the school's administration to determine annual goals and objectives. The board develops the long-term strategic plan that sets the annual agenda for the board and determines the annual goals and objectives for the executive director and head of school.

This year, seven members comprised the board of directors: a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and three other directors.

[3] The school was previously located in downtown Milwaukee and was chartered by the City of Milwaukee in 1998.

[4] Information taken from the school's website: http://downtownmontessori.com

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CRC staff and the CSRC chair attended a meeting of the Downtown Montessori Board of Directors to improve communications regarding the role of CSRC and CRC, as the educational monitors, and the expectations regarding board member involvement.

Six of the board members participated in the board interview. All of the board members rated the school as excellent or good overall. All board members also reported that they participated in strategic planning, received a presentation on the school's annual academic performance report, and received and approved the school's annual budget and the annual financial audit. When asked what they liked best about the school, the board mentioned the culture of the school, the child-focused curriculum, and the building. Several suggestions for improving the school were mentioned, but two board members mentioned continuing to implement the five-year plan for the school. See Appendix I for additional results from board member interviews.

B. Philosophy and Description of Educational Methodology

1. Montessori Approach

Downtown Montessori delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society.[5] Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. Begun in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced in the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. Montessori education has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years, reflecting growing recognition of the validity of its approach.

[5] See the 2012–13 *Parent/Student Handbook*, located on the school's website (http://downtownmontessori.com). The 2012–13 *Parent/Student Handbook* was again used for the 2013–14 school year with planned revisions for 2014–15.

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Downtown Montessori is currently divided into four levels of programming. The Children's House contains the Montessori Primary Program, which is open to students ages 3 to 6, and includes grades K3, K4, and K5.[6] The lower elementary program is designed for students in first through third grades; the upper elementary program is open to students in fourth through sixth grades; and the fourth level, the adolescent program, is for students in seventh and eighth grades.

The Children's House provides an environment that meets the needs of children—where children work individually and collaboratively with sensorial materials that engage their curiosity. Children are free to explore and observe at their own pace. The variety of sensorial experiences enables children to refine and classify their impressions of the world around them. The classroom engages children with numbers and language, writing and reading, the tools for reasoning and communication, and the basis of self-directed learning.

The sense of responsibility to self and to the community introduced in the Children's House is further developed at the elementary level. At the lower elementary level, the school continues to provide multi-age grouping in an environment that encourages cooperative learning and self-discipline. This program is based on "Great Stories" and explores everything from the microscopic to the cosmic, allowing children to discover how all things are inter-related.[7] The program builds on the foundations of the Children's House program.

The upper elementary program follows a three-year curriculum cycle in all areas of study except mathematics. Learning ways of inquiring, investigating, and resolving questions plays a dominant role in the upper elementary program. The elementary levels emphasize an interdisciplinary approach to learning and respect for self and community. Materials and group activities are designed

[6] Children who turn 5 on or before September 1 may attend full-day Montessori sessions. Children who turn 4 on or before September 1 may attend a half- or full-day 4-year-old program. The full day for 4-year-olds consists of half-day Montessori and half-day child care.

[7] In the Montessori curriculum, the Great Stories are the five stories that span the curriculum at a glance. Key lessons are taught as a result of the stories, emphasizing fundamental parts of each story that are found in all subject areas.

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to develop individual and collaborative skills in the areas of biology, mathematics, language, history, geography, music, and the visual arts. The environment reinforces children's natural curiosity and community.

The adolescent program (seventh and eighth grades) reflects a more rigorous level of academic challenge and preparation for high school. Study skills, time management, and setting high work and social standards are all vital components of the adolescent program.

Students experience extensions of classroom study through community involvement, which gradually enables students to grow from classroom citizens to citizens in society at large. In addition to being a state-certified "Green and Healthy School," the school is a member of the Urban Ecology Center. The center, located on the Milwaukee River, provides a coordinated science and environmental program for students.

The Montessori teacher/directress works with children individually and in groups, introducing materials and giving guidance as needed. The role of the teacher is to help the children teach themselves through the use of the Montessori materials and attention to the learning environment.[8]

During the interview and survey process, board members, teachers, and parents were asked about the school's program of instruction. All six board members rated the program of instruction as excellent (4) or good (2). The 10 teachers interviewed rated the program of instruction as excellent (60.0%) or good (40.0%), and 94.6% of the parents rated the program of instruction as excellent or good. All 10 teachers indicated that the educational methodology was either a very important (60.0%) or somewhat important (40.0%) reason for teaching at the school.

[8] *Parent/Student Handbook, 2012–2013,* p. 24.

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2. Teacher/Instructional Staff Information

The school consisted of 10 classrooms during the 2013–14 academic year: four Children's House classrooms for 3-to 6-year-old (or K3 through K5) students, three lower elementary classrooms (first through third grades), two upper elementary classrooms (fourth through sixth grades), and one adolescent classroom (seventh and eighth grades).

Throughout the school year, the school employed a total of 16 instructional staff and six teaching assistants. Instructional staff consisted of 10 classroom teachers and six others (a speech-language pathologist, a special education teacher, an art teacher, a school psychologist, a reading specialist, and a Title I math teacher). Four of the classroom teachers taught at the Children's House level, three taught lower elementary, two taught upper elementary, and one taught the adolescent program. In addition, a full-time teacher's assistant was assigned to each of the Children's House teachers, a special education aid assisted with one child, and another assistant provided support where needed.

The Title I math teacher was hired in January 2014. All of the other 15 instructional staff who started the school year completed the school year, resulting in an instructional staff retention rate of 100.0%. (The instructional staff retention rate is the percentage of teachers and other instructional staff who were employed at the school for the entire academic year.)

At the end of the 2012–13 school year, 15 instructional staff (10 classroom teachers and five other instructional staff) were employed by the school; all were eligible to return in the fall of 2013. A total of 14 (93.3%) instructional staff returned in the fall of 2013.[9]

Regarding staff experience at this school, two of the classroom teachers have taught at the school since its original charter 16 years ago. Another teacher has taught at the school for 15 years,

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The staff return rate is the percentage of eligible staff employed at the end of the previous school year who return to the school in the fall. Eligible staff are those who are or would be offered continuing positions for the following school year.

[9] One classroom teacher retired.

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one teacher completed the fifth year, one completed the third year, three completed their second year, and one completed the first year. The reading specialist has taught for three years, the speech therapist for three years, the special education teacher for two years, and the Title I math teacher for half a year. The psychologist has been at the school for two years. The average experience at Downtown Montessori for the 10 classroom teachers was 7.8 years; it was 2.3 years for the five other instructional staff members.

All of the instructional staff held DPI licenses (each license was verified on DPI's website) and all of the classroom teachers had Montessori certifications as well. Professional development and in-services throughout the year included the following.

- August through June—Third Friday Staff Meetings: Staff meetings were held once each month with all staff. Topics varied and were followed by grade-level meetings and team meetings.
- September through June—The academic committee continued to meet with a focus on math, as discussed in the school improvement section.
- November through February—School assistants attended the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee, which is a series of meetings to certify teachers, assistants, and/or parents for working in a Montessori classroom.
- A representative teacher from each level (Children's House, lower elementary, upper elementary, and adolescents) attended a day-long workshop at CESA #1 focused on Response to Intervention in March.
- A representative of the lower and upper elementary and adolescent program attended a half-day workshop at Concordia University on implementing the Common Core State Standards for math in May.
- June—Staff attended a DPI Program titled "Changing Behavior by Supporting Autistic Thinking Style."
- All teachers attended a half-day session with the math consultant, Dr. Kevin McLeod, regarding teaching mathematics. This first session focused on an overview of Montessori and integrating the curriculum needed to meet state Common Core standards. This is the beginning of a series of presentations and workshops in math.

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During the interview process, teachers were asked about professional development opportunities. Eight of the 10 teachers rated professional development opportunities as excellent or good and two rated the professional development opportunities as fair.

3. Parental Involvement

As described in the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2012–2013*, Downtown Montessori seeks and depends upon the energy and spirit of its parents. Parents are urged to contact their child's teacher for volunteer opportunities in and outside the classroom. Current research and prior experience at Downtown Montessori show a direct relationship between the degree of parental involvement in a school and the level of benefit children receive through that school.

Active parent involvement includes activities such as accompanying children on field trips, reading stories and sharing their experiences, assisting in building improvements such as constructing shelves and assembling playground equipment, organizing publicity events, preparing snacks, and donating equipment. The school expects all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. The school posts activity sign-up sheets throughout the year and sends emails and notes home with the students to encourage parents to participate in activities. Parents are also encouraged to visit their child's class at least once a year.

This year, instead of a parent teacher organization (PTO), the school established a Parent Engagement Network (PEN).[10] The Downtown Montessori Academy PEN is an all-volunteer-led parent group dedicated to supplementing and enriching the education of students by providing opportunities for parent involvement. All parents of enrolled children are members. Monthly meetings are held in the evenings. Parents can become involved in educational and fun activities, community-building activities, and various volunteer opportunities.

[10] PEN is fully described on the school's website: http://downtownmontessori.com/parent-info/parent-volunteer-group/

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Each child has a folder in which notices, school forms, and schoolwork are sent home with the child. Email is encouraged, as the school endeavors to communicate as much as possible through email to prevent unnecessary paper use in accordance with the principles of being a Green and Healthy School. Teacher email addresses are listed in the *Parent/Student Handbook*, located on the school website, where current information and notices are also available (http://www.downtownmontessori.com). Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year and any time a parent wishes.

Parents, teachers, and board members were asked about parental involvement in the survey/interview process. More than 83% of parents indicated that the opportunities for parental involvement were excellent or good. In addition to indicating that parental involvement was an important reason for continuing to teach at the academy (80% of teachers interviewed), 90% rated parental involvement as excellent or good. Five of the six board members interviewed rated parental involvement as excellent or good. The sixth did not have an opinion.

4. Discipline Policy

The school's code of conduct and discipline policy was published in the 2012–13 *Parent/Student Handbook,* which was reused in 2013–14. It indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is most important to create a consistent environment for children. When a child's actions demand correction, it is essential for all involved adults to deal with the problem in the same way.

The Montessori method encourages children to make choices and develop responsibility for their own actions. Discipline is used to help, not punish, the child. The method of corrective discipline endorsed by Downtown Montessori has grown out of the Montessori approach. When a child is involved in actions contrary to established rules, the goal is to redirect the child to other activities.

All staff and parents serve as role models for the children, as demonstrated by their conduct with the children, other staff, and other parents. Each child should be dealt with positively; parents

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and staff should avoid showing anger. Quiet time is used only if child redirection does not work. The child will choose when he/she is ready to rejoin the group.

When, in the judgment of the teacher and program director, a child's behavior is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the child or others, it cannot and will not be tolerated. All interventions will be formulated based on the principles of respect for the child, knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child and the needs of the group, and an understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The discipline policy describes specific consequences for older children when other interventions have not worked. These steps range from a review of the school rules and a warning for a first offense to possible consequences for fourth offenses, such as in-school suspension, isolation from the group, or temporary suspension from activities, depending on the nature of the offense. For chronic behavior problems that are suspected to be beyond the child's control, a referral is made to support services for evaluation and help. Suspension and/or expulsion of students are considered last resorts and are subject to board review.

This year, teachers, parents, and board members were asked about the discipline policy at Downtown Montessori. Their responses were as follows.

- Teachers
  - » Nine (90%) considered the discipline at the school as a very important or somewhat important reason for continuing to teach there.
  - » Seven (70%) rated the school's adherence to discipline policy as excellent or good.
- Parents
  - » Of parents who responded to surveys, 80.0% considered discipline as a very important or somewhat important factor in choosing Downtown Montessori.
  - » A total of 83.1% rated the discipline methods at the school as good or excellent.

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» A total of 79.5% were comfortable with how the staff handles discipline.[11]

- Board members: Three (50.0%) board members knew about the adherence to the discipline policy and rated this area as either excellent or good.

All of the survey and interview results can be found in the appendices.

5. Waiting List

As of June 4, 2014, the school reported a waiting list of 52 students, 25 3 year olds, and 27 others ranging from K4 through fourth grades.

C. Student Population

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 233 children in K3 through eighth grade.[12] By the end of the year, two more children had enrolled and five had withdrawn. Withdrawal reasons included two students who moved out of the state, two students who withdrew due to transportation, and one student who transferred to a different school.[13, 14] One of the children who withdrew had special education needs. Of 233 children who began the year, 228 finished the school year at Downtown Montessori; this represents a student retention rate of 97.9%.

At the end of the year, 230 students were enrolled.

- Of these, 138 (60.0%) students were White, 39 (17.0%) were Latina/o, 31 (13.5%) were African American, 10 (4.3%) were Asian, four (1.7%) were of Middle Eastern decent, four (1.7%) were of Asian Indian decent, two (0.9%) were Native American, one (0.4%) was Filipino/a, and one (0.4%) was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

[11] Agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am comfortable with how the staff handles discipline."

[12] As of September 20, 2013.

[13] Two fourth-grade students and one student each from K4, third, and fifth grades withdrew.

[14] The school does not expel any students.

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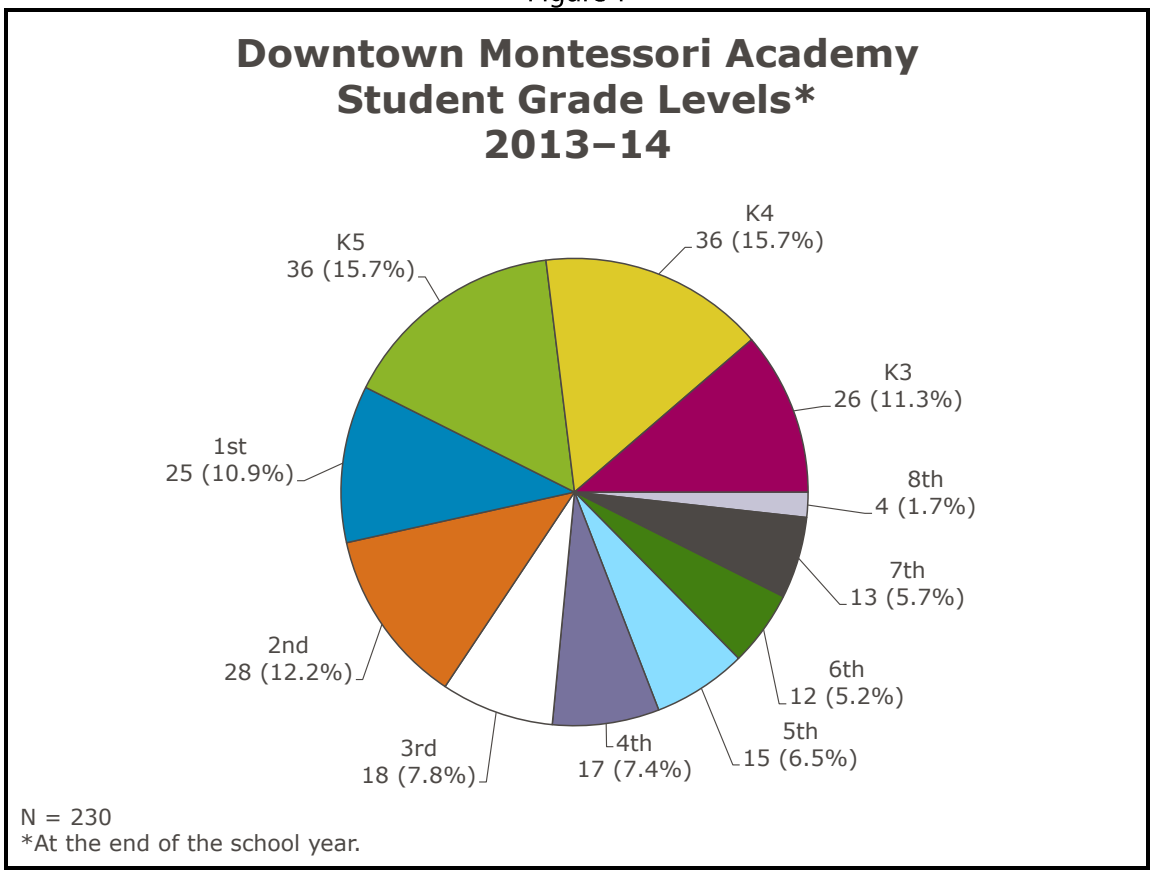
- There were 116 (50.4%) boys and114 (49.6%) girls.
- Nine (3.9%) students had special education needs. In order to protect student identity, CRC does not report results for fewer than 10 students; therefore, type of special education need is not included in this report.[15]
- A total of 65 (28.3%) students were eligible for free or reduced lunch prices.
- There were 98 children in the Montessori Primary Program (Children's House), 71 in lower elementary, 44 in upper elementary, and 17 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).

Figure 1



[15] In addition to the students with special education needs, one child was eligible for accommodations under section 504 of the Civil Rights Act.

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There were 189 students attending Downtown Montessori on the last day of the 2012–13 academic year who were eligible for continued enrollment at the school this past academic year (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 176 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2013. This represents a return rate of 93.1% and compares to a return rate of 89.7% in the fall of 2012.

A total of 16 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders participated in satisfaction interviews at the end of the school year. The responses to the survey were a lot, yes, some, no/not at all, or no response/don't know.

- When asked whether they feel safe in school, most (81.3%) students indicated a lot or some.
- Asked if they improved in reading, 93.8% responded a lot or some.
- Regarding improvement in math, 75.0% indicated a lot or some.
- A total of 93.8% reported that their teachers talk to their parents a lot or some.

When asked what they liked best about the school, student comments reflected a wide variety of issues, including getting to work with younger students and the teachers. Dress code and math were among the issues least liked. See Appendix H for the complete results of the student interviews.

D. Hours of Instruction

The school posted its 2013–14 calendar on its website. The calendar was also available in hard copy in the school's office. The hours of school operation for this year were the same as last: 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4, and 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for K5 through eighth grades.

E. Computer/Technology Capability

Downtown Montessori has generic personal computers (IBM-compatible).All students have access to computer stations at various times throughout the day. The school publishes its Internet

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usage policy in the *Parent/Student Handbook* and requires parent and student signatures on an elementary/adolescent student computer use contract. The school uses Excel spreadsheets and Montessori Records Express to collect student data and data related to academic progress. Montessori Records Express is a web-based record-keeping system that tracks attendance, progress, and lesson plans. The program also generates custom progress reports.

F. Activities for Continuous School Improvement

The following is a description of Downtown Montessori's response to the activities recommended in the programmatic profile and educational performance report for the 2012–13 academic year.

- Recommendation: Continue the academic committee team to evaluate how to meet the needs of all students AND identify an outside math consultant to assist teachers with math evaluation and interventions.

  Response: The academic committee team continued to meet throughout the 2013–14 school year. The team met biweekly to evaluate the math program and begin to demine solutions. Subsequently, they met with board members who had formed a math committee to discuss the information. Together, staff and board members reviewed the history of Downtown Montessori math scores and looked into solutions and training needs. The team also met with the teachers at each level (Children's House, lower elementary, upper elementary, and adolescent program). The emphasis was on internal teacher development and how the board could support the effort to improve math achievement for all students. One result of this effort was the identification and funding of a person to:

  - » Assist teachers to identify gaps in the Montessori curriculum; and
  - » Assist teachers with the development of appropriate math targets to reconcile math skills with the Common Core curriculum and state requirements.

  This person from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee started in June 2014 to provide an overall comparison of the Montessori math skills with the Common Core standards and to work with teachers at each of the grade levels.

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In addition, the school established a summer program from June 16 to July 17, 2014, for 25 at-risk first through third graders who were behind in math and reading. The summer program ran from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. four days a week.

- Recommendation: Provide a consultant (currently a Cardinal Stritch University consultant) to assist teachers at all grade levels with evaluation and interventions for improving reading and writing and to work with parents on literacy goals.

  Response: The school continued working with the Cardinal Stritch University consultant, who worked with the reading specialist, parents, and teachers throughout the year. This person will continue in 2014–15.

- Recommendation: Continue building development; specifically, study the idea of purchasing the convent building in- order to consider an expansion plan for the adolescent program.

  Response: During the 2013–14 school year, Downtown Montessori purchased the convent. The remodel of the second floor and part of the first floor and basement was started. The goal is to house the adolescent program and child care in the facility by September 2014.

After reviewing the information in this report and in consultation with the school's leader at the end-of-school interview in June 2014, CRC recommends that the focus of activities for the 2014–15 school year include the following.

- Develop strategies to support those families struggling with attendance, e.g., continue to work with families that have economic needs or lack a support system.
- Continue to focus on math development.
- Strengthen parent involvement as the school grows.

G. Graduation and High School Guidance Information

The classroom teacher informed families on test and entry dates and provided information regarding enrollment processes. All four eighth graders graduated. They will be attending University School of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee High School of the Arts, South Milwaukee High School, and Milwaukee Montessori High School.

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At this time, Downtown Montessori does not have a formal method to track the high school achievement of its graduates. Informally, through contact with families, the school's leader learned that the seven 2011 graduates were all in high schools, including Rufus King, Pius XI, Greenfield, the Alliance School and the Montessori High School. The one student who graduated in 2012 is attending Rufus King and the five students who graduated in 2013 are attending Rufus King, the Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Shorewood, and Reagan IB.

III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

To monitor Downtown Montessori's school performance, a variety of qualitative and quantitative information was collected at specific intervals during the past several academic years. This year, the school established goals for attendance, parent conferences, parent contracts, and special education student records. The school used internal and external measures of academic progress. This section of the report describes school success in meeting attendance, conference, parent contract, and special education record-keeping goals. It also describes student progress as measured internally on student report cards and externally by standardized tests, such as the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener (PALS) and the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE).

A. Attendance

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 95.0%. The school achieved this goal, as students, on average, attended

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school 95.2% of the time this year.[16]When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 100.0%.[17]

B. Parent Conferences and Contracts

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal for parents of all students to participate in scheduled parent-teacher conferences. This year, the school scheduled two conference sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents of all (100.0%) children enrolled at the time of the conferences attended. The school has therefore met its goal related to parent conferences.

The school also established a goal that 95.0% of parents would fulfill the requirements of the parent contract related to hours of involvement. The school requested that families contribute four hours per person or family this year. Parents of all (100.0%) children fulfilled contract requirements; therefore, the school has met this goal.

C. Special Education Student Records

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students. During the year, 10 students with special education needs attended the school.[18] Additionally, four children were referred for services but were found not eligible and one child was eligible for accommodations under section 504 of the Civil Rights Act. One student moved out of the district prior to his/her annual review. The remaining nine (100.0%) special education students had an IEP. During the year, the school conducted annual IEP reviews for all students who required one. A

[16] Attendance rate is based on all 235 students enrolled at any time during the year. The rate was calculated for each student by dividing the number of days attended by the number of expected days of attendance and averaging across all students.

[17] CSRC requires that the school report suspensions. According to the data submitted by the school, there were no student suspension this year.

[18] One student with special education needs withdrew during the year.

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special education eligibility assessment for one student was due and completed this year (eligibility reviews occur every three years).

In addition, CRC conducted a review of a representative number of files during the year. This review indicated that IEPs had been completed and reviewed in a timely manner and that parents were invited to and participated in the IEP team. The school has met its goal related to keeping updated student special education records.

D. Local Measures of Educational Performance

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula that reflect each school's individual philosophy, mission, and goals. In addition to administering standardized tests, each charter school is responsible for describing goals and expectations for its students in the context of that school's unique approach to education. These goals and expectations are established by each city-chartered school at the beginning of the academic year to measure the educational performance of its students. These local measures are useful for monitoring and reporting progress, guiding and improving instruction, clearly expressing the expected quality of student work, and providing evidence that students are meeting local benchmarks. The CSRC expectation is that at a minimum, schools establish local measures in reading, writing, math, and special education. Due to their young age, results for 3- to 5-year-old children are combined below. Results in each academic content area for students in first through eighth grades are illustrated subsequently.

1. Progress Reports for K3 Through K5

Downtown Montessori uses the Scholastic Progress Reports in K3 through K5 to track students' progress on a variety of skills. The K3 through K5 report cards track student skills in:

- Language, e.g., spoken, written, reading, parts of speech, and word study;

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- Mathematical development, e.g., numbers, counting, addition, subtraction, and multiplication;
- Sensorial discrimination, i.e., visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory;
- Cultural areas, e.g., globes, maps, and animals of the world; and
- Practical life, e.g., care of person, grace, courtesy, and control and coordination.

Students are rated as "presented," "practiced," "improving," or "proficient" on each skill. This year, the school established a goal that by the end of the year, K3 through K5 students who attended all year would be proficient or show progress (presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade-level skills in each of these five areas. Students who were initially proficient would maintain proficiency.

This year, data were submitted for 97 K3 through K5 students who were enrolled for the year. All students showed progress or reached proficient on 100.0% of language skills, 100.0% of math skills, 100.0% of sensorial skills, 100.0% of cultural skills, and 100.0% of practical life skills (Figure 2).[19]

[19] Rates were calculated for each student and averaged across all students.

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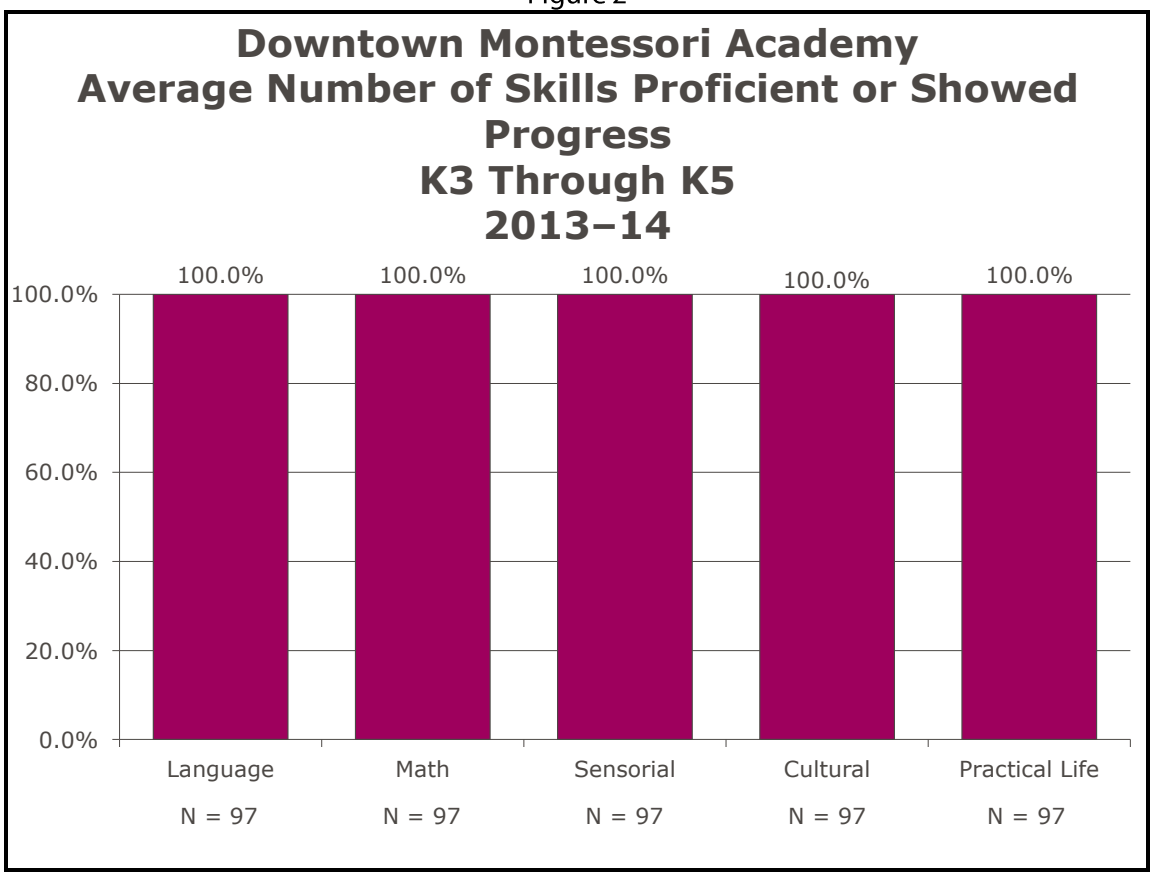
Figure 2



2. Reading, Writing, and Math Progress for First Through Eighth Grades

a. Reading Skills

Reading skills for students in first through eighth grades were measured using the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). QRI helps teachers assess student skills in a variety of areas. First graders are assessed in alphabet recognition (both lowercase and uppercase), letter/sound recognition, QRI word recognition, and a QRI reading passage (if applicable); second and third graders are administered the QRI word recognition and QRI reading passage (if applicable) sections; and fourth through eighth graders are assessed with the QRI reading passage and comprehension sections. Students are tested in the fall and again in the spring in each area. Students' scores for all subtests are averaged and result in a grade level of functioning. Test results indicate whether a student met, was below, or was well

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below grade-level benchmarks; results also indicate the student's current level of learning for that grade level. Levels of learning are designated as frustration, instructional, or independent. CRC examined progress for students who scored at grade level or above in the fall as well as students who scored below their respective grade level in the fall.

i. Students at or Above Grade Level

For the 2013–14 school year, Downtown Montessori set the goal that at least 75.0% of students who tested at or above their current grade level in reading in the fall would again test at or above grade level on the spring test. Additionally, of children who scored below their grade level on the fall QRI, 85.0% would improve their reading level by one grade level on the spring test. Based on QRI results, 79 (60.3%) of 131 students who completed both the fall and spring QRI tests scored at or above their grade level on the fall test. Of these 79 students, all 79 (100.0%) tested at or above their grade level on the spring test, exceeding the school's goal for these students (Table 1).

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Table 1 Downtown Montessori Academy Reading/Literacy Goals: Students at or Above Grade Level 1st Through 8th Grades 2013–14			
Grade Level	**Total Number of Students**	**Number of Students at Grade Level on Fall Test**	**% of Students at Grade Level in Spring**
1st	25	10	100.0%
2nd	28	Could not report due to *n* size	100.0%
3rd	18	14	100.0%
4th	17	16	100.0%
5th	15	15	100.0%
6th	11	11	100.0%
7th	13	Could not report due to *n* size	100.0%
8th	Could not report due to *n* size		100.0%
Total	**131**	**79**	100.0%

ii. Students Below Grade Level

In the fall, 52 first- through eighth-grade students scored below grade-level benchmarks. Of these, 47 (90.4%) increased their score at least one grade level (e.g., preprimer to primer or first to second) by the spring test (Table 2), exceeding the school's goal of 85.0%.

Table 2 Downtown Montessori Academy Reading/Literacy Goal: Students Below Grade Level 1st Through 8th Grades 2012–13			
Grade Level	**Total Number of Students**	**Number of Students Below Grade Level on Fall Test**	**% of Students at Grade Level in Spring**
1st	25	15	86.7%
2nd	28	21	90.5%
3rd	18	Could not report due to *n* size	100.0%
4th	17	Could not report due to *n* size	100.0%
5th	15	N/A	N/A

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Table 2 Downtown Montessori Academy Reading/Literacy Goal: Students Below Grade Level 1st Through 8th Grades 2012–13			
6th	11	N/A	N/A
7th	13	11	90.9%
8th	Could not report due to *n* size	N/A	N/A
Total	**131**	**52**	**90.4%**

These results indicate that 126 (96.2%) of the 131 of the students with comparable scores met the school's local measure goal in literacy.

b. Writing Skills

This year, the school set a goal that at least 65.0% of students who completed the writing sample in the fall (October) would achieve an overall score of three of higher on the spring writing sample. First through third grades focused on organization and conventions; fourth through sixth grades focused on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions; and seventh and eighth grades focused on organization, fluency, ideas, sentence fluency, and conventions. The fall test was given prior to October 15, 2013, and the spring test was given prior to the end of May 2014. Student skills were assessed on a five-point rubric for each of the six traits.

This year, 131 first- through eighth-grade students were tested at both times. Results indicate that 115 (87.8%) students had an overall score of three or higher on the spring writing sample (Table 3).

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Table 3 Downtown Montessori Academy Writing Skills Progress Based on Six Traits of Writing 1st Through 8th Grades 2013–14			
Grade	**N**	**Number With an Overall Score of 3 or Higher in Spring**	**% With an Overall Score of 3 or Higher in Spring**
1st	25	19	76.0%
2nd	27	26	96.3%
3rd	18	16	88.9%
4th	17	15	88.2%
5th	15	13	86.7%
6th	12	12	100.0%
7th–8th*	17	14	82.4%
Total	**131**	**115**	**87.8%**

*Due to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, results for seventh and eighth grades were combined to protect student anonymity.

c. Math Skills

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of Montessori sequential math skills. Each math skill was rated as presented, practiced, improving, or mastered/proficient. The school's goal was that students enrolled for the year would reach proficiency or show improvement in 80.0% of grade-level math skills. Students who were proficient in a skill would maintain proficiency. Scores were provided for 113 first through sixth graders who attended all year.

Two to five math skills were assessed for each student. By the end of the year, 113 (100.0%) of students had reached proficient or shown progress in all skills. On average, students had mastered 82.7% of math skills (Table 4).

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Table 4 Downtown Montessori Academy Math Progress and Proficiency 1st through 6th Grades 2013–14				
Grade	**Number of Students**	**Students Who Reached Proficient/ Progressed in All Skills**		**Average % Proficient at End of Year**
		N	**%**	
1st	25	25	100.0%	80.0%
2nd	27	27	100.0%	84.1%
3rd	17	17	100.0%	78.8%
4th	17	17	100.0%	91.8%
5th	15	15	100.0%	86.7%
6th	12	12	100.0%	73.3%
Total	**113**	**113**	**100.0%**	**82.7%**

Math progress for seventh and eighth graders was based on the Mathematical Connections curriculum (which replaced the Connected Mathematics curriculum). The goal was that students who scored 85.0% or higher on the first chapter test would score 85.0% or higher on the last one, and students who scored below 85.0% would increase their score by 10 percentage points.

Out of 17 seventh and eighth graders, 10 (58.8%) scored 85.0% or better on the first chapter test. Of those, nine (90.0%) scored 85.0% or better on the final chapter test as well. Seven (41.2%) seventh and eighth graders scored below 85.0% on the first chapter test. Due to the small size of this group, final chapter test results could not be included in this report. Overall, the school met its math local measure goals for 128 (98.5%) of 130 first- through eighth-grade students.[20]

3. Special Education Student Progress

The school also set a goal for special education students to demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals. To measure this goal, the school decided that students who had an active IEP

[20] CRC did not receive math scores for one child.

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should meet 80.0% of their total number of IEP goals by the time of their annual review or reevaluation. (Note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports that are attached to the regular report cards.) This year, because only seven students had active IEPs for an entire IEP year at Downtown Montessori, results are not reportable as CRC does not report on cohorts of fewer than 10.

E. Standardized Measures of Educational Performance

1. PALS for K4 Through Second Graders

In 2013–14, DPI required that all students in K4 through first grade take the PALS in the fall and spring of the school year. In addition, CSRC required that all second graders take the PALS in the spring semester.[21] PALS aligns with both the Common Core standards in English and the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS).

There are three versions of the PALS assessment: the PALS-PreK for K4 students, the PALS-K for K5 students, and the PALS 1–3 for first through third graders. The PALS-PreK is comprised of five required tasks (name writing, uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and rhyme awareness). Students complete two additional tasks (lowercase alphabet recognition and letter sounds), only if they reach a high enough score on the uppercase alphabet task. Finally, there is one optional task, nursery rhyme awareness, that schools can choose to administer or not. Since this later task is optional, CRC will not report data on nursery rhyme awareness.

The PALS-K is comprised of six required tasks (rhyme awareness, beginning sound awareness, alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, spelling, and concept of word) and one optional task (word

[21] Per the contract with CSRC, the school will administer all tests required by DPI within the timeframe specified by DPI; this includes the PALS. The timeframe for the fall PALS assessment was October 14 to November 8, 2013 for K4 and K5 students and September 16 to October 25, 2013, for first graders. The spring testing window was April 28 to May 23, 2014, for all grade levels. In anticipation of a DPI requirement to test second-grade students using the PALS in the fall and spring of 2014-15, the CSRC required that all second-grade students in Milwaukee-chartered schools complete the PALS in the spring of 2014.

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recognition in isolation). The PALS 1–3 is comprised of three required tasks (spelling, word recognition in isolation, and oral reading in context). The PALS 1–3 also includes one additional required task for first graders during the fall administration (letter sounds) and additional tasks for students who score below the summed score benchmark. These additional tasks are used to gather further diagnostic information about those students.

For the PALS-K and PALS 1–3, specific task scores are summed for an overall summed score. For the PALS 1–3, the fall and spring summed scores are calculated using different task combinations. The summed score is then compared with benchmarks set for each grade level and test administration. Reaching or surpassing the benchmark is not an indicator that the student is reading at grade level; the benchmark simply helps teachers identify which students may have difficulty learning to read. For example, if the student's summed score is below the designated benchmark for his/her grade level and test administration, the student is identified as requiring additional instruction to master basic literacy skills.[22] Students who are at or above the benchmark have the basic skills required to, with targeted instruction, continue learning to read without intervention. Teachers may use PALS results to help plan classroom reading and spelling instruction according to student needs.

There is no similar summed score or set benchmarks for the PALS-PreK. Because students enter K4 with different levels of exposure to books, letters, and sounds, the purpose of the PALS-PreK is to learn student levels as they enter K4 in the fall. In the spring, developmental ranges for each PALS task indicate whether the student is at the expected developmental stage for a 4-year- old child. CSRC and DPI also required WKCE administration to students attending city-chartered elementary schools to provide a basis for multiple-year student progress. The WKCE must be administered to all third- through eighth-grade students in the timeframe established by the DPI (in the fall of each school year).

[22] PALS, retrieved from http://www.palswisconsin.info/about_overview.shtml.

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a. PALS-PreK

A total of 37 K4 students completed the PALS-PreK in the fall and 36 of these students completed the spring assessment. Although the spring developmental ranges relate to expected age-level development by the time of the spring semester, CRC applied the ranges to both test administrations to see if more students were at or above the range for each test by the spring administration. The number of students at or above the developmental range increased for each task from fall to spring (Table 5). By the time of the spring assessment, 32 (88.9%) of 36 students who completed both assessments were at or above the developmental range for five or more tasks; 32 (88.9%) were at or above the range for six of seven tasks, and 31 (86.1%) were at or above the range for all seven tasks (not shown).

Table 5

Downtown Montessori Academy
PALS-PreK for K4 Students
Students at or Above the Spring Developmental Range
2013–14
(N = 36)

Task	Fall		Spring	
	N	%	N	%
Name writing	29	80.6%	36	100.0%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	26	72.2%	32	88.9%
Lowercase alphabet recognition	*23	85.2%	31**	96.9%
Letter sounds	*23	74.2%	32**	100.0%
Beginning sound awareness	35	97.2%	36	100.0%
Print and word awareness	34	94.4%	36	100.0%
Rhyme awareness	28	77.8%	33	91.7%

*Out of 27 students who qualified to complete the lowercase and 31 who qualified to complete letter sound tasks in the fall.
**Out of 32 students who qualified to complete the lowercase and letter sound tasks in the spring.

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b. PALS-K and PALS 1–3

As mentioned previously, each of these tests has a summed score benchmark for the fall and spring (Table 6), which are calculated using different task combinations. Therefore, the spring benchmark may be lower than the fall benchmark. Additionally, student benchmark status is only a measure of whether the student is where he/she should be developmentally to continue becoming a successful reader; measures of student progress from fall to spring should be interpreted with caution.

Table 6

PALS-K and PALS 1–3 Published Summed Score Benchmarks

PALS Assessment	Fall Benchmark	Spring Benchmark
PALS-K	28	81
PALS—First Grade	39	35
PALS—Second Grade	35	54

A total of 36 (100.0%) K5 and 25 (100.0%) first grade students completed the fall and spring PALS assessments. CRC examined progress from fall to spring for students who completed both tests. By the time of the spring assessment, 94.4% of K5 students and 84.0% of first graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark for their grade level. All (100.0%) K5 students and about 90% of first grade students who were at or above the fall benchmark were also at or above the spring benchmark (Table 7). Additionally, 23 (82.1%) of the 28 second graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark (not shown).

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Table 7 Downtown Montessori Academy Reading Readiness for K5 and First-Grade Students Fall 2013 to Spring 2014					
Grade Level and Fall Benchmark Status	**N**	**Spring Benchmark Status**			
		Below Benchmark		**At or Above Benchmark**	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**
K5					
Below Benchmark	2	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
At or Above Benchmark	34	0	0.0%	34	100.0%
Total K5	**36**	**2**	**5.6%**	**34**	**94.4%**
First Grade					
Below Benchmark	3	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
At or Above Benchmark	22	2	9.1%	20	90.9%
Total First	**25**	**4**	**16.0%**	**21**	**84.0%**

2. WKCE for Third Through Eighth Graders

The WKCE is directly aligned with WMELS in reading and math and assesses student skills as advanced, proficient, basic, or minimal. DPI requires all students in third through eighth grades and in tenth grade to participate in WKCE testing to meet federal No Child Left Behind requirements. Note that results in this section include students who have been enrolled at the school for a full academic year (FAY)[23] or longer as well as students who are new to the school.

In order to more closely align with national and international standards, the WKCE reading and math proficiency-level cut scores were redrawn in 2012–13 to mimic cut scores used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The revised cut scores require that students achieve higher scale scores in order to be considered proficient in each subject. Because this is only the second year the revised scores have been applied, CRC is reporting reading and math proficiency levels using both the former and the revised standards. This allows schools and stakeholders to see how students

[23] Enrolled since September 20, 2013

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and the school performed when different standards were applied. Both current school year and year-to-year student progress will be described using both sets of cut scores.

a. Reading

In October 2013, 19 third graders, 18 fourth graders, 16 fifth graders, and 12 sixth graders were administered the WKCE reading test. Using the revised cut scores, three (15.8%) third graders scored at the advanced level and 12 (63.2%) scored at the proficient level, four (22.2%) fourth graders scored advanced and seven (38.9%) scored proficient, one (6.3%) fifth grader scored advanced and six (37.5%) scored proficient, and one (8.3%) sixth grader scored advanced and two (16.7%) scored proficient. A total of 13 seventh graders and four eighth graders were administered the WKCE reading test. Due to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, results by grade were combined to protect student identity. Two (11.8%) seventh and eighth graders scored advanced and 10 (58.8%) were proficient (Figure 3). Overall, 48 (58.5%) third- through eighth-grade students scored proficient or advanced in reading (not shown).

When the former cut scores used prior to 2012–13 were applied to this year's scale scores, 15 (78.9%) third graders were advanced and three (15.8%) were proficient in reading; 12 (66.7%) fourth graders were advanced, and four (22.2%) were proficient; eight (50.0%) fifth graders were advanced and seven (43.8%) were proficient, four (33.3%) sixth graders were advanced, and six (50.0%) were proficient; and 12 (70.6%) seventh and eighth graders were advanced, and five (29.4%) were proficient. Overall, 76 (92.7%) third- through eighth-grade students scored proficient or advanced in reading, according to the former cut scores.

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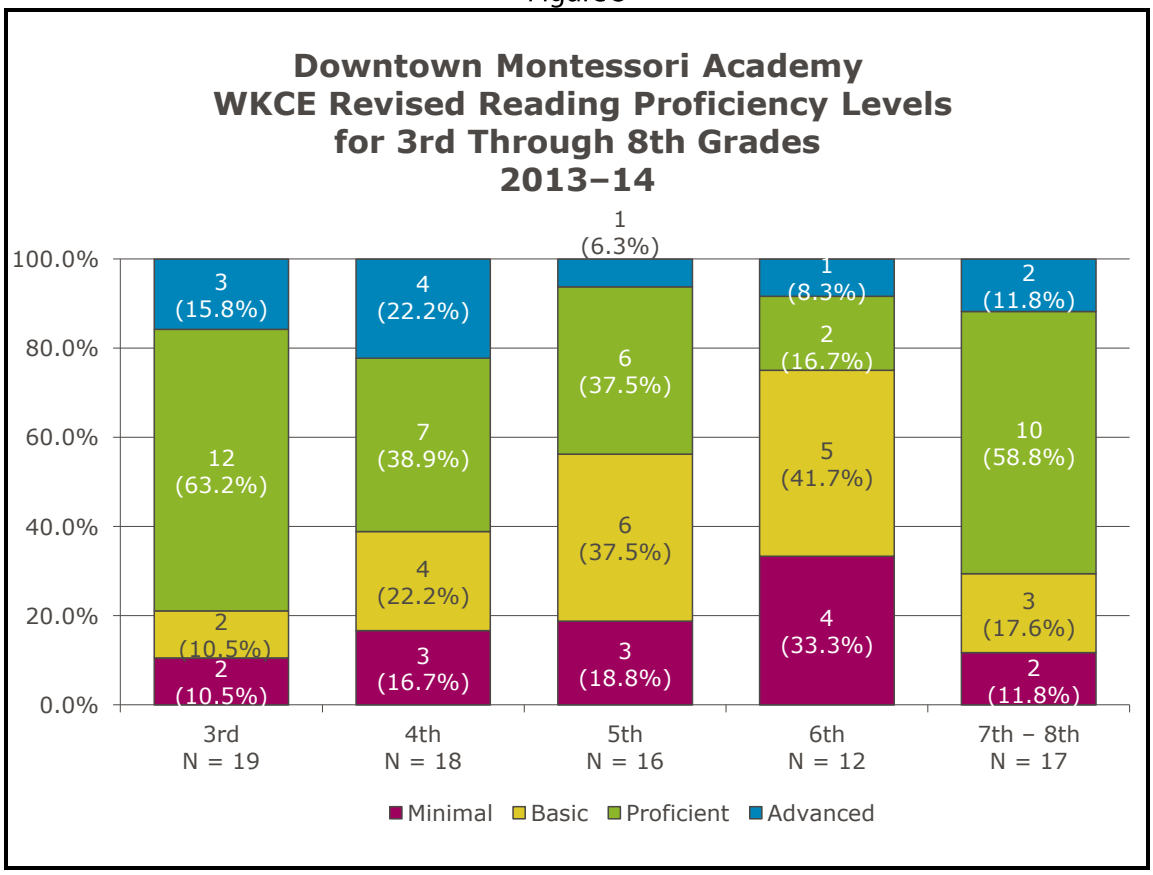
Figure 3



On average, using revised cut scores, third-grade students scored in the 71st percentile statewide in reading; fourth-grade students scored in the 65th percentile; fifth-grade students scored in the 59th percentile; sixth-grade students scored in the 44th percentile; and seventh- and eighth-grade students, on average, scored in the 70th percentile in reading (not shown).

b. Math

Math results for third through eighth grades using the revised cut scores are illustrated in Figure 4. Overall, 40 (48.8%) students scored proficient or advanced in math (not shown).

When the former cut scores used prior to the 2012–13 school year were applied to this year's scale scores, 11 (57.9%) third graders were advanced and seven (36.8%) were proficient in math, 10

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(55.6%) fourth graders were advanced, and four (22.2%) were proficient, one (6.3%) fifth grader was advanced, and 12 (75.0%) were proficient; one (8.3%) sixth grader was advanced, and three (25.0%) were proficient, and eight (47.1%) seventh and eighth graders were advanced, and five (29.4%) were proficient (not shown). Overall, 62 (75.6%) third- through eighth-grade students scored proficient or advanced in math, using the cut scores prior to 2012–13 (not shown).

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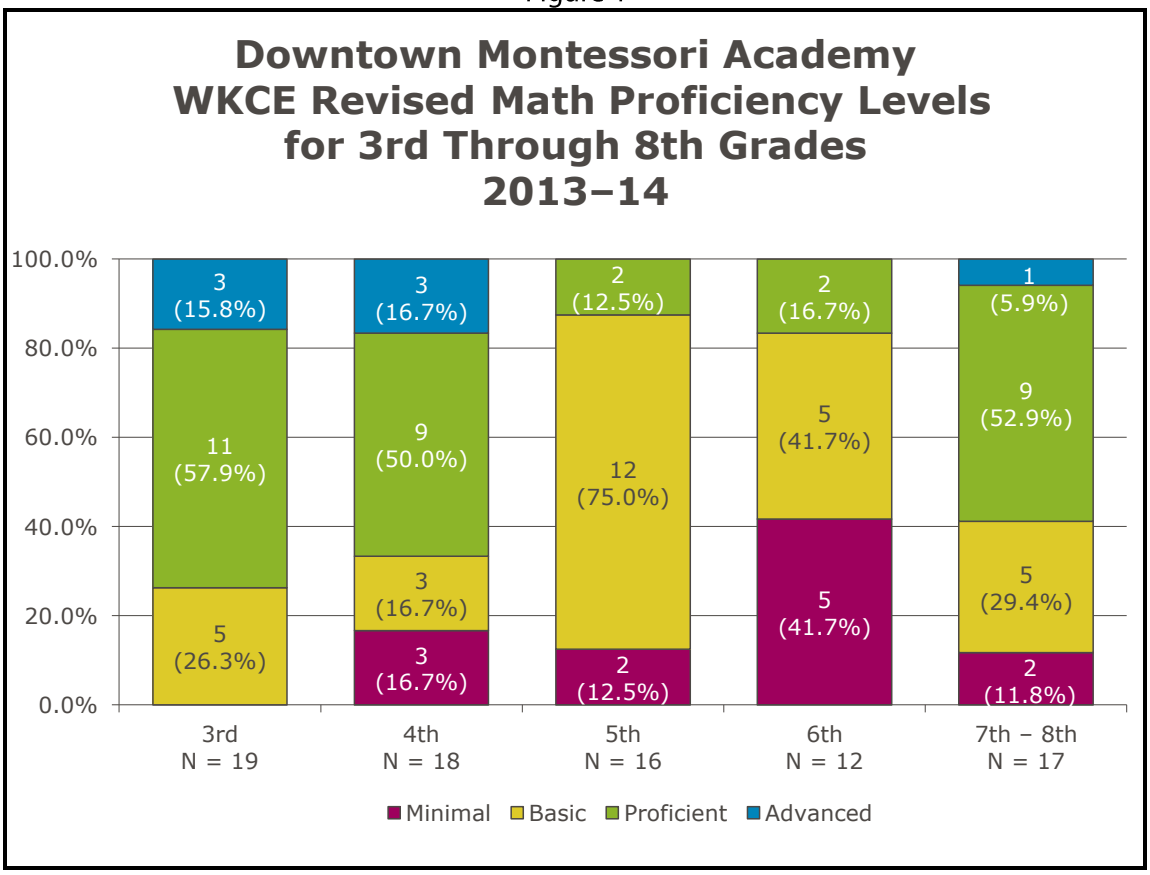
Figure 4



On average, based on revised cut score, third graders scored in the 65th percentile in math; fourth graders scored in the 60th percentile, fifth graders scored in the 36th percentile, sixth graders, scored in the 24th percentile, and seventh and eighth graders scored in the 56th percentile (not shown.)

c. Language Arts

In addition to reading and math, fourth and eighth graders are tested in language arts, science, and social studies .CSRC requires the results for language arts to be included in this report. As illustrated below, more than half (55.6%) of fourth graders exhibited advanced levels, five (27.8%) students scored as proficient, and three (16.7%) students scored in the basic category (Figure 5). Due

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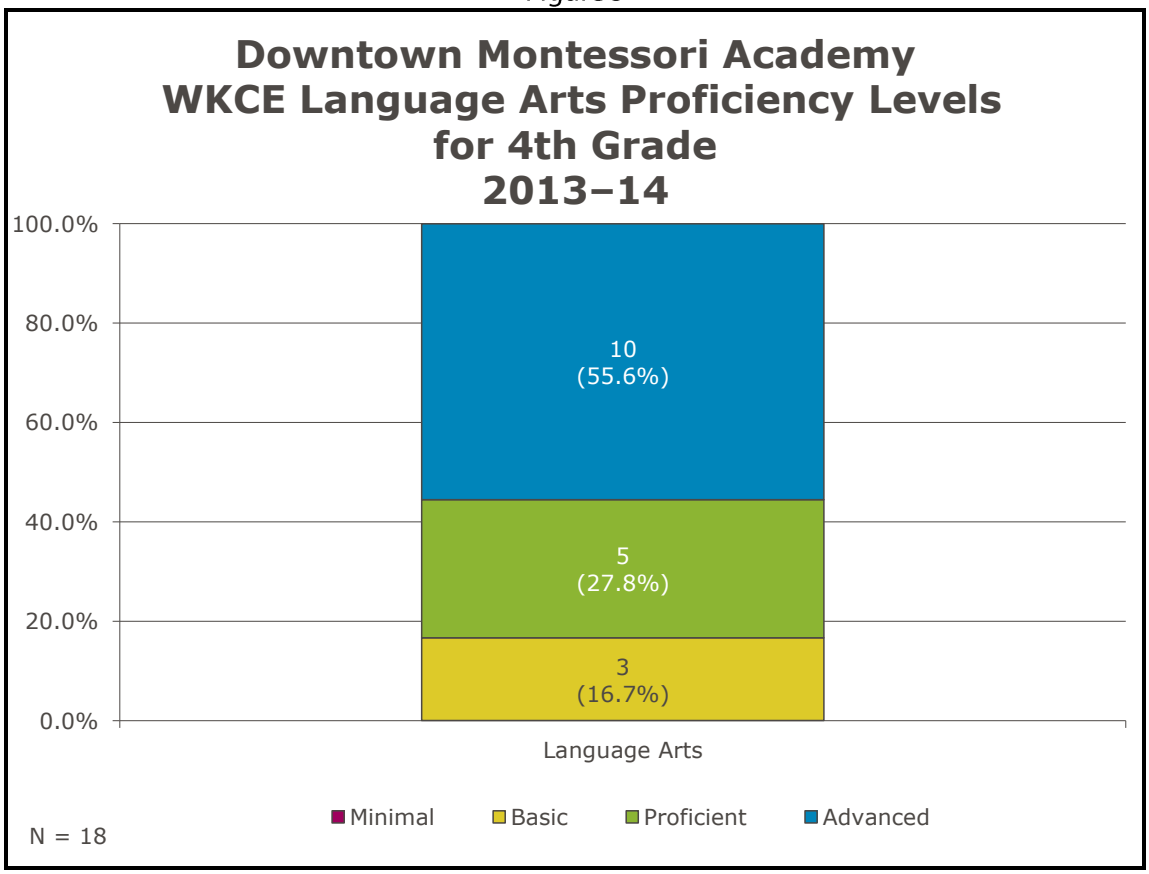
to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, proficiency levels for language arts could not be included in this report.

Figure 5



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d. Writing

The final WKCE score is for writing; fourth- and eighth-grade students are administered the writing portion of the WKCE. The extended writing sample is scored with two holistic rubrics. A six-point composing rubric evaluates students' ability to control purpose/focus, organization/coherence, development of content, sentence fluency, and word choice. A three-point conventions rubric evaluates students' ability to use punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. Points received on these two rubrics are combined to produce a single score, with a maximum possible score of nine.

This year, the extended writing scores for fourth graders ranged from 3.0 to 7.0 and the median score was 5.0, meaning half of the students scored at or below 5.0, and half scored 5.0 to 7.0 on a scale of 0 to 9. Due to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, proficiency levels for the student writing scores could not be included in this report.

F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. Year-to-year progress expectations apply to all students with scores in consecutive years. Prior to the 2013–14 school year, first- through third-grade skills were assessed based on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT). The SDRT was discontinued for the 2013–14 school year; therefore, year-to-year results are not available. Schools began using the PALS reading assessment this year; CRC and CSRC are exploring options for using this as a year-to-year measure in subsequent years.

Fourth- through eighth-grade reading and math skills are tested on the WKCE. Year-to-year progress expectations apply to students who have been enrolled at the school for a full academic year. This year, WKCE progress was measured using the revised cut scores and the former cut scores used prior to the 2012–13 school year.

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CSRC expectations on the WKCE are that at least 75.0% of the students who were at the proficient or advanced levels on the previous year's WKCE reading and math subtests and who met the full academic year definition, would maintain their status of proficient or above.[24] For students who scored below expectations, i.e., at the minimal or basic levels on their previous year's WKCE reading or math tests, the expectation is that at least 60.0% of students would either advance to the next proficiency level or advance to the next highest quartile within their previous year's proficiency level.[25]

1. Multiple-Year Student Progress for Fourth Through Eighth Graders Using Former WKCE Cut Scores

The levels of proficiency (advanced, proficient, basic, and minimal) are determined by leveling scale scores, referred to as "cut" scores. Until the 2012–13 school year, WKCE proficiency levels were based on cut scores developed by the state that aligned with state reading and math standards. In 2012–13, the state began using revised cut scores, which are based on those used by NAEP and more closely align with national and international standards. This year, year-to-year student progress will be measured and reported using both the former and revised cut scores. In order to do so, the former proficiency-level cut scores and quartiles will be applied to the scale scores for the 2012–13 and 2013–14 school years. This section describes progress from last year to this year using the former cut scores; the following section will describe progress using the revised cut scores.

[24] CSRC's expectations related to the WKCE are based on the former WKCE cut scores because the revised cut scores have been in place for too short a period for the development of valid expectations.

[25] Students had to be enrolled in the school on or before September 21, 2012, to meet the FAY definition.

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a. Students Who Met Proficiency-Level Expectations (Former Cut Scores)

This year, 61 fourth through eighth graders had scores from consecutive years. Based on fall 2012 WKCE data, 54 students reached proficiency or higher in reading, and 41 were proficient or higher in math. Nearly all (98.1%) of those students maintained their reading levels and 97.6% maintained proficient or advanced levels in math, exceeding the CRSC expectation of 75% (Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8

Downtown Montessori Academy
Reading Proficiency-Level Progress
for Students Proficient or Advanced in 2012–13
Based on Former WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores

Grade	Students Who Were Proficient/Advanced in 2012–13	Students Who Maintained Proficient/Advanced in 2013–14	
		N	%
3rd to 4th	16	16	100.0%
4th to 5th	15	14	93.3%
5th to 6th	7	Cannot report due to *n* size	
6th to 7th	12	12	100.0%
7th to 8th	4	Cannot report due to *n* size	
Total	**54**	**53**	**98.1%**

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Table 9 Downtown Montessori Academy Math Proficiency-Level Progress for Students Proficient or Advanced in 2012–13 Based on Former WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores			
Grade	**Students Who Were Proficient/Advanced in 2012–13**	**Students Who Maintained Proficient/Advanced in 2013–14**	
		N	**%**
3rd to 4th	13	13	100.0%
4th to 5th	10	10	100.0%
5th to 6th	4	Cannot report due to *n* size	
6th to 7th	10	9	90.0%
7th to 8th	4	Cannot report due to *n* size	
Total	**41**	**40**	**97.6%**

b. Students Who Did Not Meet Proficiency-Level Expectations (Former Cut Scores)

CSRC expects at least 60.0% of students who did not meet proficiency-level expectations (were at the minimal or basic levels) on the WKCE in 2012–13 to progress one or more levels or, if they scored in the same level, to show progress to a higher quartile within that level. To examine movement within a proficiency level, CRC divided the minimal and basic levels equally into quartiles. The lower threshold for the minimal level was the lowest scale score possible on the examination. The upper threshold reflected the scale score used by DPI to establish proficiency levels.

During 2012–13, seven students scored minimal or basic in reading. Due to the small size of this cohort, results could not be included in this report.

A total of 20 students scored minimal or basic in math on the 2012–13 WKCE. Of these, 60% showed improvement by progressing to a high proficiency level (n=10) or quartile (n=2) in math. Due the small cohort size, results by grade level could not be included in this report.

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2. Multiple-Year Student Progress for Fourth Through Eighth Graders Using Revised Cut Scores

The previous section described progress for students from 2012–13 to 2013–14 using former WKCE proficiency-level cut scores (i.e., those used until the previous school year). This section describes progress for these same students using the revised proficiency-level cut scores that were implemented in 2012–13. It is important to note that the range of scale scores used to assign the proficiency level differ from the ranges using the former cut scores; therefore, it may not be possible to directly compare results using the two different models. The results described in this section simply provide a look at student progress using the revised cut scores but the same standards.

a. Students Who Met Proficiency-Level Expectations (Revised Cut Scores)

Based on fall 2012 WKCE data, 27 students reached proficiency in reading when revised cut scores were applied, and 27 were proficient or higher in math. Most (92.6%) of those students maintained their reading levels and 85.2% maintained proficient or advanced levels in math (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10

Downtown Montessori Academy
Reading Proficiency-Level Progress
for Students Proficient or Advanced in 2012–13
Based on Revised WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores

Grade	Students Proficient/Advanced in 2012–13	Students Maintained Proficient/Advanced in 2013–14	
		N	%
3rd to 4th	9	Cannot report due to *n* size	
4th to 5th	7	Cannot report due to *n* size	
5th to 6th	2	Cannot report due to *n* size	
6th to 7th	6	Cannot report due to *n* size	
7th to 8th	3	Cannot report due to *n* size	
Total	**27**	**25**	**92.6%**

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Table 11 Downtown Montessori Academy Math Proficiency-Level Progress for Students Proficient or Advanced in 2012–13 Based on Revised WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores			
Grade	**Students Proficient/Advanced in 2012–13**	**Students Maintained Proficient/Advanced in 2013–14**	
		N	**%**
3rd to 4th	13	12	92.3%
4th to 5th	4	Cannot report due to *n* size	
5th to 6th*	N/A	N/A	
6th to 7th	7	Cannot report due to *n* size	
7th to 8th	3	Cannot report due to *n* size	
Total	**27**	**23**	**85.2%**

*No fifth graders scored at the proficient or advanced levels in the 2012–13 school year.

b. Students Who Did Not Meet Proficiency (Revised Cut Scores)

To determine whether students who did not meet proficient or advanced levels were making progress, CRC examined whether these students were able to improve scores by moving up one or more categories, e.g., minimal to basic, basic to proficient, or minimal to proficient. If students were not able to improve by a level, CRC examined student progress within the student's skill level. To examine movement within a proficiency level, CRC equally divided the minimal and basic levels into quartiles. The lower threshold for the minimal level was the lowest scale score possible on the examination. The lower threshold for the basic level and the upper threshold for both levels reflected the scale scores used by DPI to establish proficiency levels.[26]

There were 34 students who scored in the minimal or basic categories in reading during 2012–13 based on the revised proficiency-level cut scores. Of these, 47.1% showed improvement by progressing to a higher proficiency level (n=11) or quartile (n=5) in reading (Table 12).

[26] This method is used by CRC to examine student progress in the schools chartered by the city.

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Table 12

Downtown Montessori Academy
Reading Proficiency-Level Progress
for Students Minimal or Basic in 2012–13
Based on Revised WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores

Grade	# Students Minimal/Basic 2012–13	# Students Who Advanced One Proficiency Level 2013–14	If Not Advanced, # Who Improved Quartile(s) Within Proficiency Level 2013–14	Total Proficiency-Level Advancement	
				N	%
3rd to 4th	8	Cannot report due to *n* size			
4th to 5th	9	Cannot report due to *n* size			
5th to 6th	9	Cannot report due to *n* size			
6th to 7th	7	Cannot report due to *n* size			
7th to 8th	1	Cannot report due to *n* size			
Total	**34**	**11**	**5**	**16**	**47.1%**

When the revised cut scores were applied to the 2012–13 scale scores, 34 students scored below proficient on the fall of 2012 WKCE. Overall, 41.2% of these students either advanced one proficiency level (n=8) or, if they did not advance a level, improved at least one quartile within their level (n=6; Table 13).

Table 13

Downtown Montessori Academy
Math Proficiency-Level Progress
for Students Minimal or Basic in 2012–13
Based on Revised WKCE Proficiency-Level Cut Scores

Grade	# Students Minimal/Basic 2012–13	# Students Who Advanced One Proficiency Level 2013–14	If Not Advanced, # Who Improved Quartile(s) Within Proficiency Level 2013–14	Total Proficiency-Level Advancement	
				N	%
3rd to 4th	4	Cannot report due to *n* size			
4th to 5th	12	2	3	**5**	**41.7%**
5th to 6th	11	4	2	**6**	**54.5%**
6th to 7th	6	Cannot report due to *n* size			
7th to 8th	1	Cannot report due to *n* size			
Total	**34**	**8**	**6**	**14**	**41.2%**

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G. CSRC School Scorecard

In the 2009–10 school year, CSRC piloted a scorecard for each school that it charters. The scorecard includes multiple measures of student academic progress, such as performance on standardized tests and local measures; point-in-time academic achievement; and engagement elements, such as attendance and student and teacher retention and return. The score provides a summary indicator of school performance. The summary score is then translated into a school status rating (Table 14).

Table 14

City of Milwaukee
Educational Performance Rating Scale for Charter Schools

School Status	Scorecard % Total
High Performing/Exemplary	100.0%–85.0%
Promising/Good	84.9%–70.0%
Problematic/Struggling	69.9%–55.0%
Poor/Failing	54.9% or less

CSRC uses the score and rating to guide decisions regarding whether to accept a school's annual education performance and continue monitoring as usual and whether to recommend a school for a five-year contract renewal at the end of its fourth year of operation under its current contract. CSRC's expectation is that schools achieve a rating of 70.0% or more; if a school falls under 70.0%, CSRC will carefully review the school's performance and determine whether a probationary plan should be developed. CSRC officially adopted the use of the scorecard in August 2012. For a full explanation of the scorecard policy, see Appendix D.

This year, CRC prepared Downtown Montessori Academy's scorecard based on WKCE results using the former cut scores, because CSRC's WKCE expectations are based on the former WKCE cut scores. (The revised cut scores have been in place for too short a time to develop valid expectations). Downtown Montessori scored 89.3% on the scorecard, which places them at the high

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performing/exemplary level. This compares to 85.2% on the 2012–13 scorecard and 87.4% on the 2011–12 scorecard. See Appendix D for school scorecard information.

H. DPI School Report Card[27]

As part of the new state accountability system reflected in Wisconsin's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request,[28] DPI has produced report cards for every school in Wisconsin. These school report cards provide data on multiple indicators for four priority areas.

- **Student Achievement**—Performance on the WKCE and Wisconsin Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities in reading and mathematics.
- **Student Growth**—Improvement over time on the WKCE in reading and mathematics.
- **Closing Gaps**—Progress of student subgroups in closing gaps in reading and mathematics performance and/or graduation rates.
- **On-Track and Postsecondary Readiness**—Performance on key indicators of readiness for graduation and postsecondary pursuits, whether college or career.

Schools receive a score from 0 to 100 for each priority area. Scores for each area are included on each school's report card. The report cards are public documents and can be found on the DPI website. Some schools have had data replaced by an asterisk (*) because there are fewer than 20 students in a group.

In addition to priority area scores, performance on three student engagement indicators is also reported. These include test participation rate (goal of 95.0% for all students and each subgroup), absenteeism rate (goal of 13.0% or less), and dropout rate (goal of 6.0% or less). Schools that do not meet these goals receive point deductions from their overall scores.

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[27] Information for this section was retrieved from the DPI website, http://reportscards.dpi.wi.gov. The DPI report card reflects the school's performance for the 2012–13 school year. Report cards for the 2013–14 school year will be issued in the fall of 2014.

[28] Wisconsin DPI, retrieved from http://acct.dpi.wi.gov/acct_accountability.

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The overall accountability score is an average of the priority area scores, minus student engagement indicator deductions. The average is weighted differently for schools that cannot be measured with all priority area scores. A school's overall accountability score places the school into one of five overall accountability ratings.

- Significantly Exceeds Expectations (83.0–100.0)
- Exceeds Expectations (73.0–82.9)
- Meets Expectations (63.0–72.9)
- Meets Few Expectations (53.0–62.9)
- Fails to Meet Expectations (0.0–52.9)

Downtown Montessori's 2012–13 report card indicated an overall accountability score of 75.2 points, resulting in a rating of "Exceeds Expectations." Further information on the report card for Downtown Montessori is included in Appendix E.

I. Parent/Teacher/Board Satisfaction Regarding Student Academic Progress

Based on parent surveys, 94.6% of parents indicated that the program of instruction was excellent or good and that teacher performance was excellent (68.8%) or good (25.9%). In addition, 94.6% of parents indicated that the school's contribution to their child's learning was excellent or good. All 10 teachers indicated that Downtown Montessori's program of instruction and progress toward becoming a high-performing school was excellent or good.

When asked about satisfaction with student academic progress, 58.0% of the parents surveyed rated their child's academic progress as excellent and 33.9% as good. All 10 teachers interviewed indicated that their students' academic progress was excellent or good. All six board members indicated the program of instruction and the students' academic progress were excellent or good. For full interview and survey results, see appendices F, G, and H.

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IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 16th year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school.

Based on the current CSRC expectations, which include use of the former WKCE proficiency level standards, Downtown Montessori met all of the educational provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent CSRC requirements. The scorecard analysis yielded a score of 89.3% which places the school in the High Performing/Exemplary category.

Based on current and past contract compliance and the scorecard results, CRC recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

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Appendix A

Contract Compliance Chart

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Downtown Montessori Academy Overview of Compliance for Education-Related Contract Provisions 2013–14			
Section of Contract	**Contract Provision**	**Report Reference Page**	**Contract Provision Met or Not Met**
Section I, B	Description of educational program of the school and curriculum focus.	pp. 3–5	Met
Section I, V	The school will provide a copy of the calendar prior to the end of the previous school year.	p. 13	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods.	pp. 3–5	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 26, 36	Met
Section I, D	Academic criterion #1: Maintain local measures, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals in reading, math, writing, and special education.	pp. 18-25	Met
Section I, D	Academic criterion #2: Year-to-year achievement measures. a. 2nd- and 3rd-grade students at or above grade-level equivalent (GLE) in reading: At least 75.0% maintain GLE. b. 4th- through 8th-grade students proficient or advanced in reading: At least 75.0% will maintain proficiency-level. c. 4th- through 8th-grade students proficient or advanced in mathematics: At least 75.0% will maintain proficiency level.	a. N/A** b. p. 38 c. p. 38–39	a. N/A** b. Met (98.1% of 54) c. Met (97.6% of 41)
Section I, D	Academic criterion #3: Year-to-year achievement measures a. 2nd- and 3rd-grade students below grade level in reading: Advance more than 1 GLE in reading. b. 4th- through 8th-grade students below proficient level in reading: At least 60% will advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency-level range. c. 4th- through 8th-grade students below proficient level in math: At least 60% will advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency-level range.	a. N/A** b. pp. 39, 41–42 c. pp. 39, 42	a. N/A** b. N/A* c. Met (60% of 20)
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	pp. 8–9	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	p. 7	Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 11–13, 17–18	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures.	pp. 9–11	Met

*Group size too small; very few students were below grade level.
**The SDRT was discontinued prior to the 2013–14 school year; therefore, results were not available this year.

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Appendix B

Outcome Measures Agreement Memo

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Downtown Montessori Academy
2507 South Graham Street
Milwaukee, WI 53207
Student Learning Memorandum
2013–14 School Year

The following procedures, goals, and outcome measures will be used in monitoring the education programs of Downtown Montessori Academy for the 2013–14 school year. The data will be provided to the Children's Research Center (CRC), the monitoring agent contracted by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC). Data will be reported in a spreadsheet or database that includes each student's Wisconsin student number (WSN). All spreadsheets and/or the database will include all students enrolled at any time during the school year. CRC requests electronic submission of year-end data on the 10th working day following the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 20, 2014. Additionally, paper test printouts or data directly from the test publisher must be provided to CRC for all standardized tests.

Attendance
The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95.0%. Attendance will be reported as present, excused absence, and unexcused absence. Present is defined as having been present for at least half of the day.

Enrollment
The school will record the enrollment date for every student. Upon admission, individual student information including WSN, name, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, eligibility for free/reduced lunch, and special education status will be added to the school database.

Termination
The date and reason for every student leaving the school will be recorded in the school database.

Parent Conferences
Every student will have a parent or guardian participate in each of the scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Dates for the events and names of the parent participants will be recorded by the school for each student. Conferences may occur in person or by phone.

Parent Contract
Most parents (95.0%) will fulfill the requirements of the parent contract related to hours of involvement.

Special Education Needs Students
The school will maintain updated records on all special education students including date of team assessment, assessment outcome, individualized education plan (IEP) completion date, IEP review dates, and any reassessment results.

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Academic Achievement: Local Measures

Children's House
Students attending the Children's House (K3, K4, and K5) will demonstrate progress in acquiring skills in the areas of practical life, sensorial discrimination, mathematical development, language, and culture. Each student's development will be reported to his/her parents on report cards, and this information will be collected in Montessori Records Express (MRX). The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition.

- 1 – Presented
- 2 – Practiced
- 3 – Improving
- 4 – Mastered/Proficient

By the end of the year, students who have attended all year will have become proficient or shown improvement (presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade-level skills in each of the areas. Students who were initially proficient in a skill will maintain proficiency in that skill.

Grade-level indicators (representative skills) from the continuum for each area will be extracted for submission to CRC. All students will be assessed on all representative skills. These will be aligned with the common core requirements for each level.

Elementary and Adolescent Program

<u>Literacy</u>
All first-grade students will be administered the following components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) in the fall and spring.

- Alphabet recognition, both lowercase and uppercase
- Letter/sound recognition
- QRI word recognition
- QRI passage (if applicable)

Second- and third-grade students will be administered the following components of the QRI in the fall and spring.

- QRI word recognition
- QRI passage (if applicable)

All fourth- through eighth-grade students will be administered the passage and comprehension component of the QRI in the fall and spring.

Students' scores for all subtests will be averaged and result in a grade level of functioning as well as their level of learning for that grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent). These will be aligned with the common core requirements for each level.

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All students will be administered the QRI no later than the end of the first quarter, November 2013.

CRC will examine progress for students who completed both the fall and spring QRI test. Progress for students above and below their current grade level will be reported.

- Of all first- through eighth-grade students who scored at or above their grade level on the fall QRI, 75.0% will maintain at or above grade-level functioning in the spring.

- Of all first- through eighth-grade students who scored below their grade level on the fall QRI, 85.0% will improve their reading skills by one grade level on the spring test. These assessments will be aligned to the common core for each grade level.

Writing

Writing skills will be assessed in the fall and spring of the school year. At least 65.0% of the students who complete the writing sample in October will achieve an overall score of three or higher on a second writing sample taken during the month of May 2014.

Both writing samples will have the same prompt, which will be based on grade-level topics with the narrative genre.[29] The six traits of writing will be used, which includes consistent use across all grades of a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, 5 = experienced) for each of the six traits.[30] The skill areas chosen for each grade level follows.

- First through third grades will focus on organization and conventions.

- Fourth through sixth grades will focus on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions.

- Seventh and eighth grades will focus on fluency, organization, idea, sentence fluency, and conventions.

The average score of these traits for each sample will be used to measure student progress toward the goal.

Writing traits will be aligned with the common core requirements for each level.

[29] Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.

[30] The six traits of writing are organization, fluency, conventions, ideas, voice, and word choice.

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Mathematics: First Through Sixth Grades

Students in first through sixth grades will demonstrate progress in acquiring the Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level common core math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Each student's development will be reported to his/her parents on report cards, and this information will be collected in MRX. The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition.

- 1 – Presented
- 2 – Practiced
- 3 – Improving
- 4 – Mastered/Proficient

By the end of the year, students who have attended all year will have become proficient or show improvement (e.g., from presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in 80.0% of grade-level math skills. Students who were initially proficient in a skill will maintain proficiency in that skill.

Grade level indicators (representative math skills from the continuum that are expected at each grade level) will be extracted from the continuum and added to at least three common core skills not reflected in the Montessori continuum for submission to CRC. All students will be assessed on all representative skills.

Mathematics: Seventh and Eighth Grades

All seventh- and eighth-grade students are using Mathematical Connections.[31] All students who scored at least 85.0% on the first chapter test will score at least 85.0% on the final chapter test of the year.

Students who scored below 85.0% on the first chapter test will improve by at least 10.0% on their final chapter test.

The chapter tests within Mathematical Connections are aligned with the common core standards.

Special Education Students

Students with active IEPs will demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals *at the time of their annual review or reevaluation*. Progress will be demonstrated by reporting the number of goals on the IEP and the number of goals met. Please note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports attached to the regular report cards. Students will achieve at least 80.0% of the total number of goals on their IEPs.

[31] *Mathematical Connections, A Bridge to Algebra and Geometry*, published by McDougall Littell/Houghton Mifflin.

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Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures
The following standardized test measures will assess academic achievements in reading and mathematics.

K4 through Second Grades: The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) will be administered to all students in K4 through first grades in the fall and spring of each year within the timeframes required by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).[32] Second-grade students will complete the PALS in the spring of the school year. PALS provides information about each student's level of mastery of early literacy fundamentals at different times during the school year.[33]

Because this is the first year that schools are required to administer the PALS to students in first and second grades, the CSRC has not yet set any specific academic expectations for students taking the PALS. Pending expectations by the CSRC, CRC plans to complete the following analysis for this assessment series.[34]

- Benchmark achievement levels for students on both the fall and spring assessments (spring only for second graders).
- For K4, K5, and first-grade students, student cohort progress from fall to spring on each grade level assessment (not applicable for second graders).
- If applicable, year-to-year progress for students who completed the PALS-K in 2012–13 and also completed the PALS-1 in 2013–14.[35]

Third Through Eighth Grades: The Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) will be administered on an annual basis in the timeframe identified by the DPI. The WKCE reading subtest will provide each student with a proficiency level via a scale score in reading, and the WKCE math subtest will provide each student with a proficiency level via a scale score in math. For fourth graders, the WKCE also will include language arts, science, and social studies scale scores. Results will also reflect each student's statewide percentile score. In 2012–13, the WKCE cut scores for reading and math were revised based on cut scores for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). As in the 2012–13 school year, the CRC will analyze the data using both the revised cut scores and the former cut scores that were used through the 2011–12 school year. The standards below apply only to results based on the former cut scores, pending a different decision by the CSRC.

[32] The school must administer the PALS in the fall and spring of the school year for K4 through first graders; if DPI requires additional test administrations, CRC will request data from the additional test administrations as well.

[33] PALS was developed by researchers at the University of Virginia and is considered a scientifically based reading assessment for kindergarten students. It assesses key literacy fundamentals, including phonic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary. Specifically, PALS assesses rhyme awareness, beginning sound awareness, alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, spelling, concept of word, and word recognition in isolation (optional). (Note: This information was taken from the DPI website, http://www.palswisconsin.info)

[34] If the CSRC sets specific expectations or requests different analyses during the school year, CRC will replace these current plans with the plans and expectations formulated and adopted by the CSRC.

[35] At the time of this memo, CRC was researching whether examining year-to-year reading progress using PALS was possible. If year-to-year progress can be measured, CRC will include those results in the report.

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- At least 75.0% of the students who were proficient or advanced in reading and/or math on the WKCE in 2012–13 will maintain their status of proficient or above in the subsequent year.

- More than 60.0% of the students who tested below proficient (basic or minimal) in reading and/or mathematics on the WKCE in 2012–13 will improve a proficiency level or at least one quartile within their proficiency level in the next school year. This is a school-wide expectation.

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Data Addendum

This addendum has been developed to clarify the data collection and submission process related to each of the outcomes stated in the learning memo for the 2013–14 academic year. Additionally, important principles applicable to all data collection must be considered.

1. All students attending the school at any time during the 2013–14 academic year should be included in all student data files. This includes students who enroll after the first day of school and students who withdraw before the end of the school year. Be sure to include each student's unique WSN and school-based ID number in each data file.

2. All data fields must be completed for each student enrolled at any time during the school year. If a student is not enrolled when a measure is completed, record N/E to indicate "not enrolled." If the measure did not apply to the student for another reason, enter N/A for that student to indicate "not applicable." N/E may occur if a student enrolls after the beginning of the school year or withdraws prior to the end of the school year. N/A may apply if a student is absent when a measure is completed.

3. Record and submit a score/response for each student. Please do not submit aggregate data (e.g., 14 students scored 75.0%, or the attendance rate was 92.0%).

Staff person(s) responsible for year-end data submission: Virginia Flynn

Data due to CRC: Within 10 days following the last day of student attendance, or June 20, 2014.

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Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
Student roster: Student identification Demographics Enrollment Termination Attendance	Create a column for each of the following. Include for all students enrolled at any time during the school year. • WSN • School-based student ID number • Student name • Grade level • Race/ethnicity • Gender (M/F) • Enrollment date • Termination date, or N/A if student did not withdraw • Reason for termination, if applicable • Number of days student was enrolled at the school this year (number of days expected attendance) • Number of days student attended this year • Number of excused absences this year • Number of unexcused absences this year • Indicate if student had or was assessed for special education needs during the school year (yes and eligible, yes and not eligible, or no) • Free/reduced lunch status (free, reduced, full pay)	MRX	Liz Becerra
Special education needs students and academic achievement: Local measures IEP progress	For each student who had or was assessed for special education, (i.e., had yes and eligible in the data file above) include the following: • WSN • Student name • Special education need, e.g., ED, CD, LD, OHI, etc. • Eligibility assessment date (date the team meets to determine eligibility) • Eligibility reevaluation date (if not due this year, indicate not due; this is the three-year reevaluation date to determine if the child is still eligible for special education) • IEP completion date (date the IEP was developed) • IEP review date (date the IEP was reviewed this year; if the initial IEP was developed this year, enter N/A) • IEP review results, e.g., continue in special education, no longer eligible for special education, or N/A	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra

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Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
	• Number of goals on IEP • Number of goals met on IEP at the time of the annual review (enter N/A if the IEP was not reviewed this year)		
Parent conferences (Note: The parent conferences columns can be added to the student roster data file described above.)	Create a column for each of the scheduled conferences as well as for student identification. Include all students enrolled at any time during the school year. • Student name • WSN • Create one column labeled conference 1. In this column, indicate with a Y or N whether a parent/guardian/adult attended the first conference. If the student was not enrolled at the time of this conference, enter N/E. • Create one column labeled conference 2. In this column, indicate with a Y or N whether a parent/guardian/adult attended the second conference. If the student was not enrolled at the time of this conference, enter N/E. • If any additional conference periods were offered during the year, create similar columns for the additional conference period(s).	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Parent contract (Note: The parent contract column can be added to the student roster data file described above.)	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include: • WSN • Student name • Parent fulfilled contract (Y or N)	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Academic achievement: Local measures Children's House (K3 – K5)	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include the following columns. Count skills at the end of the year based on student report cards. • WSN • Student name • Number of core grade-level representative practical life skills assessed • Number of core grade-level practical life skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade-level practical life skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade-level representative sensorial skills assessed	MRX or Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra

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Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
	• Number of core grade-level sensorial skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade-level sensorial skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade-level representative math skills assessed • Number of core grade-level math skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade-level math skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade-level representative language skills assessed • Number of core grade-level language skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade-level language skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade-level representative culture skills assessed • Number of core grade-level culture skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade-level culture skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient)		
Literacy 1st – 8th Grades	• WSN • Student name • Fall QRI functioning grade level • Fall level of learning (independent, instructional, frustration) • Spring QRI functioning grade level • Spring level of learning (independent, instructional, frustration)	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Academic achievement: Local measures Mathematics 1st – 6th Grades	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include the following: • WSN • Student name • Number of core grade-level representative math skills assessed	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra

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Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
7th – 8th Grades	• Number of core grade-level math skills in which student reached mastered/proficient • Number of core grade-level math skills in which student showed progress from presented to practiced • Number of core grade-level math skills in which student showed progress from practiced to improving • Number of core grade-level math skills in which student showed progress from presented to improving • WSN • Student name • First chapter test score (percentage) • Final chapter test score (percentage)		
Academic Achievement: Local Measures Writing 1st – 8th Grades	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include the following: • WSN • Student name • Average six traits writing score from the fall • Average six traits writing score from end of year	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Academic achievement: Standardized measures *PALS*	For each K4 and K5 student, include the following: • WSN • Student name • Grade • Fall 2013 PALS summed score • Spring 2014 PALS summed score For each 1st- and 2nd-grade student, include the following: <u>FALL (1st graders only)</u> • Fall entry-level summed score • If applicable, fall Level B summed score • If applicable, fall Level C blending and sound-to-letter scores <u>SPRING (1st and 2nd graders)</u> • Spring entry-level summed score • If applicable, spring Level B summed score If applicable, spring Level C blending and sound-to-letter scores	Spreadsheet designed by school Additionally, paper copies must be submitted to CRC at the end of the school year.	

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Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
Academic achievement: Standardized measures WKCE 3rd–8th Grades	For each 3rd- through 8th-grade student enrolled at any time during the school year, include the following. Note that the school can download WKCE data from the Turnleaf website and is encouraged to do so. The Turnleaf website contains the official WKCE records submitted to DPI. • WSN • Student name • Grade • Scale scores for each WKCE test (e.g., math and reading for all grades, plus language, social studies, and science for 4th and 8th graders) • Proficiency level for each WKCE test • Percentile for each WKCE test • Writing scores for 4th and 8th graders Note: Enter N/E if the student was not enrolled at the time of the test. Enter N/A if the test did not apply for another reason. Please provide the test date(s) in an email or other document.	Excel spreadsheet designed by school CRC encourages the school to download WKCE data from the Turnleaf website and provide the export file to CRC.	Liz Becerra

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Appendix C

Trend Information

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Table C1

Downtown Montessori Academy
Enrollment

Year	Number Enrolled at Start of School Year	Number Enrolled During Year	Number Withdrew	Number at End of School Year	Student Retention (Number and Percentage Enrolled for the Entire Year*)
1998–99	15	0	3	12	N/A
1999–2000	33	0	5	28	N/A
2000–01	46	0	6	40	N/A
2001–02	66	32	32	66	N/A
2002–03	63	18	3	78	N/A
2003–04	74	8	2	80	N/A
2004–05	79	3	3	79	N/A
2005–06	81	0	4	77	N/A
2006–07	62	8	1	69	N/A
2007–08	100	2	9	93	N/A
2008–09*	104	7	6	105	98 (94.2%)
2009–10	121	7	2	126	119 (98.4%)
2010–11	139	7	3	143	136 (97.8%)
2011–12	166	5	5	166	161 (97.0%)
2012–13	199	4	9	194	190 (95.5%)
2013–14	233	2	5	230	228 (97.9%)

*2008–09 was the first year retention data were included in this report.

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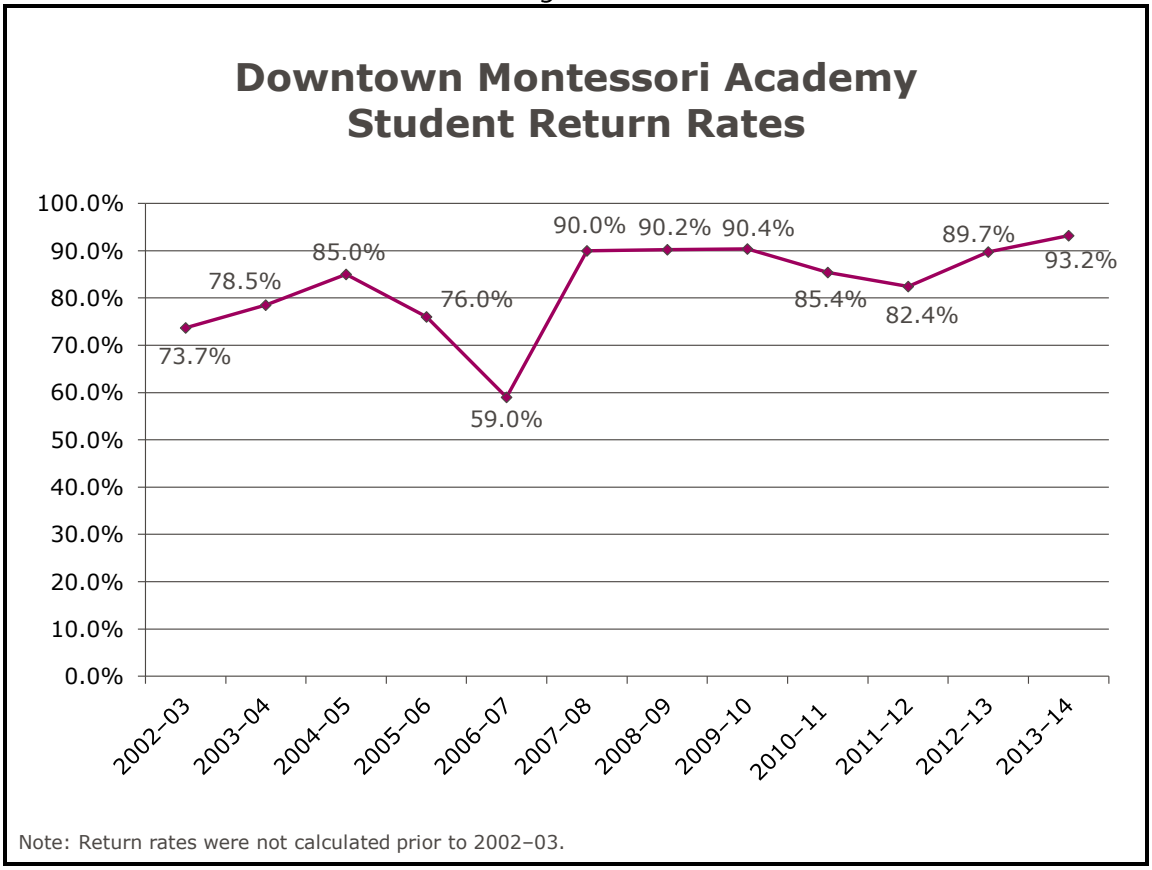
Figure C1



Note: Return rates were not calculated prior to 2002–03.

Figure C2

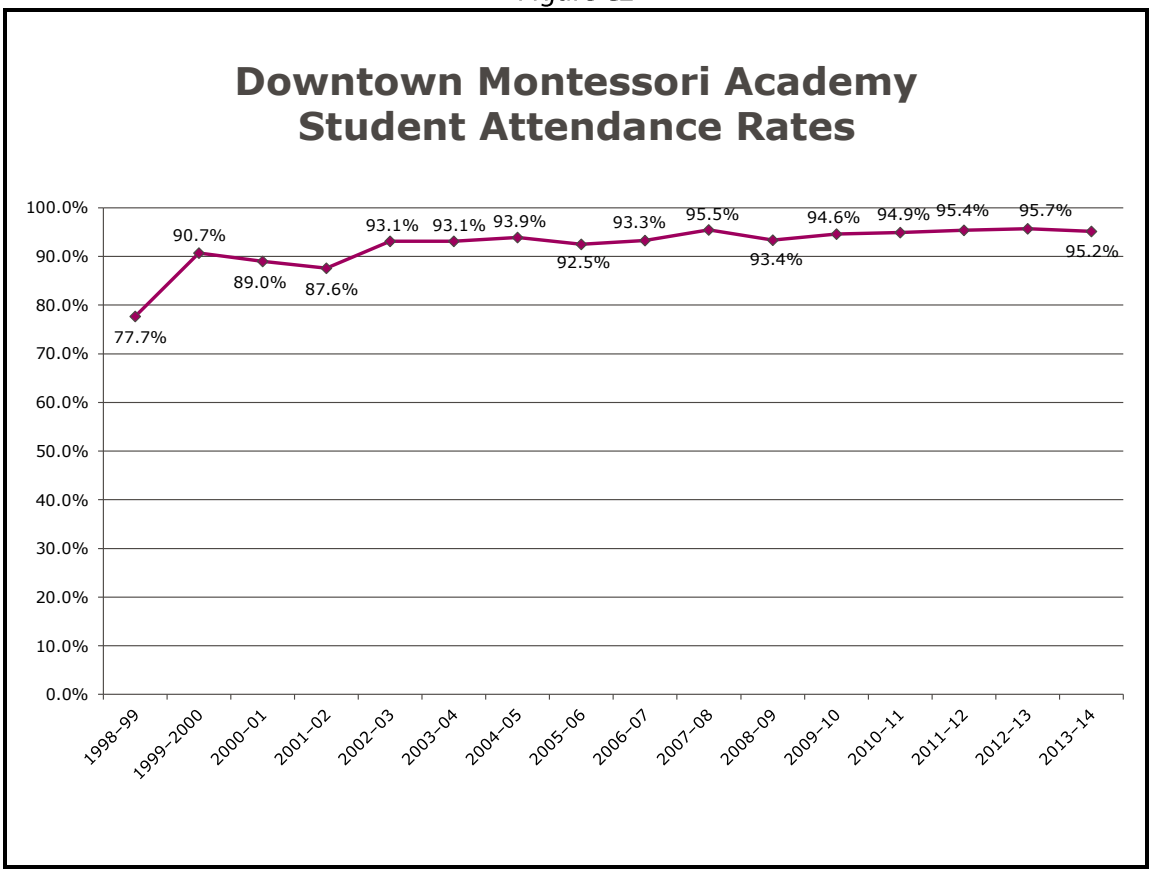


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Table C2 Downtown Montessori Academy Parent/Guardian Participation	
School Year	**% Participated**
1999–2000	100.0%
2000–01	100.0%
2001–02	100.0%
2002–03	100.0%
2003–04	100.0%
2004–05	100.0%
2005–06	100.0%
2006–07	100.0%
2007–08	100.0%
2008–09	100.0%
2009–10	100.0%
2010–11	100.0%
2011–12	100.0%
2012–13	100.0%
2013–14	100.0%

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Table C3 Downtown Montessori Academy WKCE Year-to-Year Progress Percentage of Students Who Maintained Proficiency Based on Former Proficiency-Level Cut Scores*4th Through 8th Grades		
School Year	**Reading**	**Math**
2007–08	100.0%	91.7%
2008–09	100.0%	100.0%
2009–10	100.0%	95.0%
2010–11	100.0%	100.0%
2011–12	100.0%	85.7%
2012–13	90.9%	90.3%
2013–14	98.1%	97.6%

*In 2012–13, the state began using revised cut scores; the former cut scores were applied to the 2012–13 and 2013–14 data in order to compare data across years.

Table C4 Downtown Montessori Academy WKCE Year-to-Year Progress Percentage of Students Who Scored Minimal or Basic and Showed Improvement Based on Former Proficiency-Level Cut Scores* 4th Through 8th Grades		
School Year	**Reading**	**Math**
2007–08	Cannot report due to *n* size	
2008–09	Cannot report due to *n* size	
2009–10	Cannot report due to *n* size	
2010–11	Cannot report due to *n* size	
2011–12	Cannot report due to *n* size	
2012–13	Cannot report due to *n* size	50.0%
2013–14	Cannot report due to *n* size	60.0%

*Note: Due to small *n* size, most percentages cannot be reported.

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Table C5

Downtown Montessori Academy
Teacher/Instructional Staff Retention Rate

Teacher Type	Number at Beginning of School Year	Number Started After School Year Began	Number Terminated Employment During the Year	Number at End of School Year	Retention Rate: Number and Rate Employed at School for Entire School Year
2009–10					
Classroom Teachers	6	0	0	6	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	8	0	0	8	100.0%
2010–11					
Classroom Teachers	7	0	0	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	9	0	0	9	100.0%
2011–12					
Classroom Teachers	8	0	0	8	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	9	0	0	9	100.0%
2012–13					
Classroom Teachers	10	0	0	10	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	0	0	15	100.0%
2013–14					
Classroom Teachers	10	0	0	10	10 (100.0%)
All Instructional Staff	15	1	0	16	15 (100.0%)

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Table C6 Downtown Montessori Academy Teacher/Instructional Staff Return Rate			
Teacher Type	**Number at End of Prior School Year**	**Number Returned at Beginning of Current School Year***	**Return Rate**
2009–10			
Classroom Teachers	6	6	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	7	7	100.0%
2010–11			
Classroom Teachers	7	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	2	2	100.0%
2011–12			
Classroom Teachers	7	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	9	7	77.8%
2012–13			
Classroom Teachers	8	7	87.5%
All Instructional Staff	9	8	88.9%
2013–14			
Classroom Teachers	10	9	90.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	14	93.3%

*Only those staff who were eligible to return are considered in these calculations. If a teacher or instructional staff member was not asked back, he/she was no longer eligible.

Table C7 Downtown Montessori Academy CSRC Scorecard	
School Year	**Scorecard Result**
2009–10	86.4%
2010–11	88.6%
2011–12	87.4%
2012–13	85.2%
2013–14	89.3%

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Table C8 Downtown Montessori Academy DPI Report Card	
School Year	**Rating**
2011–12	78.7
2012–13	75.2

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Appendix D

CSRC Scorecards

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City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee
School Scorecard

r: 4/11

K5–8TH GRADE

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 1–3		
• SDRT—% remained at or above GL	(4.0)	10%
• SDRT—% below GL who improved more than 1 GL	(6.0)	

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3–8		
• WKCE reading—% maintained proficient and advanced	(7.5)	35%
• WKCE math—% maintained proficient and advanced	(7.5)	
• WKCE reading—% below proficient who progressed	(10.0)	
• WKCE math—% below proficient who progressed	(10.0)	

LOCAL MEASURES		
• % met reading	(3.75)	15%
• % met math	(3.75)	
• % met writing	(3.75)	
• % met special education	(3.75)	

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3–8		
• WKCE reading—% proficient or Advanced	(7.5)	15%
• WKCE math—% proficient or advanced	(7.5)	

ENGAGEMENT		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	25%
• Student reenrollment	(5.0)	
• Student retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher return*	(5.0)	

HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 9, 10, and 12		
• EXPLORE to PLAN—composite score at or above 17 on EXPLORE and at or above 18 on PLAN	(5)	30%
• EXPLORE to PLAN—composite score of less than 17 on EXPLORE but increased 1 or more on PLAN	(10)	
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	(5)	
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	(5)	
• DPI graduation rate	(5)	

POST-SECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 and 12		
• Post-secondary acceptance for graduates (college, university, technical school, military)	(10)	15%
• % of 11th/12th graders tested	(2.5)	
• % of graduates with ACT composite score of 21.25 or more	(2.5)	

LOCAL MEASURES		
• % met reading	(3.75)	15%
• % met math	(3.75)	
• % met writing	(3.75)	
• % met special education	(3.75)	

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADE 10		
• WKCE reading—% proficient and advanced	(7.5)	15%
• WKCE math—% proficient and advanced	(7.5)	

ENGAGEMENT		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	25%
• Student reenrollment	(5.0)	
• Student retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher return*	(5.0)	

*Teachers not offered continuing contracts are excluded when calculating this rate.

Note: If a school has less than 10 students in any cell on this scorecard, CRC does not report these data. This practice was adopted to protect student identity. Therefore, these cells will be reported as not available (N/A) on the scorecard. The total score will be calculated to reflect each school's denominator.

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Beginning in 2012–13, Wisconsin DPI applied more rigorous proficiency-level cut scores to the WKCE reading and math tests. These revised cut scores are based on standards set by the NAEP and require students to achieve higher-scale scores in order to be considered proficient. However, the revised cut scores have not been in place long enough to establish valid expectations. Therefore, expectations based on the former WKCE cut scores were applied to this year's scorecard for consistency in determining the extent to which a school met the CSRC year-to-year expectations related to the WKCE.

The scorecard in Table D was compiled using the former WKCE cut scores and can be compared to scorecard results from previous years.

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Table D Downtown Montessori Academy (K5 Through 8th Grade) Charter School Review Committee Scorecard WKCE Scores Based on Former Cut Scores 2013–14 School Year					
Area	**Measure**	**Maximum. Points**	**% Total Score (out of 100)**	**Performance**	**Points Earned**
Student Academic Progress: 1st–3rd Grades	SDRT: % remained at or above GLE	4.0	**10.0%**	N/A	--
	SDRT: % below GLE who improved more than 1 GLE	6.0		N/A	--
Student Academic Progress 3rd–8th Grades	WKCE reading: % maintained proficient or advanced*	7.5	**35%**	98.1%	7.4
	WKCE math: % maintained proficient or advanced*	7.5		97.6%	7.3
	WKCE reading: % below proficient who progressed*	10.0		Cannot report due to *n* size	--
	WKCE math: % below proficient who progressed*	10.0		60.0%	6.0
Local Measures	% met reading	3.75	**15%**	96.2%	3.6
	% met math	3.75		98.5%	3.7
	% met writing	3.75		87.8%	3.3
	% met special education	3.75		Cannot report due to *n* size	--
Student Achievement 3rd–8th Grades	WKCE reading: % proficient or advanced	7.5	**15%**	92.7%%	7.0
	WKCE math: % proficient or advanced	7.5		75.6%	5.7
Engagement	Student attendance	5.0	**25%**	95.2%	4.8
	Student reenrollment	5.0		93.1%	4.7
	Student retention	5.0		97.9%	4.9
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		93.3%	4.7
TOTAL		**76.3**[36]			**68.1 (89.3%)**

*WKCE scores in this report card were based on the former proficiency-level cut scores used up until the 2012–13 school year.

[36] The SDRT was discontinued prior to the 2013–14 school year, so year-to-year results were not available. Additionally, in order to protect student identity, CRC does not include results for measures with fewer than 10 students (students below proficient in reading and special education student progress). The available points for these measures were deducted from the 100 total possible points. The scorecard percentage was calculated using the modified denominator, or 76.3 points.

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Appendix E

2012–13 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Report Card

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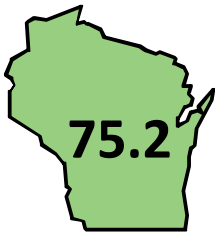
Downtown Montessori | Downtown Montessori

School Report Card | 2012-13 | Summary

Overall Accountability Score and Rating



Exceeds Expectations

Overall Accountability Ratings	Score
Significantly Exceeds Expectations	83-100
Exceeds Expectations	73-82.9
Meets Expectations	63-72.9
Meets Few Expectations	53-62.9
Fails to Meet Expectations	0-52.9

Priority Areas	School Score	Max Score	K-8 State	K-8 Max
Student Achievement	**69.7/100**		**67.0/100**	
Reading Achievement	37.6/50		29.7/50	
Mathematics Achievement	32.2/50		37.3/50	
Student Growth	**67.0/100**		**60.9/100**	
Reading Growth	38.6/50		30.0/50	
Mathematics Growth	28.4/50		30.9/50	
Closing Gaps	**73.8/100**		**65.4/100**	
Reading Achievement Gaps	33.2/50		33.2/50	
Mathematics Achievement Gaps	40.6/50		32.2/50	
Graduation Rate Gaps	NA/NA		NA/NA	
On-Track and Postsecondary Readiness	**90.3/100**		**88.1/100**	
Graduation Rate (when available)	NA/NA		NA/NA	
Attendance Rate (when graduation not available)	76.2/80		75.3/80	
3rd Grade Reading Achievement	14.1/20		5.7/10	
8th Grade Mathematics Achievement	NA/NA		7.1/10	
ACT Participation and Performance	NA/NA		NA/NA	

Student Engagement Indicators — Total Deductions: 0

Test Participation Lowest Group Rate (goal ≥95%)	Goal met: no deduction
Absenteeism Rate (goal <13%)	Goal met: no deduction
Dropout Rate (goal <6%)	Goal met: no deduction

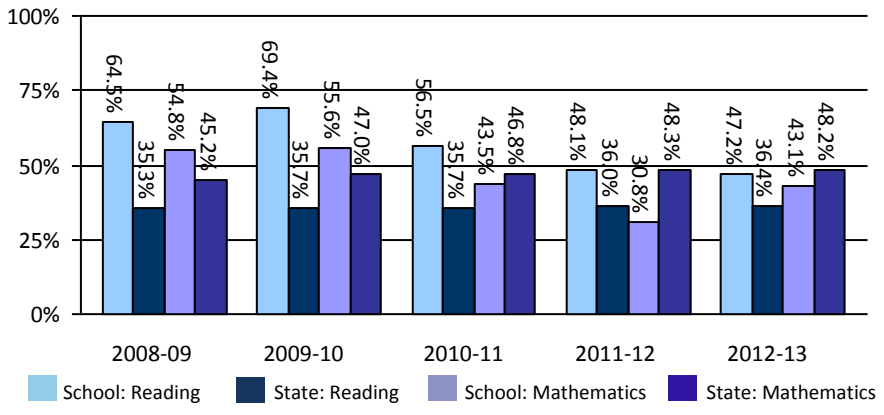
School Information

Grades	K3-8
School Type	Elementary School
Enrollment	152
Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	7.2%
Black not Hispanic	19.1%
Hispanic	19.1%
White not Hispanic	54.6%
Student Groups	
Students with Disabilities	9.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	34.2%
Limited English Proficient	0.0%

Wisconsin Student Assessment System Percent Proficient and Advanced

Includes Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) and Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD). WKCE college and career readiness benchmarks based on National Assessment of Educational Progress.

State proficiency rate is for all tested grades: 3-8 and 10



Notes: Overall Accountability Score is an average of Priority Area Scores, minus Student Engagement Indicator deductions. The average is weighted differently for schools that cannot be measured with all Priority Area Scores, to ensure that the Overall Accountability Score can be compared fairly for all schools. Accountability Ratings do not apply to Priority Area Scores. Details can be found at http://acct.dpi.wi.gov/acct_accountability.

This report serves for both school and district accountability purposes for this school.

Appendix F

Teacher Interview Results

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In the spring of 2014, CRC interviewed 10 teachers regarding their reasons for teaching and overall satisfaction with the school. Interviews included eight classroom teachers, one art teacher, and one special education teacher.

The teachers interviewed had been teaching for an average of seven years. The number of years teaching at Downtown Montessori Academy ranged from one to 14 years.

All teachers reported that they routinely use data to make decisions in the classroom, and nine teachers indicated that the school's leadership uses data to make school-wide decisions; one teacher indicated that leadership did not use student data to make school-wide decisions. Methods of tracking student progress on the school's local measures included a variety of reading, math, and writing assessments given intermittently throughout the year; special education review; and Montessori paper skills tracker.

Six teachers rated the school's overall progress in contributing to students' academic progress as excellent and four teachers rated the school's progress as good.

When asked to describe how teacher performance is assessed, all teachers reported that they are formally assessed at least once each year, 90.0% of teachers said that they are assessed through classroom observation at least once each semester, and all teachers reported having discussions about student progress/data and informal feedback at least monthly (Table F1).

Table F1

Downtown Montessori Academy
Teacher Performance Assessment
2013–14
(N = 10)

Type of Assessment	Frequency							
	Never		At Least Monthly or More Often		At Least Once Each Semester		At Least Once Yearly	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Formal evaluation using evaluation form	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%	9	90.0%
Classroom observations	1	10.0%	4	40.0%	5	50.0%	0	0.0%
Discussions regarding student progress/data	0	0.0%	10	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Informal feedback/suggestions	0	0.0%	10	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Four teachers said that their performance reviews incorporate students' academic progress or performance; four teachers said that reviews do not include those things; and two teachers did not respond or the question was not applicable. Reviews for all 10 teachers were completed by the Head of school. Four teachers said they are very satisfied with the performance review process, five are somewhat satisfied, and one teacher is somewhat dissatisfied. Nine of the 10 teachers reported plans to continue teaching at the school.

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When asked to rate the importance of various reasons for continuing to teach at the school, all teachers rated educational methodology, age/grade level of students, general atmosphere, class size, administrative leadership, and colleagues as somewhat important or very important for teaching at this school (Table F2).

Table F2

Reasons for Continuing to Teach at Downtown Montessori Academy
2013–14
(N = 10)

Reason	Importance			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not at All Important
Location	4	4	1	1
Financial considerations	2	6	2	0
Educational methodology/ curriculum approach	9	1	0	0
Age/grade level of students	3	7	0	0
Discipline	4	5	1	0
General atmosphere	8	2	0	0
Class size	7	3	0	0
Parental involvement	3	5	2	0
Administrative leadership	9	1	0	0
Colleagues	5	5	0	0
Students	2	6	2	0

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CRC asked teachers to rate the school's performance related to class size, materials and equipment, student assessment plan, shared leadership, professional support and development, and the school's progress toward becoming an excellent school. Teachers most often rated program of instruction, parent/teacher relationships, teacher collaboration, parent involvement, and principal's performance as excellent. Measures for assessing student progress, shared leadership, students' academic progress, and individual performance as a teacher were most often rated as good by teachers. Five of the 10 teachers listed the school's progress toward becoming a high-performing school as excellent and five teachers listed the school's progress as good (Table F3).

Table F3

Downtown Montessori Academy
School Performance Rating
2013–14
(N = 10)

Area	Rating			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Class size/student-teacher ratio	5	2	3	0
Program of instruction	6	4	0	0
Measures for assessing students' progress overall	3	6	1	0
Shared leadership, decision making, and accountability*	3	6	0	0
Professional support	5	4	1	0
Professional development opportunities	3	5	2	0
Progress toward becoming a high-performing school	5	5	0	0
Your students' academic progress	4	6	0	0
Adherence to discipline policy	4	3	3	0
Instructional support*	4	2	3	0
Parent/teacher relationships	7	2	1	0
Teacher collaboration to plan learning experiences	8	1	1	0
Parent involvement	7	2	1	0
Your performance as a teacher	4	6	0	0
Principal's performance	7	3	0	0

*One teacher did not respond to each of these items.

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When asked to name two things they liked most about the school, teachers noted the following.

- Autonomy for teachers
- Their colleagues
- Accessible head of school
- Montessori method

Teachers most often mentioned the following as things they like least about the school.

- Lack of classroom assistants
- Lack of cafeteria, gym, or stage
- Lack of consistent implementation of handbook policies
- Salary and benefit package could be better

Teachers identified the following barrier that could affect their decision to remain at the school.

- If the future administration is not compatible with their views

When asked if they had any suggestions for improving the school, teachers said the following.

- Having classroom assistants
- Indoor play area/gym
- Increased communication

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Appendix G

Parent Survey Results

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Parent opinions are qualitative in nature and provide a valuable measurement of school performance. To determine how parents heard about the school, why they elected to send their children to the school, parental involvement with the school, and an overall evaluation of the school, each school distributed surveys during spring parent-teacher conferences. The school asked parents to complete the survey, place it in a sealed envelope, and return it to the school. CRC made at least two follow-up phone calls to parents who had not completed a survey. If these parents were available and willing, CRC completed the survey over the telephone or sent a new survey in the mail. A total of 112 surveys, representing 112 (68.7%) of 163 families were completed and submitted to CRC.[37]

Most (54.5%) of the parents who completed a survey heard about the school from friends or relatives. Smaller proportions heard about the school through other means (Table G1).

Table G1

Downtown Montessori Academy
How Parents Learned About the School
2013–14
(N = 112)

Method	Response	
	N	%
Newspaper	1	0.9%
Private school	1	0.9%
Community center	0	0.0%
Church	0	0.0%
Friends/relatives	61	54.5%
TV/radio/Internet	21	18.8%
Other	40	35.7%

Parents chose to send their children to Downtown Montessori for a variety of reasons. Most (91.1%) rated the school's general atmosphere and educational methodology (92.0%) as very important reasons for selecting this school. In addition, many parents (75.9%) rated school safety as very important to them when choosing this school (Table G2).

Some parents (37.5%) identified other reasons for enrolling their child in the school, including class size, school reputation, relatives had attended the school, being a green school, the K3 program, and the Montessori curriculum (not shown).

[37]If more than one parent in the family or household completed a survey, both were included. If one parent completed more than one survey, the survey completed for the oldest child was retained for analysis.

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Table G2

Downtown Montessori Academy
Parent Reasons for Choosing the School
2013–14
(N = 112)

Factor	Response									
	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Somewhat Unimportant		Not at All Important		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Location	53	47.3%	44	39.3%	6	5.4%	8	7.1%	1	0.9%
Other children or relatives already attending this school	20	17.9%	15	13.4%	6	5.4%	70	62.5%	1	0.9%
Educational methodology	103	92.0%	9	8.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Range of grades in school	68	60.7%	31	27.7%	10	8.9%	2	1.8%	1	0.9%
Discipline	54	48.2%	36	32.1%	16	14.3%	5	4.5%	1	0.9%
General atmosphere	102	91.1%	6	5.4%	3	2.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Class size	83	74.1%	22	19.6%	4	3.6%	1	0.9%	2	1.8%
Recommendation of family and friends	37	33.0%	30	26.8%	12	10.7%	30	26.8%	3	2.7%
Opportunities for parental participation	46	41.1%	51	45.5%	9	8.0%	4	3.6%	2	1.8%
School safety	85	75.9%	20	17.9%	2	1.8%	3	2.7%	2	1.8%
Frustration with previous school	8	7.1%	8	7.1%	8	7.1%	77	68.8%	11	9.8%

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CRC examined parental involvement as another measure of satisfaction with the school. Involvement was based on the number of contacts between the school and the parent(s) and parental participation in educational activities in the home.

For the first measure, parent-school contacts, contacts occurred for a variety of reasons. For example, most parents reported contact with the school at least once regarding their child's academic progress or to provide information for school records (Table G3).

Table G3

Downtown Montessori Academy
Parent-School Contacts
2013–14
(N = 112)

Areas of Contact	Number of Contacts									
	0 Times		1–2 Times		3–4 Times		5+ Times		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your child(ren)'s academic performance	1	0.9%	29	25.9%	41	36.6%	41	36.6%	0	0.0%
Your child(ren)'s behavior	32	28.6%	35	31.3%	19	17.0%	25	22.3%	1	0.9%
Providing information for school records	24	21.4%	65	58.0%	13	11.6%	4	3.6%	6	5.4%
Other	10	8.9%	5	4.5%	0	0.0%	10	8.9%	87	77.7%

The second measure examined the extent to which parents engaged in educational activities while at home. During a typical week, a majority (70.6%) of 102 parents of younger children (K4 through fifth) worked on homework with their children, read to or with their children (98.1%); watched educational programs on television (64.7%); and/or participated in activities such as sports, library visits, or museum visits with their children (76.5%). Parents of older children (sixth through eighth grades) engaged in similar activities during the week. For example, 94.1% of 17 parents monitored homework completion, 88.2% discussed their children's postsecondary plans with them, 76.5% watched educational programs on television, 100% participated in activities outside of school, and 88.2% discussed their children's progress toward graduating with them at least once a month.

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Parents also rated the school on various aspects using a scale from poor to excellent. Parents rated the school as good or excellent in most aspects of the academic environment. For example, most parents said their child's academic progress (91.9%) and communication regarding learning expectations (76.8%) were excellent or good (Table G4.)

Table G4

Downtown Montessori Academy
Parental Satisfaction
2013–14
(N= 112)

Area	Response									
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Program of instruction	78	69.6%	28	25.0%	6	5.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Child's academic progress	65	58.0%	38	33.9%	8	7.1%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%
Student-teacher ratio/ class size	54	48.2%	52	46.4%	5	4.5%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%
Discipline methods	50	44.6%	42	37.5%	12	10.7%	4	3.6%	4	3.6%
Parent/teacher relationships	58	51.8%	43	38.4%	8	7.1%	2	1.8%	1	0.9%
Communication regarding learning expectations	40	35.7%	46	41.1%	21	18.8%	5	4.5%	0	0.0%
Opportunities for parental involvement	59	52.7%	41	36.6%	9	8.0%	3	2.7%	0	0.0%
Teacher(s)'s performance	77	68.8%	29	25.9%	5	4.5%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Principal's performance	56	50.0%	45	40.2%	9	8.0%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%
Teacher/principal availability	73	65.2%	30	26.8%	8	7.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Responsiveness to concerns	68	60.7%	34	30.4%	7	6.3%	3	2.7%	0	0.0%
Progress reports for parents/guardians	53	47.3%	39	34.8%	16	14.3%	2	1.8%	2	1.8%

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Parents indicated their level of agreement with several statements about school staff. Most (94.6%) reported that they were comfortable talking with their child's teachers and/or school staff and many (85.7%) were satisfied with how the school kept them informed about their child's academic performance (Table F5).

Table G5

Downtown Montessori Academy
Parental Rating of School Staff
2013–14
(N= 112)

Statement	Response											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am comfortable talking with staff	80	71.4%	26	23.2%	5	4.5%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
The staff keeps me informed about my child(ren)'s performance	55	49.1%	41	36.6%	10	8.9%	5	4.5%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
I am comfortable with how the staff handles discipline	44	39.3%	45	40.2%	16	14.3%	4	3.6%	2	1.8%	1	0.9%
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the staff	60	53.6%	43	38.4%	5	4.5%	4	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
The staff recognizes my child(ren)'s strengths and weaknesses	67	59.8%	35	31.3%	8	7.1%	2	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Parental satisfaction was also evident in the following results.

- Most (93.8%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Most (92.9%) parents will send their child to the school next year. One (0.9%) parent said he/she will not send his/her child to the school next year and a few (6.3%) were not sure.
- When asked to rate the school's overall contribution to their child's learning, a majority (94.6%) of parents rated the school's overall contribution to their child's learning as excellent or good. Some (3.6%) parents rated the school's contribution as fair and a small percentage rated the school's contribution as poor. One parent did not respond to the question.

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When asked what they like most about the school, some common responses included the following.

- Small class size and school size
- Individual attention
- Strong community
- Commitment to Montessori method
- Caring, quality staff and administration
- Green school; focus on environmentalism
- Afterschool care
- Inviting School atmosphere

When asked what they like least about the school, responses included the following.

- Lack of school-wide discipline policies
- Communication between parents, staff, and administration (especially regarding discipline)
- Need more parental involvement (PTO)
- Playground too small; want a better/larger outdoor area
- Picking up and dropping off students
- Bullying
- Want more extracurricular activities, athletics
- Lunch program
- Want more art, language, and music

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Appendix H

Student Interview Results

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At the end of the school year, CRC staff asked 16 seventh and eighth graders several questions about their school. Responses from the student interviews were generally positive.

- Most students indicated that they used computers at school;
- All but one student said that teachers were helpful;
- All students felt that the marks they received on their classwork, homework, and report cards were fair;
- All but ones student said they had improved their reading ability and 75% stated that their math abilities had also improved.
- Most students said that they felt safe while at school; and
- A total of 14 students said that people worked collaboratively at Downtown Montessori (Table H).

Table H

Downtown Montessori Academy
Student Interview
2013–14
(N = 16)

Question	Answer			
	A Lot	Some	No/Not At All	No Response/ Don't Know/ N/A
Do you like your school?	10	4	2	0
Have you improved in reading?	10	5	1	0
Have you improved in math?	6	6	3	1
Do you use computers at school?	8	7	1	0
Do you like the school rules?	1	12	3	0
Do you think the school rules are fair?	3	12	1	0
Do you get homework on a regular basis?	14	2	0	0
Do your teachers help you at school?	8	7	1	0
Do you like being in school?	7	7	2	0
Do you feel safe at school?	12	1	3	0
Do people work together in school?	11	3	2	0
Do you feel the marks you get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair?	11	5	0	0
Do your teachers talk to your parents?	3	12	1	0
Does your school have afterschool activities?	3	12	1	0

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Table H Downtown Montessori Academy Student Interview 2013–14 (N = 16)				
Do your teachers talk with you about high school plans?	1	12	3	0

When asked what they liked best about the school, students reported the following.

- Getting to work with younger students
- Teachers

When asked what they liked least, students responded as follows.

- Dress code
- Math is too easy

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Appendix I

Board Member Interview Results

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Board member opinions are qualitative in nature and provide valuable, although subjective, insight regarding school performance and organizational competency. Downtown Montessori's board of directors consists of seven members: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three other directors. CRC conducted phone interviews using a prepared interview guide with six of the seven board members who agreed to participate.

One of the board members has served on the board for 10 years, one for seven years, two for three years, one for approximately two years, and one for one year. The backgrounds of the board members include accounting, law, education, facilities, and parenting.

Five of the board members said they participate in strategic planning for the school. All six received a presentation on the school's annual academic performance report, received and approved the school's annual budget, and reviewed the school's annual financial audit.

Table I

Downtown Montessori Academy
Board Member Interview Results
2013–14
(N = 6)

Performance Measure	Response				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Teacher-student ratio/class size	3	3	0	0	0
Program of instruction	4	2	0	0	0
Students' academic progress	5	1	0	0	0
Adherence to discipline policy	1	2	0	0	3
Administrator's financial management	5	1	0	0	0
Professional development opportunities	2	1	0	0	3
Instructional support	3	2	0	0	1
Progress toward becoming a high-performing school	5	1	0	0	0
Parental involvement	3	2	0	0	1
Community/business involvement	2	3	0	0	1
Teachers' performance	2	2	0	0	2
Principal's performance	6	0	0	0	0
Current role of the board of directors	4	2	0	0	0
Financial resources to fulfill school's mission	4	2	0	0	0
Safety of the educational environment	6	0	0	0	0

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All six board members reported that the board uses data to make decisions regarding the school. On a scale of poor to excellent, all six board members rated the school, overall, as excellent or good. When asked what they liked most about the school, the board members mentioned the following items.

- Building
- Culture (thinking outside the box, community interested in Montessori, commitment to culture)
- Child-focused curriculum, with an emphasis on growth and improvement

Regarding things they like least, the board members mentioned the following.

- Lack of gym, lunch room, and playground

When asked for one suggestion for improving the school, board members all gave different suggestions and mentioned the following.

- More transparency between board, staff, and community
- Continue to implement the five-year plan for the school (mentioned twice)
- Increase the use of data in decision making
- More teacher aides and/or support staff for older children
- Revise the broader public profile of Downtown Montessori in the greater Milwaukee work area

An additional comment was offered regarding the lack of a succession plan for the head of school.

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