

**2020–21
PROGRAMMATIC
PROFILE AND
EDUCATIONAL
PERFORMANCE**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI
ACADEMY**

September 2021

Evident Change was previously NCCD Children's Research Center.



ABOUT EVIDENT CHANGE

Evident Change promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice. For more information, call (800) 306-6223 or visit us online at EvidentChange.org and [@Evident_Change](https://twitter.com/Evident_Change) on Twitter.

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This report includes text from Downtown Montessori’s parent/student handbook and/or staff handbook. Evident Change obtained permission from the school to use this text for the purposes of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 2020–21

This is the 23rd annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, one of seven schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee during the 2020–21 school year. It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and Evident Change (formerly NCCD Children’s Research Center).

During the 2020–21 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of our lives, including education systems. The findings discussed in this report should be interpreted with this in mind. Evident Change has determined the following, based on the information gathered and discussed in the report.

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

Downtown Montessori met or substantially met all 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 OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

The CSRC requires the school to track elementary student progress in literacy, writing, math, and special education goals throughout the year to identify students who need additional help and to help teachers develop strategies to improve students’ academic performance. This year, Downtown Montessori’s local measures of academic progress for elementary students resulted in the following outcomes.

a. Literacy

Downtown Montessori used two different literacy assessments for students in first through eighth grades: a Fountas and Pinnell passage for students in first through third grades, and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) for students in fourth through eighth grades.

- All 63 (100.0%) first- through third-grade students who scored below grade level and 25 out of 29 (86.2%) students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level on the spring Fountas and Pinnell assessment. No student was above grade level in the fall. The school’s goal was for 75.0% and 80.0% of students below and at grade level, respectively, to gain at least half a grade level by the spring, and for 100.0% of students above grade level to maintain above-grade-level status.
- Of the 100 fourth- through eighth-grade students who took both fall and spring assessments, 50 (50.0%) met their literacy goal based on their functional and grade-level status using the QRI. The school’s goal was that 90.0% would make progress depending on their fall assessment.

Overall, 138 (71.9%) of 192 first- through eighth-grade students who were considered in the school’s outcomes made progress on their literacy skills during the school year.

b. *Math*

This year, Downtown Montessori had separate assessment methods for first- through sixth-grade students and for seventh- and eighth-grade students. First- through sixth-grade students were assessed on grade-level Montessori sequential math skills. This was supplemented with at least three grade-level Common Core State Standards math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Seventh- and eighth-grade students were assessed using IXL, an evaluation program, resulting in a grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards.

- By the end of the year, 148 (88.6%) of 167 first- through sixth-grade students reached or maintained proficiency or showed improvement in 60.0% of grade-level- math skills. The school’s goal was 100.0%.
- Of the 34 seventh- and eighth-grade students tested in the fall, eight (23.5%) either improved by half a grade level if they were below grade level or maintained above-grade-level status in the spring. The school’s goal was 80.0% who tested at or below grade level will improve at least half a grade level and that 100% who test above grade level will remain above grade level.

Overall, 156 (77.6%) of 201 first- through eighth-grade students met the school’s local measures in math.

c. *Writing*

Writing skills were assessed using the Six Traits of Writing. Overall, 165 of 201 (82.1%) first- through eighth-grade students either increased their fall average writing level score by at least a half point (0.5) on the spring writing sample or maintained or improved a score of at least 4.0 from the fall to spring. The school’s goal was 100.0%.

d. Special Education

The school's local measure goal for special education was that students would meet at least 60% of their individualized education program (IEP) goals at the time of their annual review. This year, only 41.7% of the students met this goal.

2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, Downtown Montessori identified measurable education-related outcomes in attendance, parental involvement, and special education student records. The school met its goals in all of these outcomes.

B. YEAR-TO-YEAR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ON STANDARDIZED TESTS

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction withdrew the requirement for schools to administer any standardized tests for 2019–20. Therefore, year-to-year progress could not be measured from 2019–20 to 2020–21.

C. CSRC SCHOOL SCORECARD

Because data to examine year-to-year student progress were not available, the CSRC scorecard contains partial outcome data this year. The school's score should not be compared with the score for any previous or subsequent year. Downtown Montessori scored 77.3% of the 59.0 possible scorecard points.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Downtown Montessori addressed the recommendations from its 2019–20 programmatic profile and educational performance report. On the basis of the results of this report and in consultation with school staff, Evident Change recommends that the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2021–22 school year.

- Renew the in-person Montessori community (students, parents and teachers), including the vision and mission of the Montessori approach.
- Respond to and support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.

- Identify and implement methods of supporting individual student post-pandemic academic and social/emotional needs.
- Maintain accuracy of reporting monitoring data.

IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND REPORTING

This report covers the 23rd year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements, and this year it has met or substantially met all the applicable contract requirements. Based on contract compliance as well as the school's trend data, the recommendation from Evident Change is that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee and Evident Change. It is one component of the program that the Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) uses to monitor performance of all city-chartered schools.

To produce this report, Evident Change:

- Conducted an initial virtual session with the school to collect information related to contract requirements and to draft a learning memo for the new school year as well as an in-person year-end interview to review progress about recommendations and changes that occurred during the year;
- Visited the school to conduct a random review of special education files;
- Attended (virtually) a school board of directors meeting with CSRC representatives to provide an update regarding compliance with the City of Milwaukee's academic expectations and contract requirements; and
- Collected and analyzed data submitted by the school to complete an annual report.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy

2507 S. Graham St.

Milwaukee, WI 53207

Telephone: (414) 744-6005

Website: <http://downtownmontessori.com>

Head of School: Virginia Flynn

Executive Director: Ian Spanic

Downtown Montessori is in the Bay View neighborhood near the Port of Milwaukee on the southeast side of the city.

A. DESCRIPTION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY

1. MISSION

Downtown Montessori's mission is to create a Montessori environment where each child's early experiences with learning will help him or her to become a self-confident, competent, and cooperative adult. The philosophy is based on the belief that children learn best when they are at ease and comfortable. The key is to see the hidden nature of the child at given stages of development and to design an environment that will fulfill the child's innate potential.

2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Downtown Montessori began the year with all students attending school virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school submitted its virtual schedule to Evident Change staff. On April 19, 2021, when in-person education was allowed and the school's safety plan was accepted by the city Health Department, the school offered all students an in-person hybrid schedule (two cohorts of students attending two days per week each) or a continued virtual program for students in second through sixth grades. The school also provided the hybrid and virtual schedules.

The school's leadership noted disadvantages to virtual learning, including the following.

- Inadequate face-to-face observation of the younger students' process with an activity allowing for the teacher to assist the student or move forward.
- Parent influence on their child's actual skill development.
- High parent stress regarding the Montessori approach leading to a large number of email messages (up to 50 per day) requiring a teacher's response.
- Inadequate daily staff support from their colleagues.

Advantages included the following.

- Improvement of students' ability to use computers, resulting in their increased comfort taking the computerized Department of Instruction (DPI) assessments in spring.
- The teachers' success learning in Google classroom and other computer skills.

Downtown Montessori delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society. 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.

B. SCHOOL STRUCTURE

1. LEADERSHIP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS¹

The school's leadership includes a head of school, assistant head of school, and executive director who all manage the school's day-to-day activities.

The Downtown Montessori Academy Board of Directors provides strategic leadership in support of the school's mission, philosophy, and goals. Again this year, the board had seven members: a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and three other directors. The board makes long-term decisions, provides financial management, and communicates regularly with the executive director and head of school to ensure the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of the charter and that the school is a viable organization.

The board met virtually with the CSRC program analyst and the Evident Change program specialist regarding a general update, including recent information from the City of Milwaukee and general roles and responsibilities of board members.

2. AREAS OF INSTRUCTION²

Downtown Montessori is divided into four levels of programming. The Children's House contains the Montessori primary program, which is open to children ages 3 to 6 and covers grades K3, K4, and K5.³ Children's House students begin to acquire knowledge through the Montessori Curriculum, which includes five areas of study: practical life, sensorial learning, language, mathematics, and culture (science, history, geography, arts, and music). Students also participate in physical education, and the 5-year-old students also participate in the Urban Ecology Center's Neighborhood Environmental Education Program (NEEP).

¹ Information comes from the fall and spring interviews with school leadership and the school's website, <http://downtownmontessori.com>

² Information from the school's website can be found at <https://downtownmontessori.com/academics>

³ Students who turn 5 on or before September 1 may attend full-day Montessori sessions. Students who turn 4 on or before September 1 may attend a half- or full-day program for 4-year-olds; this program consists of half-day Montessori and half-day childcare. The charter school program does not include 4-year-olds.

The lower elementary program is designed for first through third graders. Normally, the school day allows for blocks of concentrated work (individually, in pairs, or in small groups) in the Montessori Curriculum. However, this schedule was very flexible due to virtual learning. Downtown Montessori uses Scholastic's Guided Reading Program and Writing Workshop. Lower elementary students also participate in physical education, art, music, and NEEP.

The upper elementary program is open to fourth through sixth graders. Materials and group activities develop individual and collaborative skills in biology, math, language, history, geography, music, and visual arts. Upper elementary students also participate in physical education and NEEP.

The adolescent program, for seventh and eighth graders, is an integrative and projects-based learning environment designed to meet students' social, emotional, and intellectual needs. Each week, students participate in math, language arts, humanities, occupations, academic writing, human growth and development, book group, coffee shop, in-school and out-of-school community service, class council, restorative justice, student-led clubs, art, music, and physical education.

Downtown Montessori provided Chromebooks for all students from first grade and above. K4 and K5 students were provided Chromebooks upon request by their parents. When students attended school in person, the school's internet use policy required parent and student signatures on an elementary/adolescent student computer-use contract. The school uses Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and Skyward to collect student data and data related to academic progress.

This year, enrichment activities outside of school were limited due to the pandemic.

3. CLASSROOMS

In the fall of the 2020–21 academic year, the school began the program with 11 virtual classrooms: three Children's House classrooms, four lower elementary classrooms, three upper elementary classrooms, and one adolescent program classroom. Each classroom consisted of about 26 students. When in-person learning began, the classrooms were used by half of the in-person students two days a week and the other half two other days a week to allow for social distancing.

4. TEACHER INFORMATION

The school employed 21 instructional staff. Instructional staff was made up of 12 classroom teachers, one of whom also acted as assistant head of school; a special education director; two part-time social workers; a reading interventionist; a part-time school psychologist; a part-time literacy teacher; a visual arts teacher;

and a Response to Intervention (RTI) math teacher.⁴ Three classroom teachers taught at the Children’s House, four taught lower elementary, three taught upper elementary, two taught the adolescent program. During virtual learning, teaching assistants were used in the day care program; after April 19, when in-person learning began, the assistants were used to help the teachers in the classrooms. All 21 instructional staff started and completed the school year, resulting in a retention rate of 100.0%.

At the end of the 2019–20 school year, 21 instructional staff (13 classroom teachers and eight other instructional staff) were employed by the school and eligible to return in the fall of 2020. All but two eligible instructional staff returned in the fall of 2020, resulting in a return rate of 90.5%.

All instructional staff held Wisconsin DPI licenses except for one instructional staff member.⁵ All but one classroom teachers held Montessori certifications.

The Downtown Montessori Academy Employee Handbook, revised in March 2020, was again used during the 2020–21 school year. The handbook explains that informal performance evaluation is ongoing. A formal performance evaluation occurs once per year and includes classroom observation and a performance review with the head of school, the executive director, and the teacher.

Regarding professional development, Downtown Montessori instructional staff received training and in-services in the areas of trauma-affected students, how to use Google Classroom, and methods of adapting Montessori approaches in the context of virtual learning. Grade level staff meet regularly with school leadership to share expertise and ideas for virtual learning.

5. SCHOOL HOURS AND CALENDAR

The school posted its 2020–21 calendar on its website. A printed calendar also was available in the school’s office. The hours of school operation for in-person learning this year were 8:40–11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4, and 8:40 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. for K5 through eighth grades.

⁴ The school contracted with MJ Cares for the services of a speech pathologist and, if needed, an occupational therapist. If physical therapy or vision-related services are needed, the school uses First Aid through the Cooperative Educational Service Agency. If nursing care is needed, the school uses First Aid.

⁵ The literacy teacher has a lifetime license that is noted as invalid due to the lack of a DPI background check. However, the school has conducted its own background check per personnel policies.

6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As described in the parent/student handbook (updated for the 2020–21 school year), Downtown Montessori seeks and relies on the energy and spirit of parents. Parents are urged to contact their child’s teacher for volunteer opportunities in and out of the classroom. Downtown Montessori’s handbook states that current research, as well as the school’s prior experience, shows a direct relationship between parental involvement and how much the child benefits from the school.

Examples of active parental involvement include accompanying students on field trips, reading stories to students, 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 students to encourage parents to participate. Parents also are encouraged to visit their child’s class at least once a year. To aid parent involvement, the school’s all-volunteer parent group, Parent Engagement Network, is dedicated to supplementing and enriching student education by providing parent involvement opportunities.⁶ All parents of enrolled students are members.

During in-person learning, each student has a folder in which schoolwork, notices, and school forms are sent home. The school tries to communicate via email as much as possible to prevent unnecessary paper use in accordance with the principles of being a state-certified Green and Healthy School. Teachers’ email addresses are listed in the parent/student handbook and on the school’s website, where current information and notices also are available. Parent–teacher conferences occur twice each year and upon parental request.

7. DISCIPLINE POLICY

The school’s code of conduct and discipline policy is stated in the parent/student handbook for use during in-person instruction. The handbook indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is important for all involved adults to deal with the problem the same way. The method of corrective discipline endorsed by Downtown Montessori is to redirect a student to other activities upon the student’s engaging in activity contrary to established rules. The Montessori Method encourages students to make choices and be responsible for their actions. Discipline is used to help students rather than punish them. All staff and parents serve as role models for students through their conduct with students, other staff, and other parents. Each student should be dealt with positively; according to the handbook, parents and staff should avoid showing anger. Quiet time is used only if redirection does not work; students choose when they are ready to rejoin the group.

⁶ The Parent Engagement Network is fully described in the parent/student handbook.

The school does not tolerate student behavior that is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the student (themselves) or others in the teacher and program director's judgment. Interventions are formulated based on the principles of respect for the student; knowledge and understanding of the student's developmental needs and characteristics; knowledge of the group's needs; and an understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The discipline policy describes specific consequences for older students when other interventions have not worked. These steps, depending on the nature of the offense, 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. For chronic behavior problems suspected to be beyond the student's control, a referral is made to support services for evaluation and help. Suspension and expulsion are considered last resorts and are subject to board review.

The school's anti-bullying/peace policy defines bullying specifically with examples and includes procedures for reporting, investigation, prevention, management, nonviolent communication, and student support.

8. GRADUATION AND HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

All 15 eighth graders graduated. Beginning the previous spring, school staff informed students and parents of high school options, testing requirements, early admission, and other sign-up dates throughout the year. Individual help was provided to students as needed. At this time, individual Downtown Montessori graduates plan to attend Ronald Reagan, St. Francis, St. Thomas More, Arrowhead Union, Cudahy, Carmen, High School of Health and Sciences, and Pius XI. One student was undecided at the time of this report.

At this time, Downtown Montessori does not have a formal method to track its graduates' high school achievement. The head of school gains information informally through contact with families and graduates who come back to visit.

C. STUDENT POPULATION

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 292 students in K3 through eighth grade.⁷ By the end of the year, no additional students enrolled, and nine had withdrawn. To protect student identity, Evident Change does not include results for groups of fewer than 10 students; there were too few withdrawals this

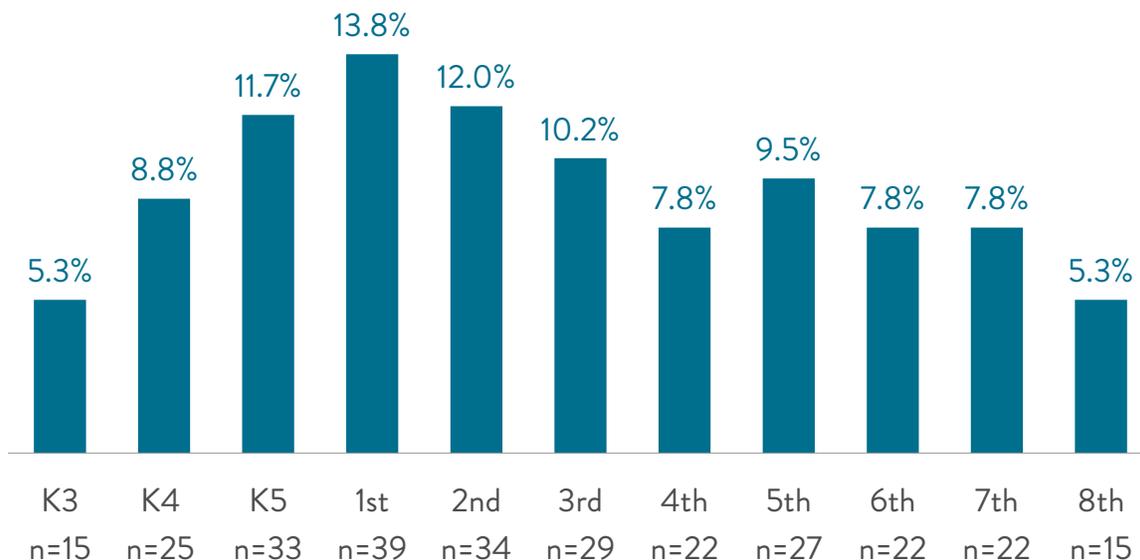
⁷ As of September 18, 2020. The third Friday of September is considered the beginning of the school year for student tracking purposes.

year to provide reasons. Of the students who began the year, 283 (96.9%) remained enrolled at the end of the school year.

At the time of school closure, 283 students were enrolled.

- Of these students, 192 (67.8%) were White, 41 (14.5%) were Latinx, 30 (10.6%) were Black or African American, 13 (4.6%) were Asian, three (1.1%) were American Indian/Alaska Native, and four (1.4%) were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
- There were 144 (50.9%) girls and 139 (49.1%) boys.
- A total of 14 (4.9%) students had special education needs. Nine had speech and language needs, four had other health impairment, one had specific learning disabilities, and one had an emotional and behavioral disorder.⁸
- There were 50 (17.7%) students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- There were 73 students in the Children’s House, 102 in lower elementary, 71 in upper elementary, and 37 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Downtown Montessori Academy Enrollment by Student Grade Level, 2020–21
N = 283



⁸ One student had needs in both specific learning disabilities and other health impairment.

On the last day of the 2019–20 academic year, 294 students attending Downtown Montessori were eligible for continued enrollment for 2020–21 (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 270 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2020. This represents a return rate of 91.8%, slightly lower than the return rate of 94.4% in the fall of 2019.

D. ACTIVITIES FOR CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The following is Downtown Montessori’s response to the activities recommended in the programmatic profile and educational performance report for the 2019–20 academic year. At that time, the recommendation was that the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2020–21 school year. Each recommendation and response by the school follows.

- **Recommendations Combined:** Develop and implement a virtual Montessori program and develop staff knowledge and strengths in virtual learning.

Response: The teaching staff made Montessori manipulative materials for students who would be using the materials if they were at school. These materials were sent to the homes of the younger students along with packets of printed materials. Packets of materials were sent to the students twice a month. The teachers used Google Classroom with the older students who were able to follow and complete their work online.

Over the summer of 2020 and into the fall, the school provided a consultant to work with teachers on how to use Google Classroom. Teachers prepared videos for parents on how to use Google Classroom. School staff used available online programs to access Montessori materials and attended webinars for implementing virtual learning, including hybrid approaches for Montessori classrooms. Teachers also learned to make their own videos for students. Some teachers made videos of task presentations for the parents to reinforce how Montessori activities are presented and then practiced. Internal support included grade-level meetings every week with the head and assistant head of school to discuss strategies for virtual learning as well as specific problem solving.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to focus staff training on trauma-sensitive schools.

Response: Four in-services were provided to staff throughout the school year: two in September, one in October, and one in June. The in-services were conducted by staff from SaintA. The first three sessions were virtual, and the last one was in person.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to focus on improving accuracy of monitoring data.

Response: School staff members are committed to using the data addendum to make sure they are providing the correct data.

After reviewing the information in this report, and in consultation with the school’s leader at the end-of-year interview in May 2021, Evident Change recommends the following activities for the 2021–22 school year.

- Renew the in-person Montessori community (students, parents, and teachers), including the vision and mission of the Montessori approach.
- Respond to and support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.
- Identify and implement methods of supporting individual student post-pandemic academic and social/emotional needs.
- Maintain focus on accuracy of monitoring data.

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–teacher conferences, 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 goals for attendance, parent–teacher conferences, and special education record-keeping. It also describes student progress as measured internally on student report cards and externally by standardized tests, such as the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment and Wisconsin Forward Exam.

A. ATTENDANCE

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 95.0%. This rate includes all students enrolled at any time during the school year and up until the last day school. “Present” was defined as being present for at least half the day; the learning memorandum in Appendix B provides more detail on how the school defined attendance during virtual instruction. The school achieved this goal, with students present on average 96.8% of the time this year.⁹ When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 99.9%.

By policy, Downtown Montessori does not suspend students.

⁹ Attendance rate is based on all 292 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.

B. PARENT–TEACHER CONFERENCES

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal for parents of all students to participate in scheduled parent–teacher conferences, which may occur in person or by phone. This year, the school scheduled two conference sessions: one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents of all students (100.0%) enrolled at the time of the fall and spring conferences attended. Therefore, the school has met its goal.

C. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT RECORDS

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students, including those who were evaluated but not eligible for services. During the year, 17 students received special education services.¹⁰ One student was reevaluated during the current year and dismissed from special education services. Two students withdrew from the school. An IEP was developed for 14 of the 17 new or returning special education students who required one.

In addition, Evident Change staff reviewed a representative number of files in the spring. This review revealed no special education compliance issues.

D. LOCAL MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula reflecting 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. 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’s expectation is that, at a minimum, schools establish local measures in literacy (i.e., reading), writing, math, and special education.

Results for K3 through K5 are not part of the overall local measure score for the CSRC scorecard because of the students’ young age; these results are combined. Where available, results in each academic content area for students in first through eighth grades are illustrated subsequently.

¹⁰ This does not include one student whose parents revoked consent for services at the beginning of the school year.

1. PROGRESS REPORTS FOR K3 THROUGH K5

Downtown Montessori uses the Montessori Progress reports in K3 through K5 to track students' progress on the following skills in these five areas.

- Language (spoken, written, reading, parts of speech, and word study)
- Mathematical development (numbers, counting, addition, subtraction, and multiplication)
- Sensorial discrimination (visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory)
- Cultural areas (globes, maps, and animals of the world)
- Practical life (care of person, grace, courtesy, and control and coordination)

Students are rated as “presented,” “practiced,” “improving,” or “proficient”¹¹ on each skill in each area. This year, the school established a goal that K3 through K5 students who attended all year would be proficient or show improvement (i.e., presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade-level skills in literacy and math. Students who were initially proficient would maintain proficiency.

This year, while the school addressed all areas mentioned above, progress data were provided in the areas of literacy (language) and math (mathematical development). There were 65 students who took both fall and spring assessments for literacy and math. Of those who took both assessments, 60 (92.3%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five math skills, and 54 (83.1%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five literacy skills (Table 1).

TABLE 1		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY		
K3–K5 FALL-TO-SPRING PROGRESS IN MATH AND LITERACY 2020–21		
N = 65		
SKILL	STUDENTS MET GOAL	%
Math		
Skill 1	65	100%
Skill 2	65	100%
Skill 3	63	96.9%
Skill 4	63	96.9%
Skill 5	63	96.9%
All five math skills	60	92.3%

¹¹ The school's learning memo equates “proficient” with “mastered.”

TABLE 1		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY		
K3–K5 FALL-TO-SPRING PROGRESS IN MATH AND LITERACY 2020–21		
N = 65		
SKILL	STUDENTS MET GOAL	%
Literacy		
Skill 1	59	90.8%
Skill 2	59	90.8%
Skill 3	57	87.7%
Skill 4	56	86.2%
Skill 5	61	93.8%
All five literacy skills	54	83.1%

2. LITERACY FOR FIRST THROUGH THIRD GRADERS

This year, first- through third-grade students were administered a grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage in the fall of 2020 and again in the spring of 2021.¹² The score consisted of a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade and third month of instruction would be 4.3).

The school established the following goals.

- At least 75.0% of students below grade level in the fall would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) on the spring Fountas and Pinnell.
- At least 80.0% of the students who are at their current grade level in the fall (e.g., a fourth-grade student in the fall at or above 4.1) would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) at the time of the spring test.
- Any student scoring at least one grade level above the student’s current grade level in the fall would maintain above-grade-level status in the spring (e.g., a fourth-grade student must have a score of 5.1 or higher to be above grade level).

¹² First-grade students were administered a passage by the end of November 2020 and second- through third-grade students by the end of October 2020; all were administered the spring assessment in May 2021.

A total of 92 first- through third-grade students took the literacy assessment in both the fall and spring. All 63 students (100.0%) below grade level in the fall gained at least a half a grade level by the spring; 25 (86.2%) of the 29 students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level by the spring; no student was above grade level in the fall (Table 2).

TABLE 2 DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 1ST – 3RD GRADE STUDENTS GRADE-LEVEL LITERACY SCORE WITH RESPECT TO CURRENT GRADE 2020–2021 N = 92			
FALL STATUS	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
Below Grade Level	63	63	100.0%
At Grade Level	29	25	86.2%
Total	92	88	95.7%

3. LITERACY FOR FOURTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Literacy skills for students in fourth through eighth grades were measured in the fall using the QRI, which helps teachers assess student skills in a variety of areas. All students in fourth through eighth grades were administered components of the QRI in the fall of 2020 (no later than November) and again in the spring of 2021. Student scores for all subtests are averaged and result in a QRI-tested grade level and a functional level of learning for that tested grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent) for the fall and spring assessments. Student scores for all subtests are averaged and result in a QRI-tested grade level and a functional level of learning for that tested grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent) for the fall and spring assessments. Progress was measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement were based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in Table 3. The school’s goal was that at least 90.0% of students would make progress as described in the table.

TABLE 3			
SPRING GOALS BASED ON THE FALL GRADE LEVEL AND FUNCTIONAL LEVEL STATUS			
FALL FUNCTIONAL LEVEL	FALL GRADE LEVEL STATUS		
	BELOW GRADE LEVEL	AT GRADE LEVEL	ABOVE GRADE LEVEL
Frustration	Frustration at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	Maintain above-grade-level status, regardless of functional level
Instructional	Instructional at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	
Independent	Independent at the next grade level	Instructional at the next grade level	

A total of 100 students were assessed in both the fall and spring. Of them, 28 tested at the frustration level, 52 tested at the instructional level, and 20 tested at the independent level in the fall. (All were at grade level; none was below or above grade level in the fall.) Of the 100 students considered in the school’s outcomes, 50 (50.0%) students met or exceeded their literacy goals during the school year (Table 4).

TABLE 4			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 4TH – 8TH GRADE STUDENTS LITERACY GOALS N = 100			
FALL FUNCTIONAL LEVEL (ALL AT GRADE LEVEL)	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
Frustration	28	13	46.4%
Instructional	52	31	59.6%
Independent	20	6	30.0%
Total	100	50	50.0%

4. LITERARY PERFORMANCE FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Overall, 138 (71.9%) of 192 first- through eighth-grade students met their literacy local measure goal.

5. WRITING SKILLS FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Students were assessed on two or more of the Six Traits of Writing. First through third graders focused on organization and conventions; fourth through sixth graders focused on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions; and seventh and eighth graders focused on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence

fluency, voice, and conventions. Student skills on each trait were assessed on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced), and the total for all traits was averaged and converted into an overall writing level. The school set a goal that all students who received an average score below 4.0 in the fall would increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2021, and students with an average of 4.0 or higher in the fall would score 4.0 or higher in the spring.

This year, 201 first- through eighth-grade students were tested in the fall and the spring. Of 41 students who received an average score of 4.0 or higher in the fall, 35 (85.4%) maintained an average score equal to or above 4.0 in the spring. Of 160 students who averaged below 4.0 in the fall, 130 (81.3%) improved by at least 0.5 in the spring. Overall, 165 (82.1%) of 201 students demonstrated progress, falling short of the school’s goal of 100.0%.

6. MATH SKILLS FOR FIRST THROUGH SIXTH GRADERS

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Each math skill was rated as “Minimal: Needs Support,” “Basic: Progressing,” “Proficient: Meets Expectation,” and “Advanced: Mastery.” The school’s goal was that all students enrolled for the year would maintain proficiency (if proficient or above in the fall) or show improvement in at least three (60.0%) out of five grade-level math skills (if minimal or basic in the fall). Fall and spring scores were provided for 167 first through sixth graders who attended all year. By the end of the year, 148 (88.6%) students maintained proficiency or showed progress in 60.0% of skills (Table 5).

GRADE	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
1st	38	38	100.0%
2nd	34	34	100.0%
3rd	29	29	100.0%
4th	21	15	71.4%
5th	25	21	84.0%
6th	20	11	55.0%
Total	167	148	88.6%

7. MATH SKILLS FOR SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS

Math progress for seventh and eighth graders was examined using IXL, an evaluation program that determines grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards. Grade level is established when a student demonstrates proficiency in required grade-level standards using a 75.0% threshold. By the end of spring, 80.0% of the seventh- and eighth-grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall were expected to improve at least half a grade level. Students above grade level in the fall were expected to maintain above-grade-level status in the spring. Of the 34 students tested in the fall and spring, eight (23.5%) improved by half a grade level or maintained their grade-level status in the spring. Due to the small number, results are not reported out by fall performance group.

8. LITERARY PERFORMANCE FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Overall, 156 (77.6%) of 201 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math, falling short of the 100.0% goal.

9. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT PROGRESS

The school set a goal for special education students to demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals. To measure this goal, the school decided that students with active IEPs who had been at the school for one entire IEP year would demonstrate progress by meeting 60% of their IEP goals at 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.) There were 12 students with active IEPs for an entire IEP year at the school, and five (41.7%) met or exceeded 60.0% of their IEP goals at the time of the annual review or reevaluation, falling short of the goal.

E. EXTERNAL STANDARDIZED MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

DPI requires all schools to administer a DPI-approved reading achievement test to K4 through second-grade students. In 2016, the CSRC selected the PALS assessment for students in first and second grade at all city-chartered schools; Downtown Montessori also chose PALS to meet the DPI requirement for students in K4 and K5.

For students in third through eighth grades, DPI requires the Forward Exam. For the 2020–21 school year, DPI was granted a federal waiver suspending the accountability requirement that achievement results be based on 95% of students. Because standardized tests could not be administered remotely, families were allowed to opt out of the testing requirement this year.¹³ Therefore, these results include only students who completed the test and should not be compared to results from previous or subsequent years. These tests and results are described in the following sections.

1. PALS¹⁴

The PALS assessment aligns with both the Common Core English standards and the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. It is available in three versions: PALS-PreK for K4 students, PALS-K for K5 students, and PALS Plus for first and second graders.

a. PALS-PreK

PALS-PreK includes five required tasks (name writing, uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness). Two additional tasks (lowercase alphabet recognition and letter sounds) are completed only by students who reach an adequate score on the uppercase alphabet task.

PALS-PreK does not have a summed score benchmark because the purpose is to learn students' abilities 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. There is no summed score benchmark for the PALS-PreK.

¹³ More detailed information about testing requirements and families' right to opt out of testing can be found at <https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/COVID-19/FAQ#parent%20opt-out>

¹⁴ Information about the PALS assessments comes from <https://palsresource.info/wisconsin> and <https://pals.virginia.edu>

A total of 23 K4 students completed the five required tasks of the PALS-PreK in the spring; the number of students above the spring developmental range for each is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6 DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PALS-PREK FOR K4 STUDENTS STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE THE SPRING DEVELOPMENTAL RANGE: 2020–2021 N = 23		
TASK	STUDENTS	%
Name writing	21	91.3%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	14	60.9%
Lowercase alphabet recognition ¹⁵	13	100.0%
Letter sounds ¹⁶	13	100.0%
Beginning sound awareness	22	95.7%
Print and word awareness	21	91.3%
Rhyme awareness	21	91.3%

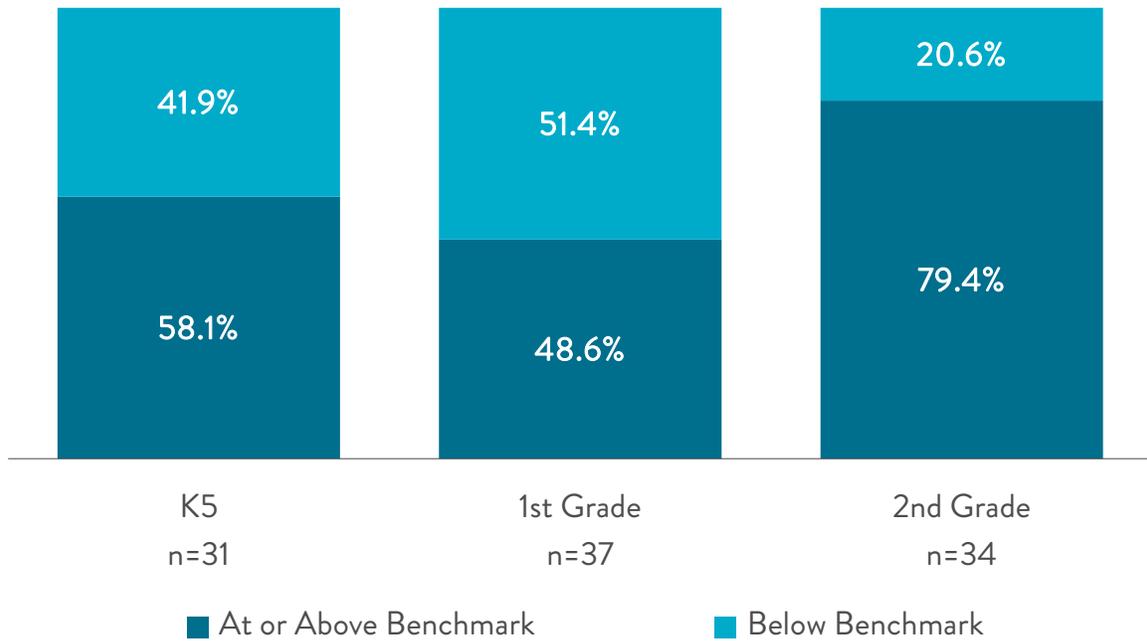
b. PALS-K and PALS Plus

The PALS-K and PALS Plus are administered in the fall and spring. Both tests result in a summed score that can be compared to a reading readiness benchmark set for each of the test administrations. Evident Change examined spring reading readiness for students who were enrolled for the entire year and completed the spring tests. At the time of the spring assessment, 58.1% of 31 K5 students, 48.6% of 37 first graders, and 79.4% of 34 second graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark for their grade level (Figure 2).

¹⁵ Students who score 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task complete the lowercase alphabet recognition task. Eight students had scores for the lowercase task in the fall despite not scoring 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task; these students are not included in the results.

¹⁶ Students who score 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task complete the letter sounds task. Eight students had scores for the letter sounds task in the fall despite not scoring 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task or a 16 or higher on the preceding uppercase alphabet task. Another student did not take the assessment despite qualifying. These students are not included in the results.

Figure 2
Downtown Montessori Spring 2021 PALS Results
N = 102



2. WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM FOR THIRD THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

The Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state’s standardized test for English/language arts (ELA) and math for third through eighth graders; science for fourth and eighth graders; and social studies for fourth, eighth, and tenth graders. Scores for each test are translated into one of four levels: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. The Forward Exam is administered in the spring of each school year.

In the spring of 2021, 98 students in third through eighth grades who were enrolled since the start of the year (third Friday in September) completed the ELA and math assessments. Of these students, 65 (66.3%) were proficient or advanced in ELA, and 48 (49.0%) were proficient or advanced in math. Results by grade level are presented in Figures 3 and 4. Evident Change does not report results in which the student population is less than 10 to protect student confidentiality; therefore, these figures exclude the eighth-grade results.

Figure 3
Downtown Montessori
Forward Exam English/Language Arts Assessment 2020–21¹⁷

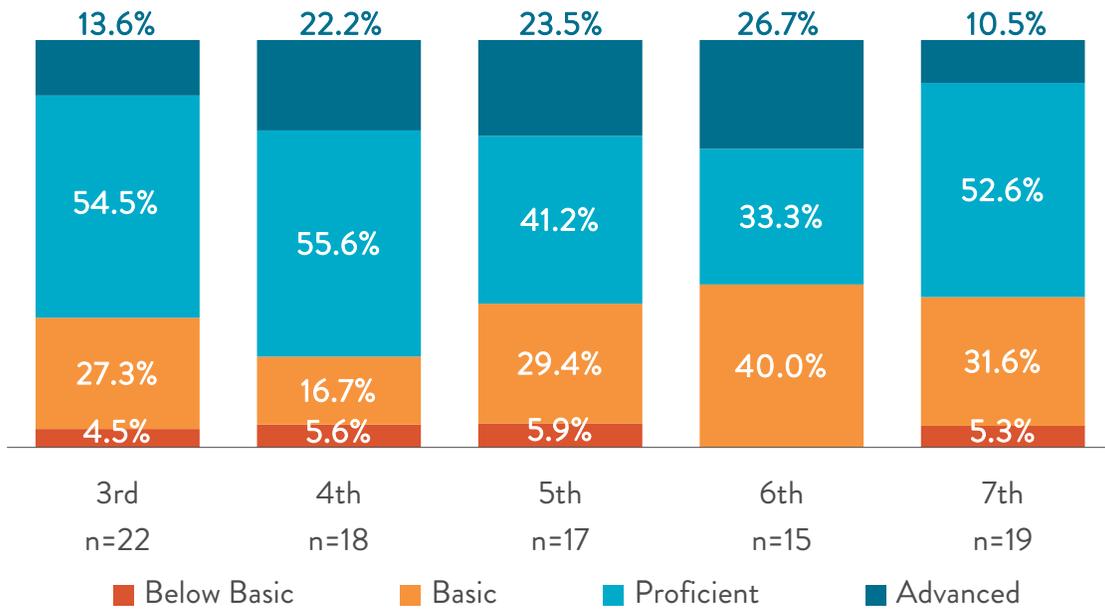
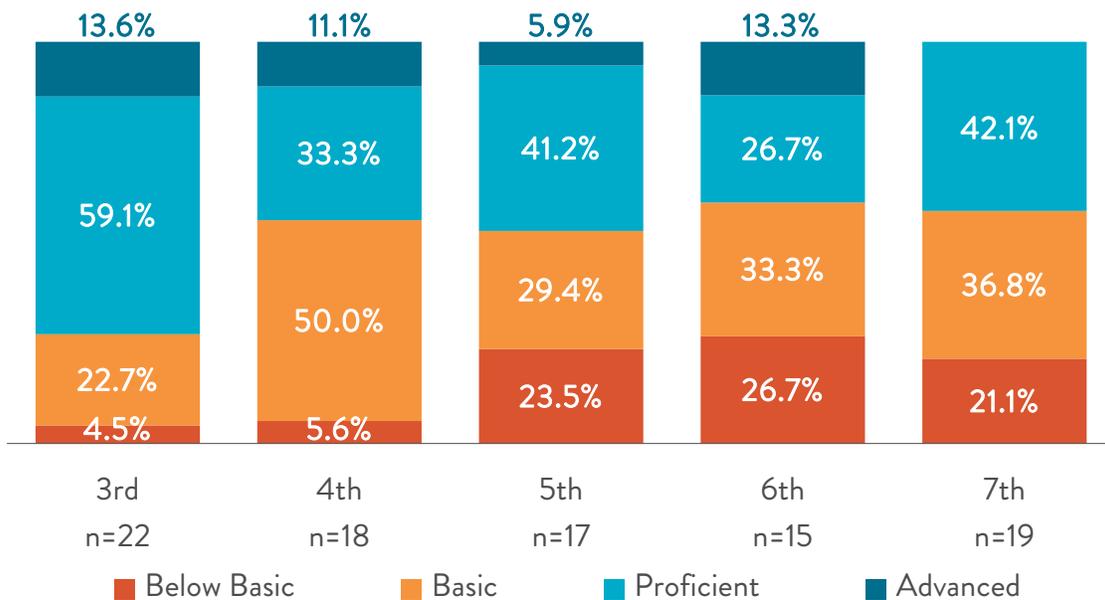


Figure 4
Downtown Montessori
Forward Exam Math Assessment: 2020–21¹⁸

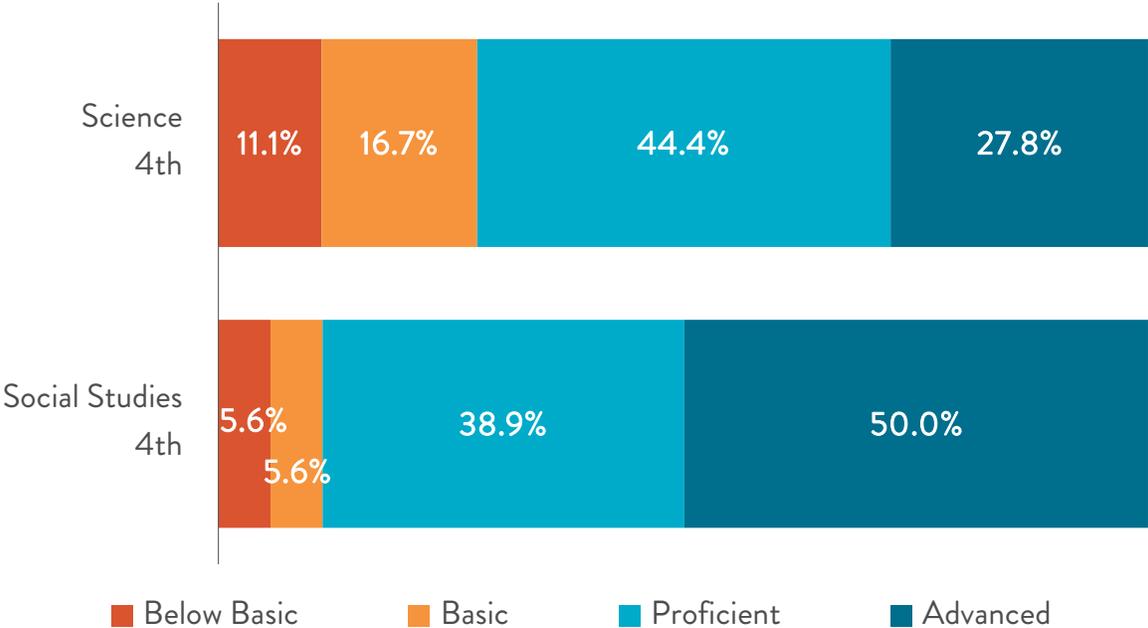


¹⁷ Some percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

¹⁸ Some percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Among 25 fourth and eighth graders, 19 (76.0%) were proficient or advanced in social studies, and 16 (64.0%) were proficient or advanced in science. Results by grade level appear in Figure 5. Evident Change does not report results where the student population is less than 10 to protect student confidentiality; therefore, these figures exclude the eighth-grade results.

Figure 5
Downtown Montessori
Forward Exam Social Studies and Science Assessment: 2020–21¹⁹
N = 18



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. Students in K4 through second grade take the PALS reading assessment. The PALS summed score benchmark indicates whether a student needs additional reading assistance, not that the student is reading at grade level. Additionally, there are three versions of the test, with different formats, sections, and scoring. Because only students who are in first and second grade during two consecutive years complete the same version of the test, Evident Change typically examines only year-to-year results for a cohort of students who were in first grade in the spring of one year and second grade in the spring of the following year. The CSRC’s

¹⁹ Some numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.

performance expectation is that at least 75.0% of students at or above the summed score benchmark in first grade would remain at or above the summed score benchmark as second graders in the subsequent school year.

Students in third through eighth grade take the Forward Exam in the spring. The exam results from two consecutive school years are typically used to assess student progress. Expectations for year-to-year progress on the exam were adopted by the CSRC for the 2019–20 school year. The CSRC’s performance expectation is that at least 60% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in ELA the prior year would maintain proficiency, and at least 50% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year would maintain proficiency.

DPI withdrew the requirement for schools to administer any standardized tests for 2019–20; therefore, year-to-year progress could not be measured from 2019–20 to 2020–21.

G. CSRC SCHOOL SCORECARD

In the fall of 2012, after a three-year pilot, the CSRC adopted its first school scorecard. It included multiple measures of student academic progress, including performance on standardized tests and local measures and point-in-time academic achievement and engagement elements, such as attendance and student and teacher retention and return rates. Due to significant testing changes, the scorecard was revised, and a second pilot was initiated in 2014–15.

In February 2020, when three years of comparable data on all elements in the second pilot scorecard were available, the CSRC reviewed data trends and made minor modifications to the scoring rubric. The changes place more emphasis on year-to-year student progress and less on point-in-time measures in order to capture a more realistic picture of the school’s impact on student growth over time.²⁰ Like the previous versions, the updated scorecard was designed to monitor school improvement from year to year and will be used to guide decisions about a school’s status as a city-chartered school for subsequent school years. See Appendix D for detailed information on the revised scorecard.

²⁰ The CSRC continues to focus on the schools’ impact on student achievement over time; therefore, the changes assigned more points to the progress indicators rather than point-in-time assessments. For the elementary scorecard, the year-to-year progress for students below proficiency in ELA and math were increased by 2.5 points, and the point-in-time ELA and math proficiencies were decreased by 2.5 points. For the high school scorecard, the first two items related to Aspire were merged, two items related to grade promotion were given 2.5 extra points, and point-in-time measures on Aspire in English and math were decreased by 2.5 points each.

Because data to examine year-to-year student progress were not available, the CSRC scorecard contains partial outcome data this year. The school's score should not be compared with the score for any previous or subsequent year. Downtown Montessori scored 77.3% of the 59.0 possible scorecard points. These results should not be compared with scores in previous or subsequent school years.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 22nd year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements, and this year it has met or substantially met all the applicable contract requirements. Evident Change recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting, based on contract compliance as well as the school's trend data.

APPENDICES

- A. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CHART**
- B. STUDENT LEARNING MEMORANDUM**
- C. TREND INFORMATION**
- D. CSRC 2020–21 SCHOOL SCORECARD**

APPENDIX A: CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CHART

TABLE A			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY			
OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2020–21			
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. 2–3	Met
Section I, V	The school will provide a copy of the calendar prior to the end of the previous school year.	p. 5	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods.	pp. 2–3	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 17–22	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. 11–17	Met
	<p>Academic criterion #2: Year-to-year achievement measures for students who are proficient. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 60% will maintain proficiency.</p> <p>a. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 50% will maintain proficiency.</p> <p>b. Second-grade students at or above summed score benchmark in reading (PALS): At least 75.0% will remain at or above.</p>		<p>a. N/A</p> <p>b. N/A</p>

TABLE A

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY
OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2020-21**

SECTION OF CONTRACT	CONTRACT PROVISION	REPORT REFERENCE PAGE	CONTRACT PROVISION MET OR NOT MET
Section I, D	<p>Academic criterion #3: Year-to-year achievement measures: progress for students below proficient.</p> <p>a. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.</p> <p>b. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.</p>	N/A	<p>a. N/A</p> <p>b. N/A</p>
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	p. 6	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	pp. 4-5	Substantially Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 7-9, 11	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures	pp. 6-7	Met

N/A: Not applicable this year due to the lack of year-to-year data because of early school closure in spring of 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

APPENDIX B: STUDENT LEARNING MEMORANDUM

STUDENT LEARNING MEMORANDUM FOR DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY

To: NCCD Children’s Research Center and Charter School Review Committee
From: Downtown Montessori Academy
Re: Learning Memo for the 2020-21 Academic Year
Date: November 10, 2020

This memorandum of understanding includes the *minimum* measurable outcomes required by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) to monitor and report students’ academic progress. These outcomes have been defined by the leadership and/or staff at the school in consultation with staff from the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC) and the CSRC. The school will record student data in Skyward or MS Excel spreadsheets and provide the data to CRC, the educational monitoring agent contracted by the CSRC. Additionally, paper test printouts or data directly from the test publisher will be provided to CRC for all standardized tests unless CRC is able to access the results directly from the test publisher. All required elements related to the outcomes below are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section of this memo. CRC requests electronic submission of year-end data on the fifth day following the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 11th, 2020.

Enrollment

The school will record enrollment dates for every student. Individual student information and actual enrollment dates will be added to the school’s database upon admission. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Termination/Withdrawal

The exit date and reason for every student leaving the school will be determined and recorded in the school’s database. A specific reason is required for each student expulsion. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Attendance

The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95%.

During virtual instruction: A student will be considered in attendance for the day when they exhibit one of the following:

- Evidence of daily work,
- Submission or completion of assignment, module, or exam,
- Google Classroom log-in,
- Weekly progress reports,
- Attendance taken in synchronous event(s),
 - » Student is present during event,
 - » Educator collects evidence that student accessed the event (if recorded),
- Contact or activity logs,
- Pacing charts or adequate course progress,
- Daily check-in with student (virtual meeting, email connection, phone)
- Regular weekly check-ins with parents/guardians.

When face-to face instruction resumes, attendance will be defined as: Any student who attends school for at least half of the day will be counted as present.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Parent/Guardian Participation

A parent or guardian of every student enrolled at the time of each scheduled parent-teacher conference will participate in that conference, which may occur in person, virtually, or by phone. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Special Education Needs Students

The school will maintain updated records for all students who received special education services at the school, including students who were evaluated but not eligible for services. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Academic Achievement: Local Measures²¹

Children’s House Literacy and Math

Students attending the Children’s House (K3, K4, and K5) will demonstrate progress in acquiring skills in the areas of math and literacy. Each student’s development will be reported to his/her parents on report cards, and this information will be collected in Skyward. The following scale will be used to track skill levels and changes in skill acquisition.

²¹ Local measures of academic achievement are classroom- or school-level measures that monitor student progress throughout the year (formative assessment) and can be summarized at the end of the year (summative assessment) to demonstrate academic growth. They are reflective of each school’s unique philosophy and curriculum. The CSRC requires local measures of academic achievement in the areas of literacy, math, writing, and IEP goals.

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

Students will be assessed on all five math skills and five literacy representative skills in the fall. Students who attend all year will be proficient or show improvement (Presented to Practiced, Practiced to Improving, or Presented to Improving) in grade-level skills in each of the areas by the end of the year. Students with initial proficiency in a skill will maintain proficiency.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Elementary and Adolescent Program Literacy

Second- through third-grade students will be administered a grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage by the end of October 2020, and again in May 2021. The first graders will be tested by the end of November 2020 and again in May 2021. The score will be reported as a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade, third month of instruction = 4.3). Any student scoring below the first-grade level will have a score of K for kindergarten without a month indicator.

- At least 75% of the students below grade level in the fall will gain at least half a grade level (0.5) on the spring Fountas and Pinnell.
- At least 80% of the students who are at their current grade level in the fall (e.g., a fourth-grade student in the fall at or above 4.1) will gain at least half a grade level (0.5) at the time of the spring test.
- Any student who scores at least one grade level above their current grade level in the fall will maintain above-grade-level status in the spring (e.g., a fourth-grade student must have a score of 5.1 or above to be above grade level).

All students in fourth through eighth grades will be administered components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) no later than the end of the first quarter (November 2020) and again in the spring. Progress will be measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement will be set based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in the table below. At least 90% of students will make progress as described below.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Fall Functional Level	Fall Grade Level Status		
	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Frustration	Frustration at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	Maintain above-grade-level status, regardless of functional level
Instructional	Instructional at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	
Independent	Independent at the next grade level	Instructional at the next grade level	

Elementary and Adolescent Program Writing

Writing skills will be assessed in the fall and spring of the school year using the Six Traits of Writing.²² Both writing samples will have grade-level prompts based on grade-level topics with the narrative genre.²³

There are a total of six traits scored on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced). Different grades have a different number of traits. Grade levels and the number of traits chosen for them follow.

- First through third graders will focus on organization and conventions. (Scores of two traits to be averaged)
- Fourth through sixth graders will focus on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions. (Scores of four traits will be averaged)
- Seventh and eighth graders will focus on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. (Scores of six traits will be averaged)

The average score of these traits for each sample will be used to measure student progress toward the goal.²⁴

All students who receive an average score below four in the fall will increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2020. Students with an average of four or above in the fall will score four or above in the spring.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

²² The six traits of writing are organization, fluency, conventions, ideas, voice, and word choice.

²³ Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.

²⁴ NOTE: The highest possible average score is 5.0.

Elementary and Adolescent Program Math

First Through Sixth Graders

Students in first through sixth grades will demonstrate progress in acquiring the grade-level Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core State Standards math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition.

- 1—Minimal: Needs support
- 2—Basic: Progressing
- 3—Proficient: Meets expectation
- 4—Advanced: Mastery

Students will be assessed on all five representative skills by the end of November, 2020. Students who attend all year will show improvement (from minimal to basic or basic to proficient in at least three out of five grade-level math indicators of math growth by the end of the year). Students with initial proficiency in a skill will maintain proficiency or improve to advanced.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Seventh and Eighth Graders

All seventh- and eighth-grade students will be given a benchmark assessment in the fall, by the end of October 2020; and in the spring, by the end of May 2021. This benchmark assessment will be completed using IXL an evaluation program, resulting in a grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards. Grade-level equivalency is established when the student demonstrates proficiency in the required standards for a particular grade level. The assessment uses a 75% threshold to determine proficiency.

By the end of spring, 80% of the seventh- and eighth-grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall will improve at least half of a grade level. For example, a seventh-grade student who receives a grade-level equivalency score of 6.3 will improve to a score of at least 6.8.

Students who test above grade level in the fall will remain above grade level in the spring.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Students with Special Education Needs

Students with active individualized education programs (IEPs) who have been at the school for one entire IEP year will demonstrate progress by meeting 60% of their IEP goals at the time of their annual review. 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.

Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for K4 Through Second-Grade Students

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) will be administered to all K4 and K5 in the spring and first and second-grade students in the fall and spring of each school year within the timeframe required by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Wisconsin Forward Exam for Third- Through Eighth-Grade Students

The Wisconsin Forward Exam will be administered on an annual basis within the timeframe specified by DPI. This standardized assessment will produce an English/language arts score and a math score for all third through eighth graders. Additionally, fourth- and eighth-grade students will complete the science and social studies tests. Data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Year-to-Year Achievement²⁵

1. CRC will report results from the 2020-21 Wisconsin Forward Exam. In addition, progress will be reported for students who completed the Forward Exam in two consecutive years at the same school. When sufficient year-to-year data are available, the CSRC will set its expectations for student progress, and these expectations may be effective in subsequent years.
2. The CSRC’s expectation for students maintaining reading readiness on the PALS is that at least 75% of students who were in first grade in the 2019-20 school year and met the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2020 will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2021.

²⁵ The CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 and K5.

APPENDIX C: TREND INFORMATION

The following tables present five-year trends for enrollment and measure of academic progress. In 2019–20 and 2020–21, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of student education including attendance, enrollment, and academic assessment. Therefore, while data from these two years is included in the trend tables, results should not be compared with results from prior years.

TABLE C1					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY ENROLLMENT					
YEAR	ENROLLED AT START OF SCHOOL YEAR	ENROLLED DURING YEAR	WITHDREW	NUMBER ENROLLED AT END OF YEAR	RETENTION (ENROLLED FOR ENTIRE YEAR)
2016–17	274	4	4	274	270 (98.5%)
2017–18	286	2	2	286	284 (99.3%)
2018–19	299	2	7	294	292 (97.7%)
2019–20	313	2	4	311	309 (98.7%)
2020–21	292	0	9	283	283 (96.9%)

TABLE C2	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT RETURN RATES	
SCHOOL YEAR	RATE
2016–17	87.1%
2017–18	90.5%
2018–19	91.4%
2019–20	94.4%
2020–21	91.8%

TABLE C3	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES	
SCHOOL YEAR	RATE
2016-17	95.2%
2017-18	95.5%
2018-19	95.6%
2019-20	94.2%
2020-21	96.8%

TABLE C4	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PARENT PARTICIPATION	
SCHOOL YEAR	% PARTICIPATED
2016-17	100.0%
2017-18	
2018-19	
2019-20	
2020-21	

TABLE C5	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETENTION	
SCHOOL YEAR	RETENTION RATE: EMPLOYED ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR
2016-17	100.0%
2017-18	
2018-19	
2019-20	
2020-21	

TABLE C6

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY
TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETURN RATES**

TEACHER TYPE	NUMBER AT END OF PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR	RETURNED FIRST DAY OF CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR	RETURN RATE
2016-17			
Classroom teachers	13	10	76.9%
All instructional staff	17	13	76.5%
2017-18			
Classroom teachers	13	13	100.0%
All instructional staff	16	16	100.0%
2018-19			
Classroom teachers	14	14	100.0%
All instructional staff	19	19	100.0%
2019-20			
Classroom teachers	12	12	100.0%
All instructional staff	20	19	95.0%
2020-21			
Classroom teachers	13	11	84.6%
All instructional staff	21	19	90.5%

Note: Includes only teachers who were eligible to return (i.e., who were offered a position for fall).

APPENDIX D: CSRC 2020–21 SCHOOL SCORECARD

CITY OF MILWAUKEE CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE SCHOOL SCORECARD

r: 06/20

K–8TH GRADE

STUDENT READING READINESS: GRADES 1–2

• PALS—% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0
• PALS—% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0



STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3–8

• Forward Exam reading—% maintained proficient	5.0
• Forward Exam math—% maintained proficient	5.0
• Forward Exam reading—% below proficient who progressed	12.5
• Forward Exam math—% below proficient who progressed	12.5



LOCAL MEASURES

• % met reading	6.25
• % met math	6.25
• % met writing	6.25
• % met special education	6.25



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3–8

• Forward Exam reading—% proficient or advanced	2.5
• Forward Exam math—% proficient or advanced	2.5



ENGAGEMENT

• Student attendance	5.0
• 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

• ACT Aspire—% 10th graders who maintained benchmark on composite score or progressed at least one point	15.0
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	7.5
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	7.5
• DPI graduation rate	5.0



POSTSECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 AND 12

• Postsecondary acceptance for graduates (college, university, technical school, military)	10.0
• % of 11th/12th graders tested	2.5
• % of graduates with ACT composite score of 19.6 or higher	2.5



LOCAL MEASURES

• % met reading	5.0
• % met math	5.0
• % met writing	5.0
• % met special education	5.0



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 9 AND 10

• ACT Aspire English—% students at or above spring benchmark	2.5
• ACT Aspire math—% students at or above spring benchmark	2.5



ENGAGEMENT

• Student attendance	5.0
• Student reenrollment	5.0
• Student retention	5.0
• Teacher retention	5.0
• Teacher return*	5.0



*Teachers not offered continuing contracts or who moved farther than 25 miles from any Milwaukee County border due to a transfer of a family member are excluded when calculating this rate.

Note: To protect student identity, Evident Change does not report data on scorecard items with fewer than 10 students. These cells will be reported as not available (N/A) on the scorecard, and the total score will be calculated to reflect each school's denominator.

TABLE D

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY
CSRC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K THROUGH 8TH GRADE) SCORECARD REVISED FOR 2020-21**

AREA	MEASURE	MAXIMUM POINTS	% TOTAL SCORE	PERFORMANCE	POINTS EARNED
Student Reading Readiness: PALS, 1st – 2nd Grades	% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0	10.0%	48.6%	1.9
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0		N/A	N/A
Student Academic Progress: 3rd – 8th Grades	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	35.0%	Not available	
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0			
	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % below proficient who progressed	12.5			
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % below proficient who progressed	12.5			
Local Measures*	% met reading	6.25	25.0%	71.9%	4.5
	% met math	6.25		77.6%	4.9
	% met writing	6.25		82.1%	5.1
	% met special education	6.25		41.7%	2.6
Student Academic Achievement: 3rd – 8th Grades	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % at/above proficient	2.5	5.0%	66.3%	1.7
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % at/above proficient	2.5		49.0%	1.2
Engagement	Student attendance rate	5.0	25.0%	96.8%	4.8
	Student return rate	5.0		91.8%	4.6
	Student retention	5.0		96.9%	4.8
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		90.5%	4.5
Total Possible Points		59.0			45.6
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCORECARD PERCENTAGE					77.3%