

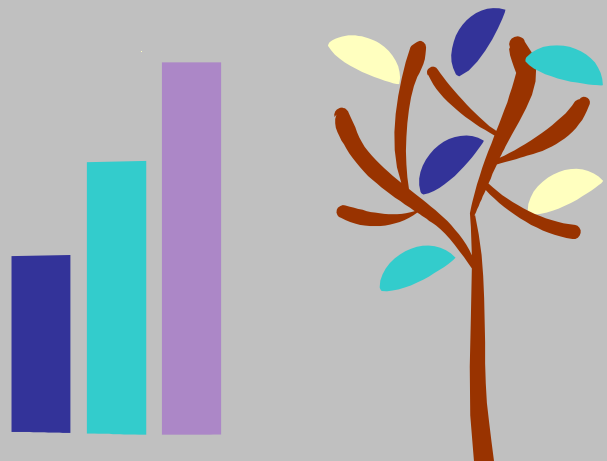
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.

Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

2005-06 School Year

Report Date: September 2006

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Prepared for:

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.

2319 East Kenwood Blvd.

Milwaukee, WI 53211

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
for
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
Eighth Year of Operation as a City of Milwaukee Charter School
2005-2006

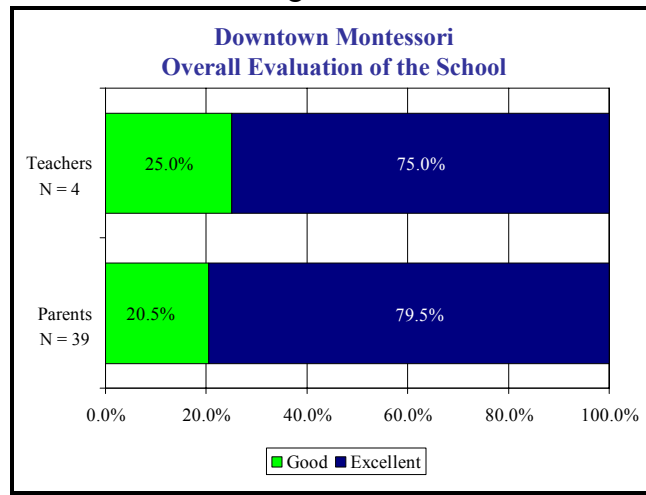
This eighth annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. charter school is a result of the intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and the Children’s Research Center (CRC). Based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report, CRC has determined the following:

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY¹

Downtown Montessori has met all of the provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent requirements of the CSRC. See Appendix A for an outline of specific contract provision compliance information.

II. PARENT, TEACHER, STUDENT, AND BOARD MEMBER SATISFACTION

Figure ES1



- The two board members interviewed mentioned that the school needed a larger facility, a foreign language added to the curriculum, and increased parent involvement.
- Teachers suggested that there was a need for a larger physical space and more resources to support a full-time assistant director, more planning time, and a librarian.

¹ See Appendix A for a list of each educationally related contract provision, page references, and a description of whether or not each provision was met.

III. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

A. Local Measures

1. Educationally Related Outcomes

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, Downtown Montessori identified measurable educationally related outcomes in the following areas:

- Attendance;
- Student demographics such as student return rate and special education requirements; and
- Parent involvement.

The school achieved its goals in all of these outcomes.

2. Local Measures of Academic Progress

The CSRC requires that the school 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:

- By the end of the school year, pre-K and kindergarten students reached steady progress in or mastery of the following skills:
 - ▶ 98.5% of the practical life skills;
 - ▶ 92.1% of the sensorial discrimination skills;
 - ▶ 79.6% of the math skills;
 - ▶ 89.7% of the language skills; and
 - ▶ 81.5% of the cultural skills.
- By the end of the school year, first through sixth graders, on average, were "successful" in:
 - ▶ 81.5% of language skills; and
 - ▶ 66.2% of math skills.
- McGraw-Hill Reading Program results for 38 first through sixth graders indicated that:
 - ▶ Most students' overall reading performance was proficient (57.9%) or advanced (34.2%);

- ▶ 52.6% of the students exhibited proficient writing skills, and 23.7% of the students exhibited advanced writing skills.

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.

- SDRT multiple-year advancement results indicated that second and third graders advanced an average of 2.2 GLEs in reading.
- WKCE-CRT results were not reportable due to the small cohort size.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The school fully addressed the recommendations made in its 2004-05 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance report. To continue a focused school improvement plan, it is recommended that the focus of activities for the 2006-07 year include the following:

- Increase marketing and advertising relative to the school's move and increased space.
- Develop plans to increase the student population at the school in order to extend the program to eighth grade. With this accomplished, develop the curriculum to include higher-level mathematics and foreign language.
- Fully implement Powerschool, including the capacity to generate electronic reports. Identify which electronic reports can be used to provide data for monitoring purposes.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is the eighth annual program monitoring report to address education outcomes at Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc., a City of Milwaukee charter school.² As one component of the monitoring program undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), this report was prepared as a result of a contract between the CSRC and the Children's Research Center (CRC).

The process used to gather the information in this report included the following:

- A site visit, wherein a structured interview was conducted with the program director. Critical documents were reviewed and copies were obtained for CRC files, and classroom instruction was observed with notes recorded on student-teacher interactions. Additional scheduled and unscheduled site visits were made to observe classroom activities, student-teacher interactions, parent-staff exchanges, and overall school operations.
- CRC read case files for selected special education students to ensure Individual Education Programs (IEP) were up-to-date.
- CRC conducted face-to-face interviews with all of the teachers, randomly selected students, and two members of the school's board of directors.
- CRC developed a survey to gather information from parents about the school. The school distributed and collected surveys. CRC then made follow-up telephone calls to parents who had not submitted a completed survey and offered to conduct the survey over the telephone.
- An end-of-the-year structured interview with the program director.
- Obtaining a copy of Downtown Montessori's database. The school supplied report cards and standardized tests results information on paper.
- Compiling and analyzing results.

² The City of Milwaukee Common Council chartered five schools in the 2005-06 academic year.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.

Address: 2319 East Kenwood Blvd.³
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Telephone: (414) 332-8214

Program Director: Ms. Virginia Flynn

A. Philosophy and Description of Educational Methodology

1. Montessori Approach

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. (Downtown Montessori) delivers a valid Montessori program, as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or American Montessori Society. The Montessori approach is a planned academic program, based on the educational model developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, in which each child's inborn desire to learn is nurtured through an academic program that follows the natural path of a child's development. In the Montessori environment, the child is exposed to a wide range of educational opportunities and activities that follow a developmental progression. Individual learning is emphasized by offering a series of increasingly challenging exercises aimed at allowing students to develop their skills by utilizing a discovery, rather than a didactic, approach.

As described in its 2005-06 *Parent-Student Handbook*, Downtown Montessori is divided into two levels of programming—the Children's House and the Elementary Program. The Children's House contains the Montessori Primary Program and is open to students ages two and a half through six years old. Children age five on or before September 1 may attend full-day Montessori sessions.

³ On September 1, 2006, the school moved to 2705 South Graham Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207. The new telephone number is (414) 744-6005.

The Children's House provides a prepared environment to meet the needs of children, where they 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.

At the elementary level, the school continues to provide multi-age grouping in an environment that encourages cooperative learning and self-discipline for first through sixth grade students. The Elementary Program is based on "Great Stories" and explores everything from the microscopic to the cosmic, allowing children to discover the interrelatedness of all things. The program builds on the foundations of the Children's House program, where the children learn through discovery, experimentation, and exploration at an individualized pace. An interdisciplinary approach to learning is also emphasized, as is respect for self and community. Materials and group activities 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; they learn ways of inquiring, investigating, and resolving questions.

Extensions of classroom study are experienced through community involvement, which gradually enables students to grow from classroom citizens to citizens in society at large. The school is also a member of the Urban Ecology Center. This year-long program provides a coordinated science and environmental program for students at the Urban Ecology Center located on the Milwaukee River.

2. Teacher Information

During the 2005-06 academic year, there were four teachers in four classrooms at Downtown Montessori. The classrooms included two Children's House classrooms for three- to six-year-olds (or K3 through K5) and two elementary classrooms. All four teachers held valid Wisconsin Department of Education (DPI) licenses or permits. In addition, all four DPI-licensed teachers held Montessori certification. The school employed two classroom assistants (one licensed as a special education aide) to assist in the classrooms as needed.

Montessori teachers serve as student guides, with the students working at their own pace. The areas of discovery are ordered into a sequentially progressive curriculum that is commensurate with the development of the child.

At the time of this report, the school had not submitted a list of the in-services provided for the teachers during the 2005-06 year.

3. Parental Involvement

Because parents bring their children into the school building each day, they have a unique opportunity for daily communication with the teachers. The *Parent-Student Handbook* states that the school encourages and expects all parents to spend at least three hours per year of school-based service activities and to visit their child's classroom at least once a year. Teachers encouraged parental involvement by sending a letter and calendar home at the start of each month. Teacher email addresses were shared with parents, and Downtown Montessori held two parent conferences during the academic year, as well as several parent informational meetings and programs. Downtown Montessori also published the annual *Parent-Student Handbook*.

Parents attended parent education nights (one for the Children's House and one for the Elementary Program) with their children's teachers at the beginning of the school year. Parental involvement was also encouraged throughout the year with opportunities for parents to observe

demonstrations of Montessori equipment, to assist with field trips, to read to their children, and to have access to classrooms and teachers at any time. The year ended with an all-school family picnic.

As part of the enrollment process, parents were asked to complete a parent volunteer information sheet and sign contracts with Downtown Montessori that covered such areas as parental involvement, field trip permission, and emergency medical care.

4. Discipline Policy

The school's discipline policy was published in the 2005-06 *Parent-Student Handbook*. It indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is most important to create a consistent environment for the children. Adult reactions to the child are tested daily, and when the actions of a child demand correction, it is most important that all adults who are involved with the child 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 and staff should avoid showing anger.

The "time out" procedure is used if redirection of the child does not work. The length of the time out is limited, and the child must sit in full view of staff.

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 on the following principles:

- Respect for the child.
- Knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, as well as the needs of the group.
- An understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The discipline policy goes on to describe 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 out-of-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.

B. Student Population

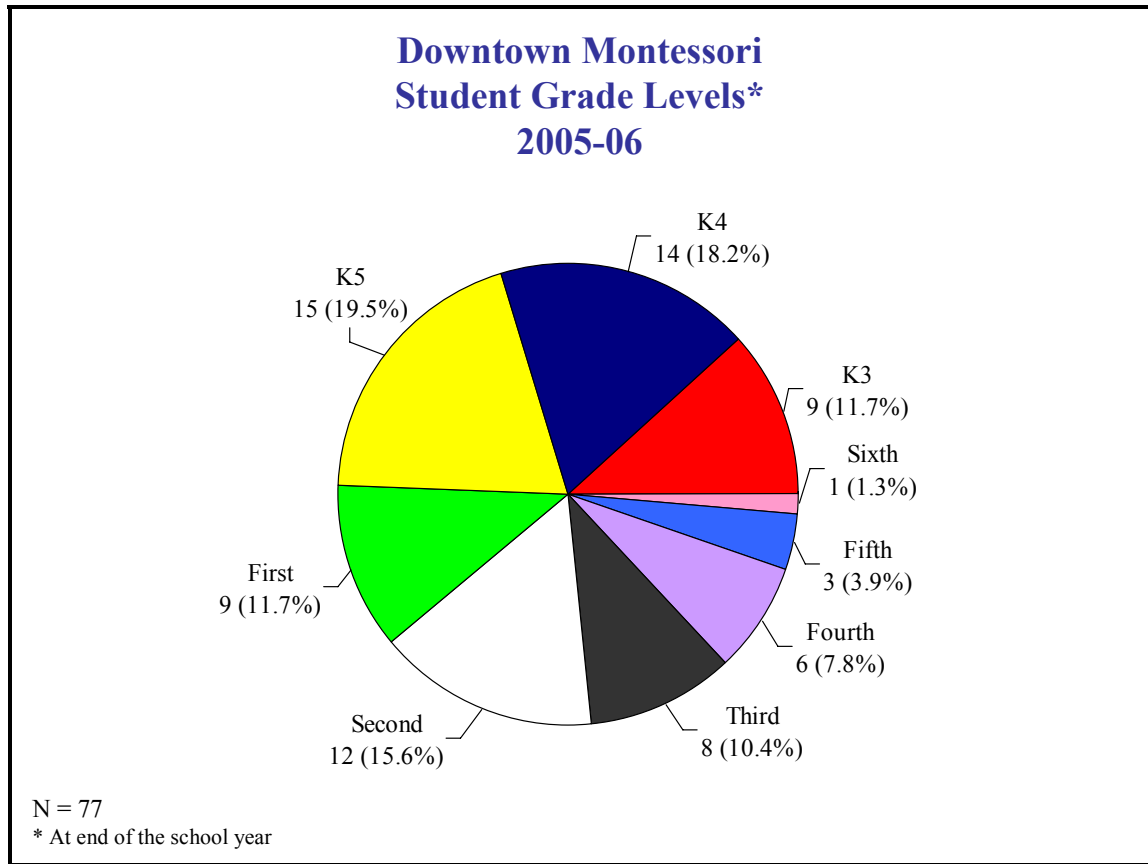
Downtown Montessori started the 2005-06 school year⁴ with 81 children in K3 through sixth grade. By the end of the year, four children had withdrawn. Two children left due to transportation issues and two left for other unspecified reasons. Of the 77 students enrolled at the end of the school year:

- Nine (11.7%) were in pre-kindergarten for three-year-olds, 14 (18.2%) were in pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds, 15 (19.5%) were in kindergarten, nine (11.7%) were in first grade, 12 (15.6%) were second graders, eight (10.4%) were in third grade, six (7.8%) were in fourth grade, there were three (3.9%) fifth graders, and one (1.3%) sixth grader.

⁴ As of September 6, 2005.

- Forty-five (58.4%) students were White, 17 (22.1%) were African American, four (5.2%) were Hispanic, three (3.9%) were Asian, and six (7.8%) were multi-racial. Race was not specified for two students.
- There were 44 (57.1%) girls and 33 (42.9%) boys.
- Six students had special education needs. Four had speech/language impairments and two had learning disabilities.

Figure 1



Data regarding the number of students returning to Downtown Montessori from the previous year were gathered in the fall of 2005. Of the 75 students attending Downtown Montessori on the last day of the 2004-05 academic year who were eligible for continued enrollment at the school this past academic year, 57 enrolled and attended Downtown Montessori

in September 2005. This represents a return rate of 76.0% and compares to a return rate of 85.0% in the fall of 2004.

As of September 30, 2005, there were two students waiting for admission to K4 and no students waiting for the elementary program. In mid-June 2006, the program director reported that there were approximately ten students on the waiting list for the fall semester.

C. Hours of Instruction

The 2005-06 school year consisted of 170 school days. The hours of instruction for K3 and K4 students were 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each day. For students in K5 through sixth grade, the school day was 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The highest possible number of hours of instruction per day was three hours for K3 and K4 students and 6.5 hours for K5 through sixth grade students; therefore, the provision of at least 875 hours of instruction for full-day students (K5 through fifth grade) was met. K3 and K4 students attended half days; therefore, the provision of one half of the required 875 hours of instruction was met.

D. Computer/Technology Capability

Downtown Montessori has generic personal computers (IBM-compatible). The program director at Downtown Montessori has worked with the data specialist at CRC and has computerized demographic and educational outcome information. She has continued to work with CRC staff to refine the database to ensure that it has utility for both program and monitoring purposes. This year, the staff attended a Powerschool training prior to the beginning of the year; however, the full utilization of Powerschool remains in process.

All students have access to computer stations at various times throughout the day.

E. Activities for Continuous School Improvement

Following is a description of Downtown Montessori's response to the recommended activities in its programmatic profile and education performance report for the 2004-05 academic year:

- Recommendation: Continue to work on finding new classroom space, including identifying resources beyond parent time and energy.

Response: The school identified a building in the Bayview area of Milwaukee. At the time of this report, the school leaders were negotiating a lease for the fall of 2006 and have informed the CSRC of plans to move the school.

- Recommendation: Continue developing the afternoon integrated literacy program to specifically work on logical reasoning.

Response: Logical reasoning was integrated in the reading program. The school provided extended time for critical thinking and extended writing from one to two hours in the afternoon, two days per week.

- Recommendation: Develop a rating system with criteria for local measures in reading and math for first through sixth graders that will clearly identify students in need of extra services.

Response: The school did not develop a new rating system this year for reading and math. For reading and writing, the staff used the McGraw-Hill reading unit tests and the Montessori writing curriculum to identify those students in need of extra services. For math, the school used the step-by-step Montessori curriculum and the WKCE-CRT math test data to identify students in need.

- Recommendation: Provide teacher training and foster appropriate utilization of Powerschool.

Response: Teachers participated in an in-service on Powerschool before the school year began. The level of utilization is an ongoing process. The staff person who was the most knowledgeable in accessing reports through Powerschool was on maternity leave for much of the year.

III. PARENT, TEACHER, STUDENT, AND BOARD MEMBER SATISFACTION

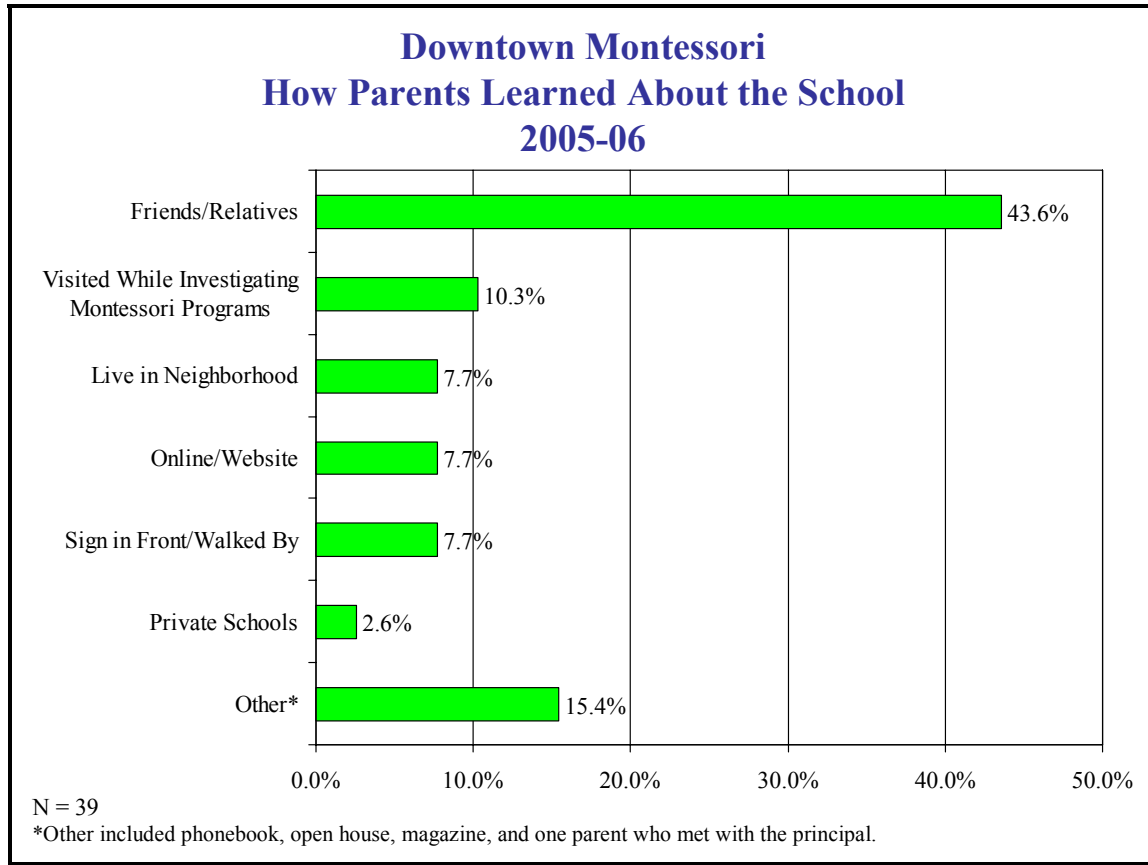
A. Parent Surveys

Parent opinions are qualitative in nature and provide a valuable external measure 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, parents were asked to complete a parent survey. The survey was provided during the school's May 4 and May 10, 2006, conferences. CRC staff made two attempts by telephone to gather survey information from parents who did not return a survey. At the time of this report, 39 surveys (representing parents of 53 children) had been completed and submitted to CRC.⁵ Results are summarized below.

Parents heard about the school from a variety of places, such as friends or relatives (43.6%). Some parents discovered the school when researching Montessori programs in the city (10.3%), some families knew about the school because they lived in the neighborhood (7.7%), others found the school online or via a website (7.7%), and some saw the school's sign as they walked by (7.7%) (see Figure 2).

⁵ There were 77 students enrolled in the school at the time of the survey. This represents a survey return rate of 68.8%.

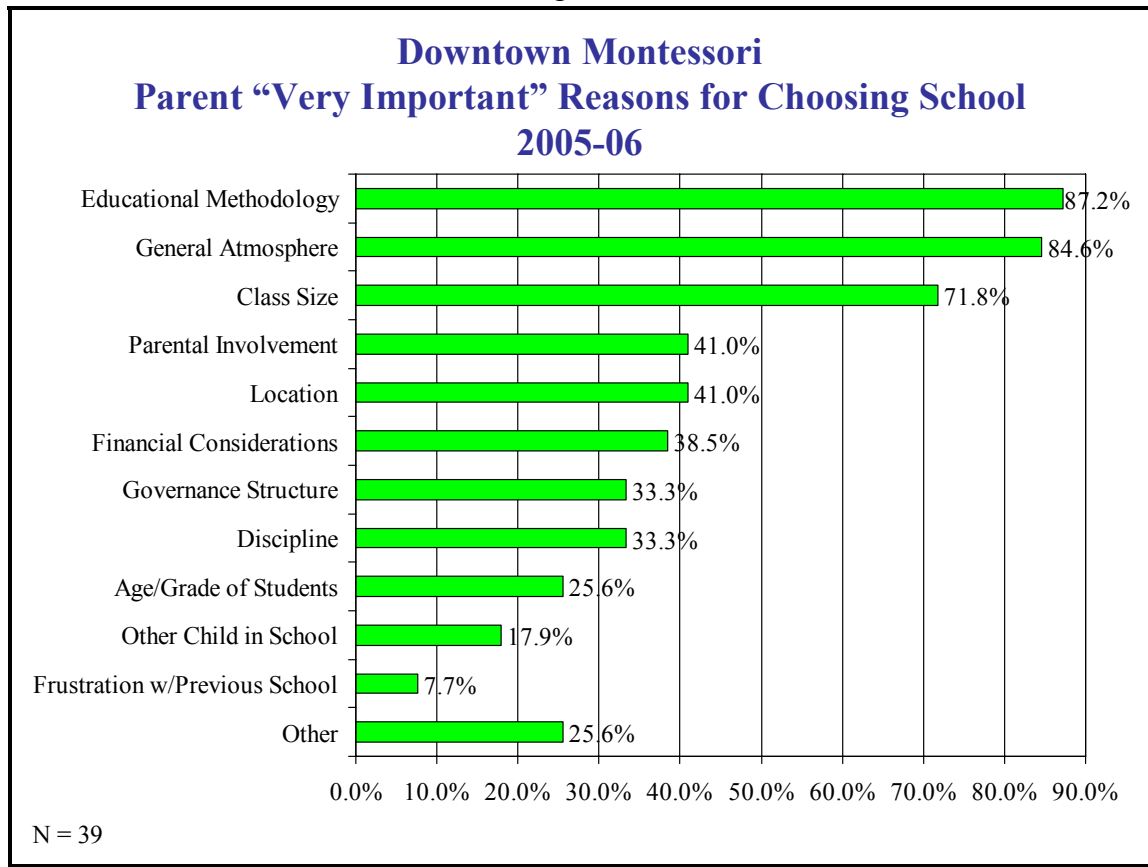
Figure 2



Parents chose to send their child(ren) to Downtown Montessori for a variety of reasons. Figure 3 illustrates the reasons parents considered “very important”⁶ when making the decision to send their child(ren) to this school. For example, 87.2% (34 of 39) of parents stated that educational methodology was a very important reason for selecting this school, and 84.6% of parents indicated that the school’s general atmosphere was very important to them when choosing this school.

⁶ Parents were given the following choices for each reason: very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, and not at all important.

Figure 3



Parental involvement was also used as a measure of satisfaction with the school. Parental involvement was measured by:

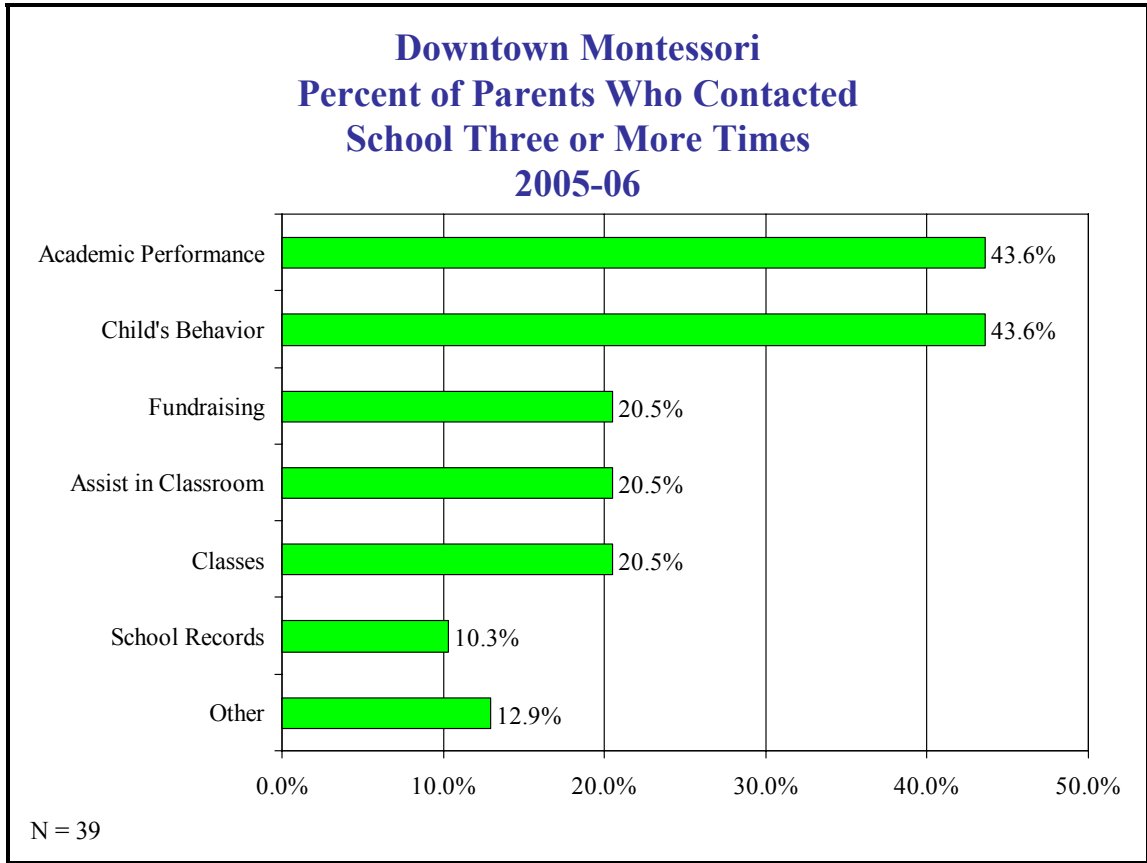
- Number of contacts with the school initiated by the parent(s);
- Number of contacts with the parent(s) initiated by the school;
- Participation in school activities; and
- Participation in educational activities at home.

Parents and the school were in contact for a variety of reasons, including a child's academic performance and behavior, as well as to assist in the classroom or to engage in fundraising activities.

As illustrated below, 43.6% of parents (17 of 39) contacted the school at least three times regarding their child's academic performance and/or their child's behavior. Eight (20.5%)

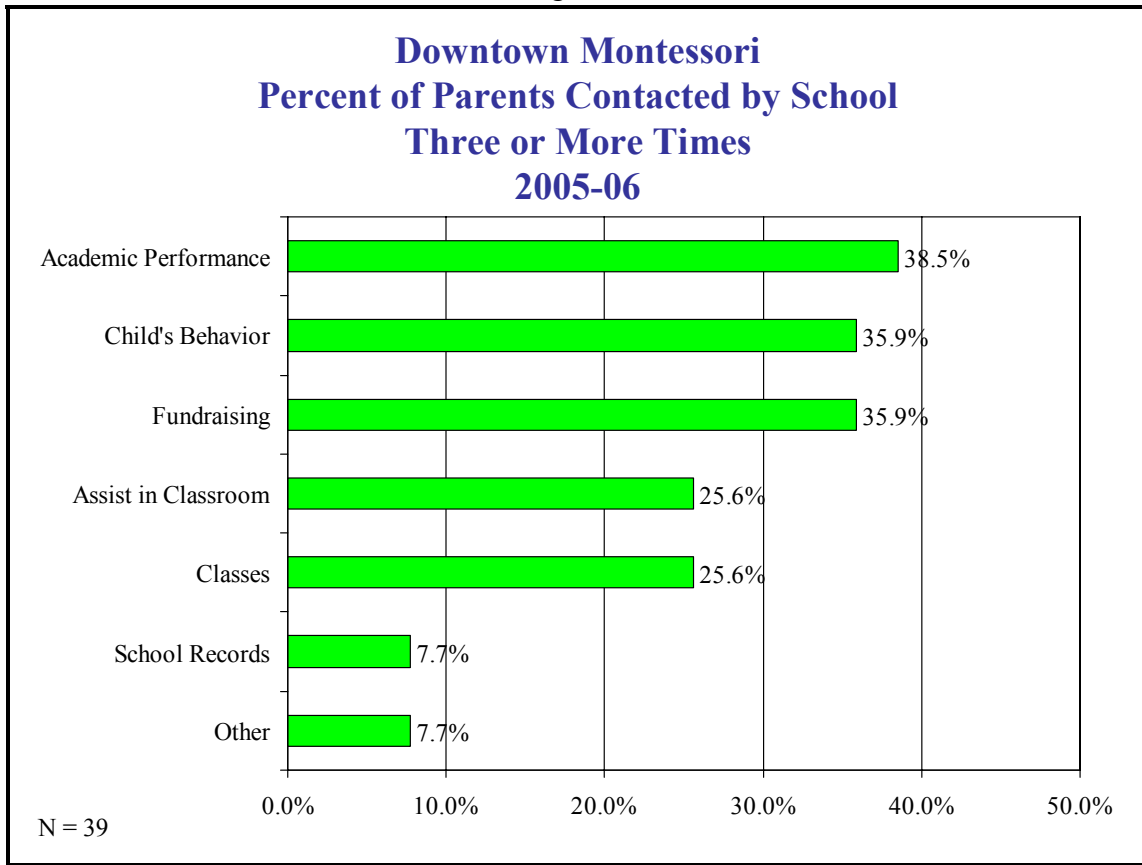
contacted the school to participate in fundraising, assist in the classroom, and/or to discuss their child(ren)'s classes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4



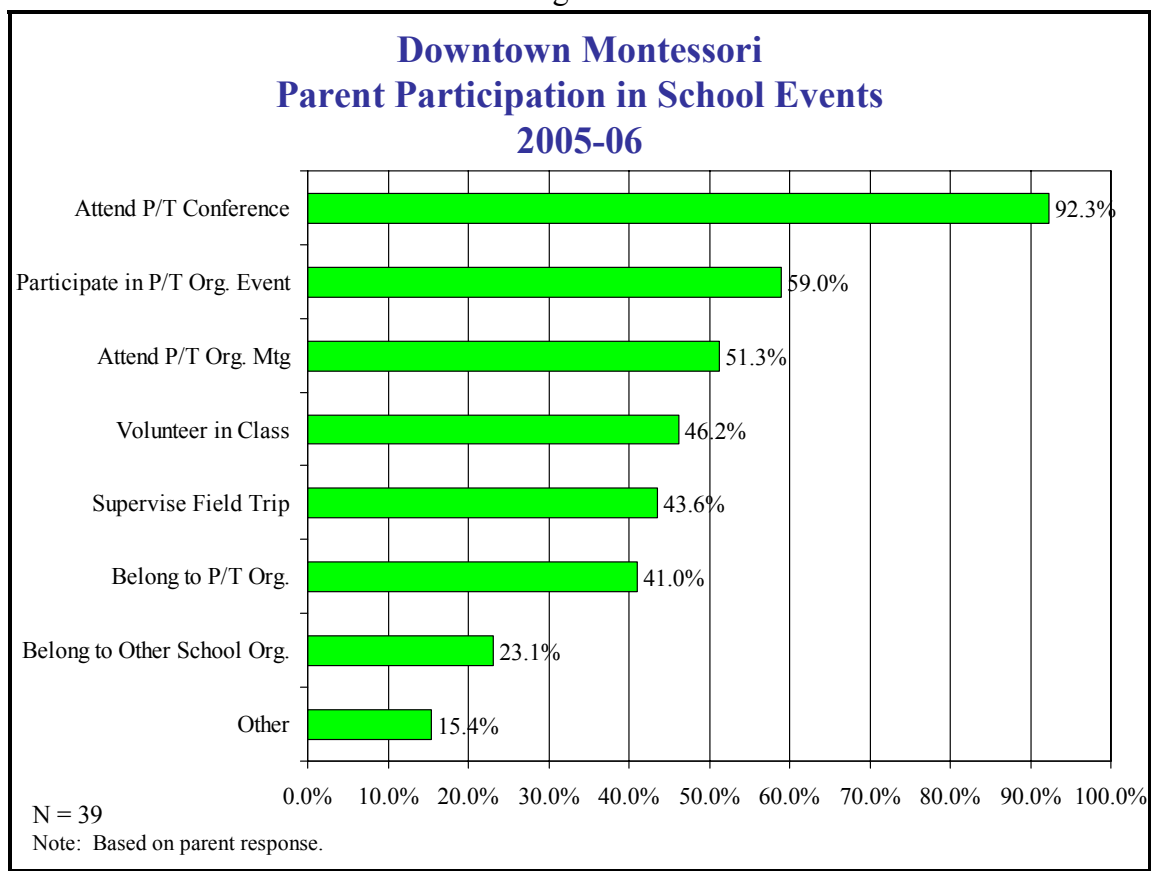
According to parents, the school initiated contact at least three times to 38.5% of parents to discuss their child's academic performance, and 35.9% of parents were contacted multiple times to discuss child's behavior and/or fundraising activities (see Figure 5).

Figure 5



The extent to which parents participated in school events is illustrated below. Nearly all (92.3%) parents attended at least one parent-teacher conference, and 59.0% participated in a parent-teacher organization event. Approximately 51.3% of parents attended at least one parent-teacher organization meeting this year, and 46.2% of parents volunteered in the classroom (see Figure 6).

Figure 6



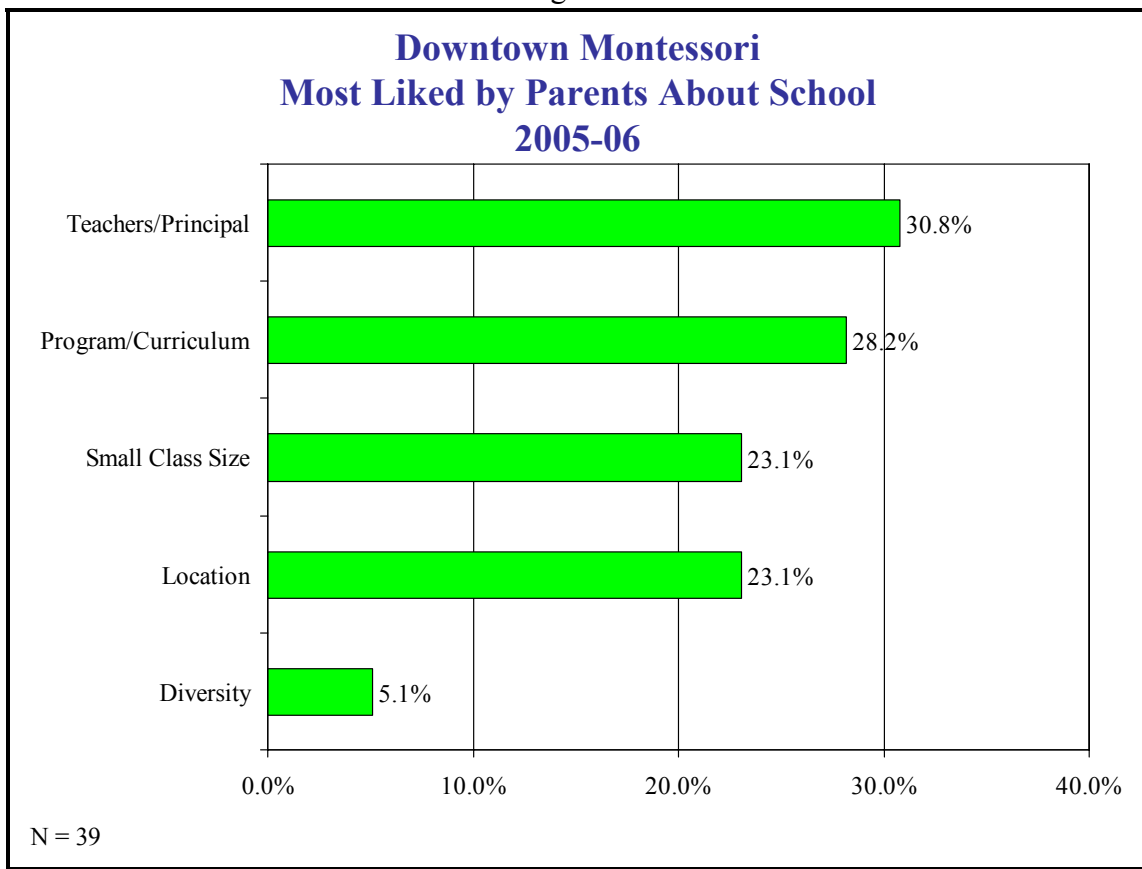
Parental participation can also be described in terms of educational activities the family engages in while at home. During a typical week:

- 100.0% of parents read to their child;
- 100.0% worked on arithmetic or math;
- 87.2% worked on penmanship and/or writing;
- 84.6% participated in sports activities with their child;

- 79.5% watched educational programs on TV; and
- 87.2% worked on other homework with their children.

When asked what they most liked about the school, 30.8% of parents indicated an appreciation for the teachers and/or principal,⁷ 28.2% liked the Montessori program/curriculum, and 23.1% liked the small class size and/or the location (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

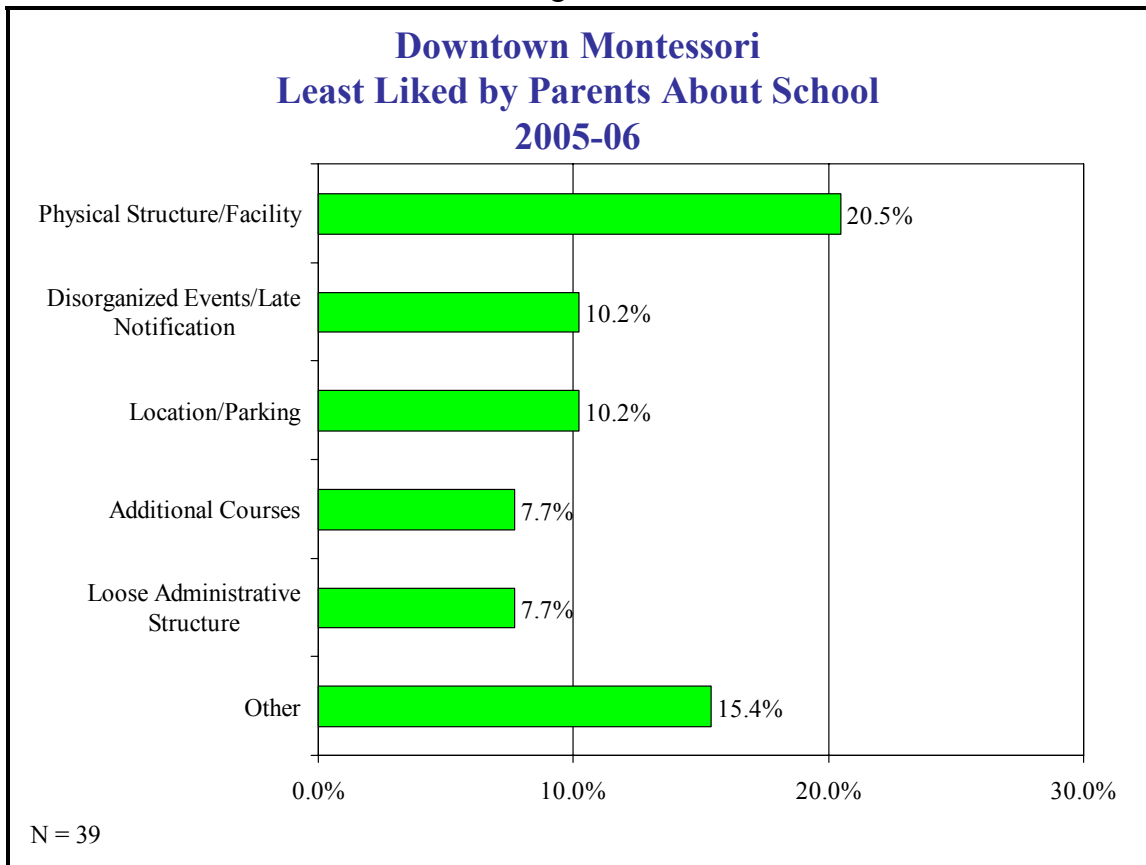


⁷ The “program director” at Downtown Montessori.

Parents noted the following as needing improvement:

- Physical structure/facility (e.g., outdoor and indoor space, bathrooms, security) (20.5%);
- Better event organizing as well as earlier notification of upcoming events (10.2%);
- Location and/or parking (10.2%);
- The need for additional courses such as arts, languages, and science (7.7%);
- Would like more administrative structure (7.7%).

Figure 8



Other aspects of the school least liked by parents included discipline problems (two parents); transportation (one parent); lack of minority teachers (one parent); too few students in upper grades (one parent); and one parent indicated that he/she was not always aware of the work his/her child was doing in class.

In terms of overall evaluation, parents were asked to rate the school’s performance in three areas: class size, materials and equipment, and student assessment plan. As shown in Table 1, most parents rated these areas as “excellent” or “good.”

Table 1										
Downtown Montessori Parental Rating of School Performance 2005-06 (N = 39)										
Measure	Rating									
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Class size	19	48.7%	19	48.7%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2. Materials and equipment	20	51.3%	18	46.1%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3. Student assessment plan	13	33.3%	23	59.0%	2	5.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
3a. Standardized tests	10	25.6%	21	53.8%	3	7.7%	0	0.0%	5	12.8%
3b. Progress reports	21	53.8%	16	41.0%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%

Parents were then asked to indicate their level of satisfaction in various aspects of the school ranging from academic progress to communication issues. Table 2 indicates that parents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied most of the time with 13 aspects of the academic environment. For example, most parents indicated they were very satisfied with the program of instruction, their child(ren)’s academic progress, parent-teacher relations, and responsiveness to concerns. Parents who either had no knowledge or experience with an aspect or had no opinion did not respond.

Table 2										
Downtown Montessori Parental Satisfaction 2005-06 (N = 39)										
Area	Response									
	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Program of instruction	28	71.8%	9	23.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%
Enrollment policy and procedures	25	64.1%	8	20.5%	3	7.7%	0	0.0%	3	7.7%
Child's academic progress	24	61.5%	13	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%
Student/teacher ratio	23	59.0%	15	38.5%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Discipline policy	18	46.2%	19	48.7%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	1	2.6%
Adherence to discipline policy	21	53.8%	13	33.3%	3	7.7%	1	2.6%	1	2.6%
Parent-teacher relations	30	76.9%	9	23.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Communication regarding learning expectations	15	38.5%	21	53.8%	3	7.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Parent involvement in policy and procedures	20	51.3%	16	41.0%	2	5.1%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%
Teacher performance	33	84.6%	6	15.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Principal performance	30	76.9%	8	20.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Teacher/principal accessibility	35	89.7%	4	10.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Responsiveness to concerns	28	71.8%	9	23.1%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%

Last, a high level of overall parent satisfaction was most evident in that:

- Nearly all (97.4% or 38 of 39) parents would recommend this school to other parents;
- 66.7% (26 of 39) of parents will send their child to this school next year;⁸ and
- When asked to rate the school overall, most (79.5%) parents indicated “excellent” and eight (20.5%) parents rated the school “good.” No parents thought the school was “fair” or “poor.”

⁸ Two families are moving away, one is sending their child to a school with a sibling, and ten families did not know if their children would return. Eight of the ten are unsure because the school may move, one family may be moving away, and one family is trying to enroll their child(ren) in a suburban school during open enrollment.

B. Teacher Interviews

In the spring of 2006, CRC interviewed the school's four teachers regarding reasons for teaching and overall satisfaction with the school. Two teachers taught three- to six-year-olds; one taught first through third grades and was the assistant director, and one teacher taught third through sixth grades. Teachers were responsible for 16 to 22 students at a given time. Two of the four teachers used team teaching techniques. One of the teachers had been teaching at this school for six years, two teachers for seven years, and one teacher was in his/her thirteenth year at the school.⁹ Two teachers' performance reviews occurred at least annually, one was reviewed informally on an "as needed" basis, and one had not yet had a performance review. All four teachers indicated that they routinely used data to make decisions within the classroom and indicated that school leadership used data to make school-wide decisions.

When asked about their reasons for teaching at this school, all teachers indicated that the educational methodology at the school was a very important reason, and three out of four indicated that the general atmosphere and governance structure were very important reasons for teaching at this school. See Table 3 for more details.

⁹ The principal/administrator, known at Downtown Montessori as the "Program Director," is not included in the teacher interview section.

Table 3				
Reasons for Teaching at Downtown Montessori 2005-06 (N = 4)				
Reason	Importance			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not At All Important
Educational methodology	4	0	0	0
General atmosphere	3	1	0	0
Governance structure	3	1	0	0
Parental involvement	2	2	0	0
Discipline	2	2	0	0
Age/grade of students	2	2	0	0
Class size	1	2	1	0
Financial	0	2	2	0
Location	0	2	1	1

In terms of overall evaluation of the school, teachers were asked to rate the school's performance related to class size, materials and equipment, and overall student assessment plan, as well as shared leadership, professional support and development, and the school's progress toward becoming an excellent school. Most teachers rated these areas as good or excellent, except for one teacher who rated professional support as "poor" (see Table 4).

Table 4				
Downtown Montessori School Performance Rating 2005-06 (N = 4)				
Area	Rating			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Class size	3	1	0	0
2. Materials and equipment	3	1	0	0
3. Student assessment plan	3	1	0	0
3a. Local measures	3	1	0	0
3b. Standardized tests	2	2	0	0
3c. Progress reports	2	2	0	0
4. Shared leadership, decision making, and accountability	1	3	0	0
5. Professional support	1	2	0	1
6. Professional development opportunities	2	2	0	0
7. Progress toward becoming an excellent school	3	1	0	0

Teachers were then asked to rate their satisfaction in a variety of areas related to the school. On a satisfaction rating scale ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied," teachers responded on the "satisfied" end of the response range in most areas. Areas where a teacher expressed some dissatisfaction were adherence to the discipline policy, parent-teacher relationships, parent involvement, teacher involvement in policy and procedure decisions, and the frequency and effectiveness of staff meetings. Table 5 lists all of the teacher responses.

Table 5

**Downtown Montessori
Teacher Satisfaction
2005-06
(N = 4)**

Performance Measure	Response				
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion
Program of instruction	4	0	0	0	0
Enrollment policy and procedures	3	1	0	0	0
Student's academic progress	3	1	0	0	0
Student/teacher ratio	4	0	0	0	0
Discipline policy	3	1	0	0	0
Adherence to discipline policy	3	0	1	0	0
Instructional support	2	2	0	0	0
Parent-teacher relationships	2	1	1	0	0
Parent-teacher collaboration to plan learning experiences	2	1	0	0	1
Teacher collaboration to plan learning experiences	3	1	0	0	0
Parent involvement	3	0	1	0	0
Community business involvement	2	0	0	0	2
Teacher performance	3	1	0	0	0
Principal performance	3	1	0	0	0
Teacher involvement in policy and procedures decisions	2	1	0	1	0
Board of directors performance	0	4	0	0	0
Opportunity for continuing education	4	0	0	0	0
Frequency of staff meetings	1	2	0	1	0
Effectiveness of staff meetings	3	0	0	1	0

When teachers were asked what they most liked about the school, at least one teacher mentioned:

- Family and community diversity;
- The Montessori method;
- Small class size;
- Small school;
- Opportunities for professional development;
- Teacher flexibility; and
- The general atmosphere.

When asked what they least liked about the school, teachers mentioned:

- Trouble with communication (two teachers); and
- The current facility (two teachers).

When asked for suggestions to improve the school, teachers indicated:

- Need for a larger physical space;
- The assistant director should be a full-time position; and
- Hire a librarian or staff member to take care of books.

When asked to provide suggestions to improve the classroom, teachers indicated:

- More resources to enhance the classroom; and
- More planning time.

(The other two teachers did not have any suggestions for improving the classroom.)

On a scale of poor, fair, good, or excellent, three teachers rated the school as excellent and one teacher rated the school as good. All four teachers indicated that they intended to continue teaching at the school.

C. Student Interviews

Seven students in fourth or fifth grade were asked several questions about their school. All seven children indicated that they liked their school and the books at their school, that they follow school rules, and that their teachers talk to their parents (see Table 6).

Table 6			
Downtown Montessori Student Interview 2005-06 (N = 7)			
Question	Yes	No	No Response/Don't Know/Not Applicable
1. Do you like your school?	7	0	0
2. Do you learn new things every day?	5	2	0
3. Is your school work fun?	6	0	1
4. Do you like the books at school?	7	0	0
5. Do you use computers at school?	6	1	0
6. Is your school clean?	6	0	1
7. Do you like the school rules?	6	1	0
8. Do you follow the rules?	7	0	0
9. Does your homework help you learn more?	4	2	1
10. Do your teachers help you at school?	6	0	1
11. Do you like being in school?	6	0	1
12. Do you feel safe in school?	6	0	1
13. Do people work together in school?	6	0	1
14. Do you feel the marks you get on class work, homework, and report cards are fair?	6	1	0
15. Do your teachers talk to your parents?	7	0	0
16. Does your school have after-school activities?	6	0	1

Students were then asked what they liked best and least about the school. Responses are summarized below.

Like most:

- Teachers;
- Friends and other students;
- Close to home; and
- Students learn a lot, often times before students in other schools.

Like least:

- Need more space;
- More choices for reading materials; and
- The school does not have pets anymore.

D. Board of Directors' Interviews

Board member opinions are qualitative in nature and provide valuable, although subjective, insight regarding school performance and organizational competency. Two members of the Downtown Montessori Academy's Board of Directors were interviewed by telephone by CRC staff, using a prepared interview guide. One of the board members has been involved with Downtown Montessori for three years and the other for five years. Both have children enrolled in the school. These board members also bring experience in education and non-profit and for-profit business administrations.

The board members were asked to rate the school's performance in class size, material and equipment, and the student assessment plan (local measures of achievement, standardized testing, and progress reports to parents) if they had knowledge of these school performance elements. The rating scale was excellent, good, fair, or poor. The interviewees rated all of these elements as "excellent."

The interviewees rated the school progress toward becoming an excellent school as excellent. Their rating for the areas of shared leadership, decision making and accountability, and professional development opportunities was either good or excellent. One interviewee did not have enough information to make a judgment regarding professional development and another could not rate professional support for the same reason. Both rated the school overall as excellent.

The board members indicated that the trustees use data to make decisions regarding the school, especially in the areas of financial planning.

On a satisfaction rating scale ranging from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied,” both board members indicated that they were very satisfied with the following aspects of the school:

- The students’ academic progress;
- The student ratio/class size;
- Opportunities for continuing education;
- The commitment of the school’s leadership; and
- The safety of the educational environment.

The board members were somewhat satisfied with:

- The program of instruction; and
- The administrative and financial resources to fulfill the school’s mission.

There were some elements of the school for which at least one of the board members did not have a basis for an opinion. These included the discipline policy, the adherence to the discipline policy, instructional support, opportunities for teacher involvement in policy/procedure decisions, and the human resources to fulfill the school’s mission.

The only areas where the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction were parent involvement (both were very dissatisfied) and community business involvement (one was somewhat dissatisfied).

When asked what they liked best about the school, the board members liked the following about Downtown Montessori:

- The teacher/student relationship and the closeness of the people involved;
- The class size;
- The commitment of the faculty and staff; and
- The Montessori approach.

When asked what things they least liked about the school, the board members indicated that they would like to see:

- A larger facility;
- The addition of a foreign language to the curriculum; and
- Increased parent involvement.

The board members suggested that the school could be improved by improving communication between board members, the parent-teacher association, and all parents.

IV. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

To monitor Downtown Montessori school performance, a variety of qualitative and quantitative information has been collected at specified intervals during the past several academic years. This year, the school established attendance, parent conference, and parent contract goals, as well as goals related to special education students. In addition, the school utilized internal and external measures of academic progress. This section of the report describes school success in meeting attendance, conference, parent contract, and special education goals. It also describes student progress as measured internally on student report cards and externally by standardized tests, such as the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) and the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination – Criterion Referenced Test (WKCE–CRT).

A. Attendance

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal to maintain an average attendance rate of 80.0%. This year, the school surpassed this goal, as students, on average, attended school 92.5% of the time.¹⁰

B. Parent Conferences and Contracts

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal that parents would attend 50.0% of scheduled parent-teacher conferences. This year, the school scheduled two conferences, one in the fall and one in the spring. There were 77 children enrolled for the entire year, and parents of all (100.0%) children attended both conferences. The school has, therefore, met its goal related to parent conferences.

¹⁰ Attendance was calculated for 77 students by dividing the number of days attended by the number of expected days of attendance as recorded in the school's database. Only complete records were included.

The school also established a goal that 80.0% of parents would fulfill the requirements of the parent contract related to hours of involvement. This year, parents of 85.7% of children fulfilled contract requirements; therefore, the school has met this goal.

C. Special Education Students

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students. During the year, there were seven students with special needs. One student left early in the school year. IEPs for all six remaining students had been completed and reviewed in a timely manner.¹¹ The school has met their goal related to special education students.

D. Internal Local Measures of Educational Performance

Charter schools, by definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula that reflect each school's individual philosophy, mission, and goals. In addition to standardized testing, each charter school has the responsibility to describe the goals and expectations of its students in meaningful language, in light of that school's unique approach to education. These goals and expectations are established by each City of Milwaukee charter 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 required each city chartered school to submit a plan for using local measures. The CSRC established a committee to review the local measure plan and provide feedback to the school. The plan was to include:

¹¹ CRC reviewed randomly chosen files to verify the accuracy of these data.

1. A description of local measures that were reliable and valid in reading or literacy, writing, and math, as well as a description of other required or elected local measures.
2. A description of how teachers use the local measures in making instructional and curricular decisions in the classroom.
3. A description of how the administration uses local measures to inform decision-making at the school level.
4. A description of the process the school uses to communicate local measures to CRC.
5. A description of staff development opportunities for staff to learn about using local measures.
6. A description of ways in which the school intends to improve the use of its local measures.

Downtown Montessori's program director submitted the school's local measure plan in a timely manner. Feedback was provided by the CSRC local measure plan committee, requesting the school to submit an addendum to describe the ways in which the school intends to improve the use of its local measures. At the time of this report, Downtown Montessori's staff are developing strategies to improve the use of their local measures.

1. Progress Reports

For the fifth consecutive year, Downtown Montessori elected to use the Scholastic Progress Reports in grades K3 through K5 to track children's progress on a variety of skills. The K3 through K5 report cards cover skill areas such as the following:

- Practical Life, e.g., care of person, grace and courtesy, and control and coordination.
- Sensorial Discrimination, e.g., visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory.
- Mathematical Development, e.g., numbers, counting, addition, subtraction, and multiplication.

- Language, e.g., spoken, written, reading, parts of speech, and word study.
- Cultural Areas, e.g., globes, maps, and animals of the world.

For the second consecutive year, the school has used the Elementary Progress Report to track student skills in language, reading/writing, mathematics, social studies, science, physical development, and creative expression (art/music). The Elementary Progress Report is completed for students in first through sixth grades.

a. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

This year, the school established goals for practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language, and cultural areas for students in K4 (pre-kindergarten) and K5 (kindergarten). Figures 9 through 13 describe the percentage of skills in which K4 and K5 students reached “making steady progress” or “has mastered the skill.” Rates are calculated for each child depending on if/when the skill was first introduced, and they are averaged across all children.¹²

This year, report cards were submitted for 28 K4 and K5 students. All 28 students exhibited progress or mastery in 76.0% or more of the practical life skills that had been presented in the first and second semesters (see Figure 9). In terms of sensorial discrimination skills, 19 students were progressing or had mastered 76.0% or more of the skills that had been presented to them in the first semester, and 27 showed progress or mastery in 76.0% or more of the sensorial skills presented in the second semester (see Figure 10). Similar information is provided in Figures 11 through 13.

¹² Rates were calculated by dividing the number of skills “progressing” or “mastered” by the number of skills presented for each student.

Figure 9

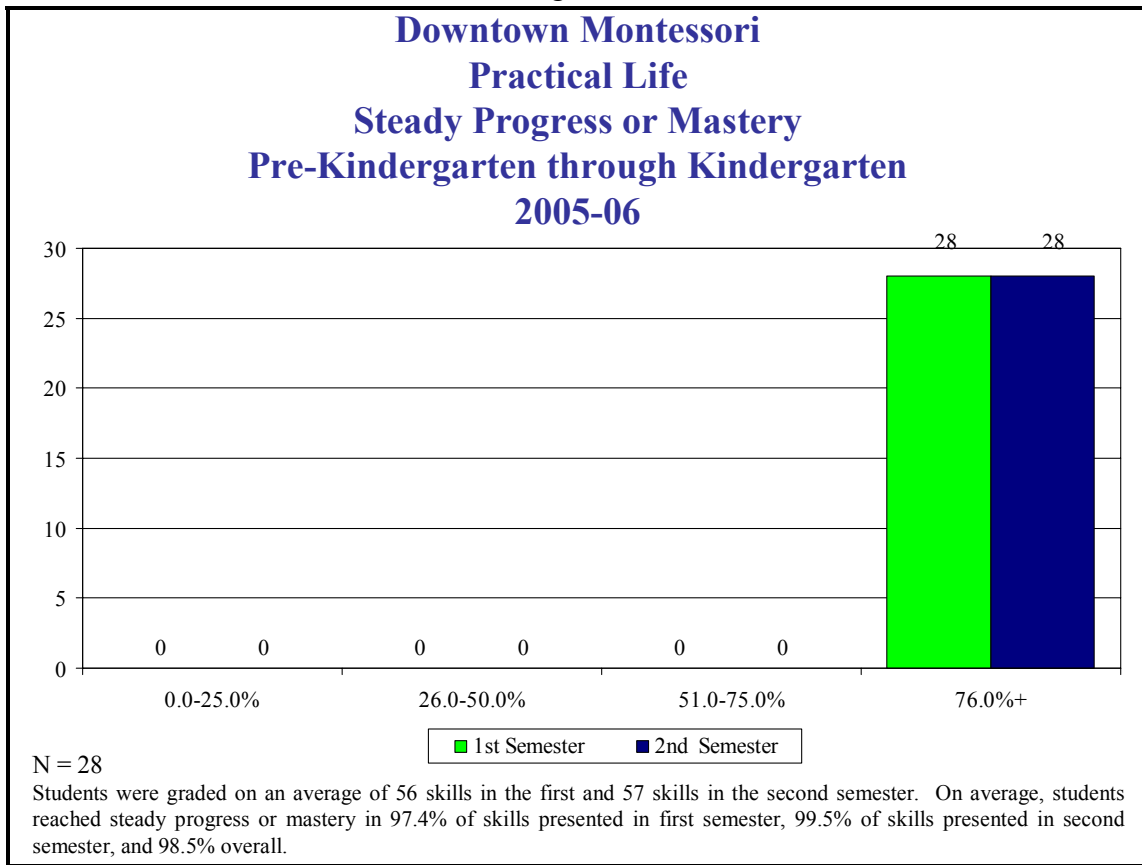


Figure 10

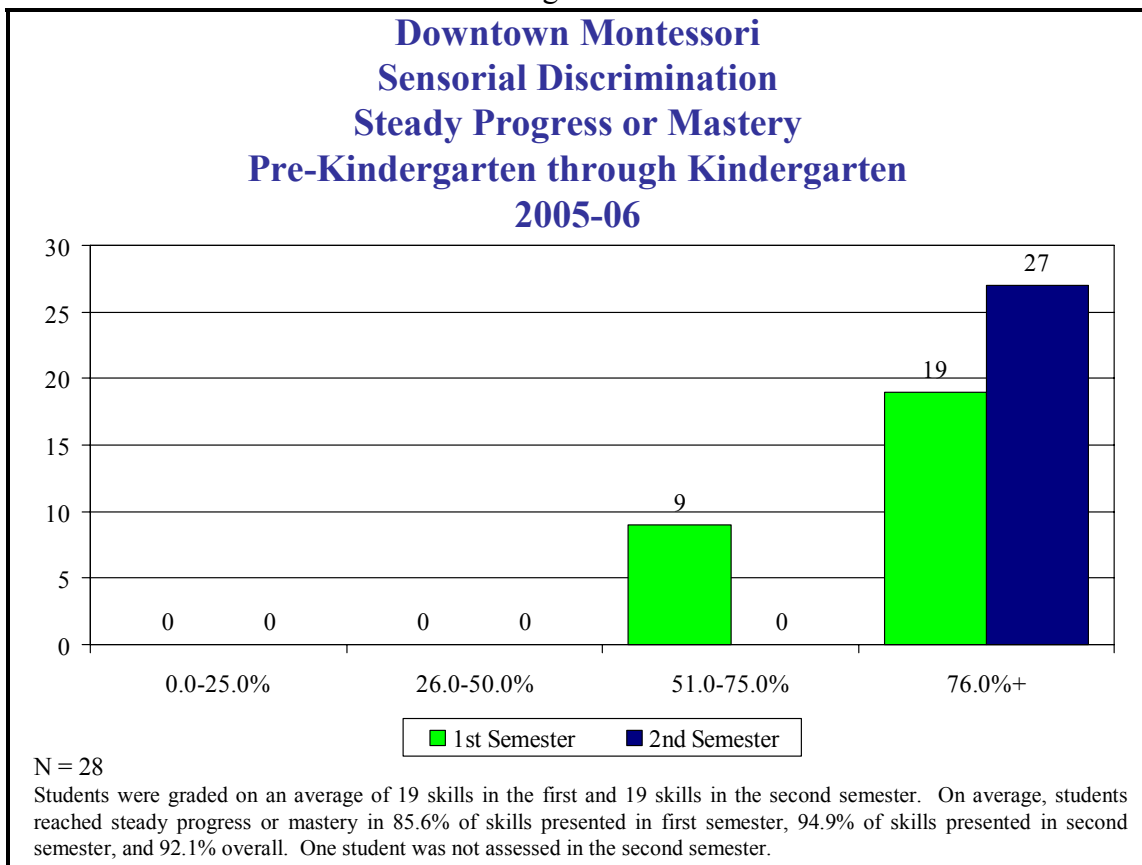


Figure 11

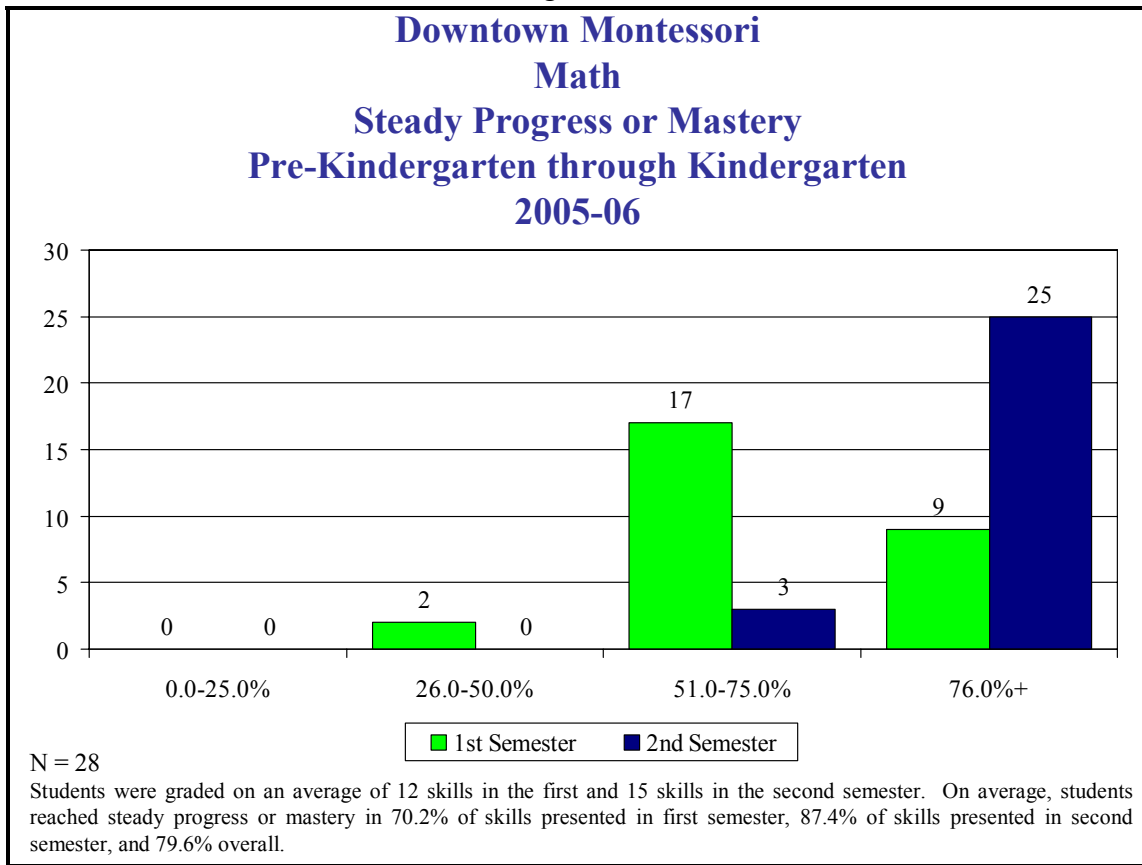


Figure 12

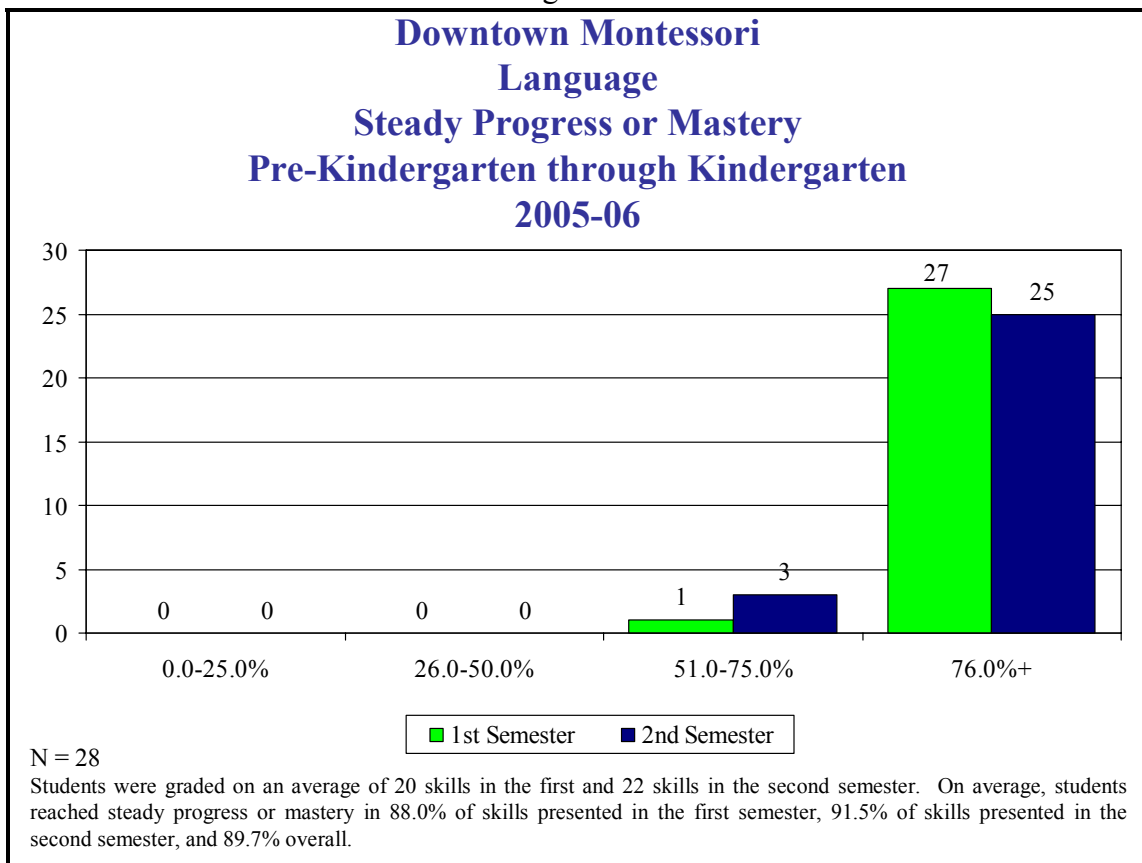
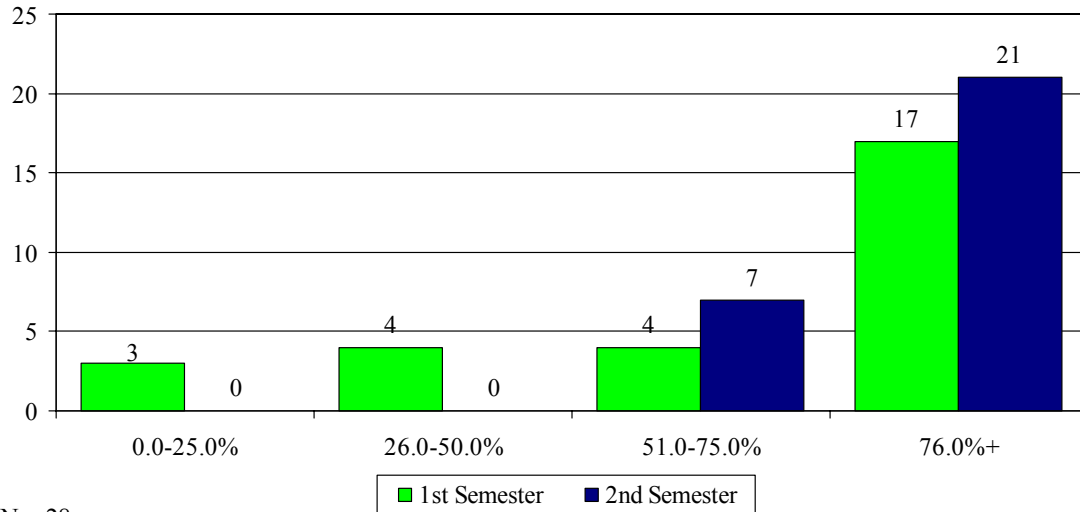


Figure 13

**Downtown Montessori
Cultural Areas
Steady Progress or Mastery
Pre-Kindergarten through Kindergarten
2005-06**



N = 28

Students were graded on an average of 16 skills in the first and 20 skills in the second semester. On average, students reached steady progress or mastery in 72.7% of skills presented in the first semester, 88.4% of skills presented in the second semester, and 81.5% overall.

By the end of the school year,¹³ Downtown Montessori K4 and K5 students, on average, achieved “steady progress” or “mastery” in the following:

- 98.5% of overall practical life skills. During the first semester, students showed progress or mastered 97.4% of practical life skills, on average. During the second semester, students showed steady progress or mastered 99.5% of skills.
- 92.1% of overall sensorial skills. During the first semester, students reached the goal of 85.6% of skills. During the second semester, students showed progress or reached mastery on 94.9% of skills.
- 79.6% of overall mathematics skills. During the first semester, students, on average, reached this goal in 70.2% of the mathematics skills presented and on 87.4% of skills presented in the second semester.
- 89.7% of overall language skills. Students reached this goal on 88.0% of language skills presented in the first semester and 91.5% presented in the second semester.
- 81.5% of the overall cultural areas skills. Students reached this goal on 72.7% of the cultural skills presented in the first semester and 88.4% presented in the second semester.

b. First through Sixth Graders

Student progress in grades first through sixth is tracked in a variety of areas, such as:

- Montessori Language lessons, e.g., grammar and writing.
- Reading/Writing Program, e.g., overall reading performance, writing skills, and spelling, and assessments using the McGraw-Hill Reading Program unit tests.
- Mathematics, e.g., decimal system and number theory.
- Social Studies, e.g., geography, history, and cultural geography.
- Science, e.g., biology and physical geography.
- Physical Development, e.g., large and small muscle development.
- Creative Expression, e.g., art activities and music.

¹³ The end-of-the-year percentage is an average of the skills in which students reached “steady progress” or “mastery” during the first and second semesters.

In all areas except reading/writing programs, students are rated on each skill as “skills not yet introduced,” “needs strengthening,” or “successful.” Reading/writing assessment results are assessed in terms of proficiency levels and are reflected in the McGraw-Hill Reading Program results. Reading/writing results are described later in this section. Due to the limited number of skills on which students are assessed in other areas, CRC limited analysis to progress in language and math skills.¹⁴

This year, the annual learning memo did not reflect goals related to the rating system on the report cards for first through sixth grade. To estimate student progress, CRC counted the number of skills in which a student reached “successful.”

Figures 14 and 15 describe the percentage of skills in which first through sixth grade students reached “successful” in language and math.¹⁵ This year, 22 of 38 students reached “successful” in 76.0% or more of the language skills that had been presented in the first semester, and 27 of 36 students reached “successful” in 76.0% or more of language skills that had been presented in the second semester (see Figure 14). In terms of math skills, 21 of 38 students reach “successful” in 76.0% or more of the skills that had been presented to them in the first semester, and seven of 38 students reached “successful” in 76.0% or more of the skills presented in the second semester (see Figure 15).

¹⁴ Students are rated on two physical developments, two creative expressions, two social studies, and two science items. Given the limited number of items in these areas, they were not included in the analysis.

¹⁵ Rates were calculated by dividing the number of skills in which the student was assessed “successful” by the number of skills for which the student was assessed.

Figure 14

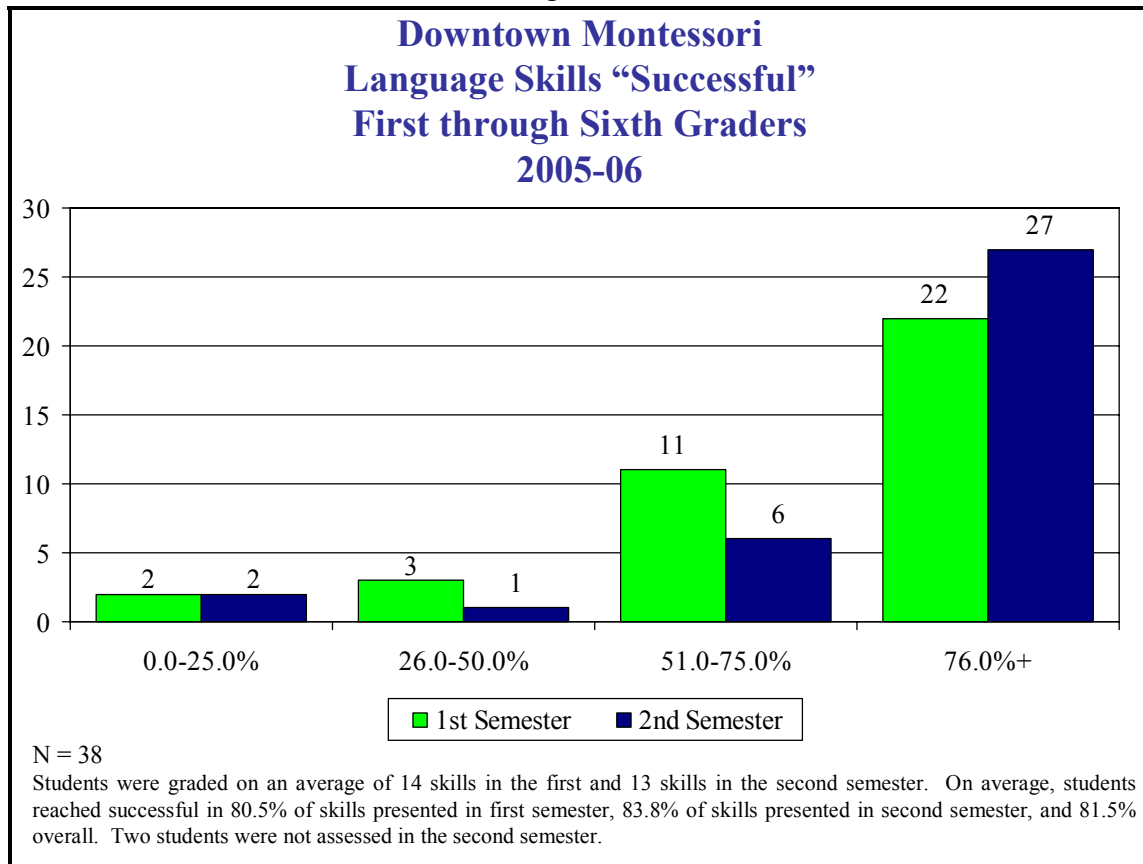
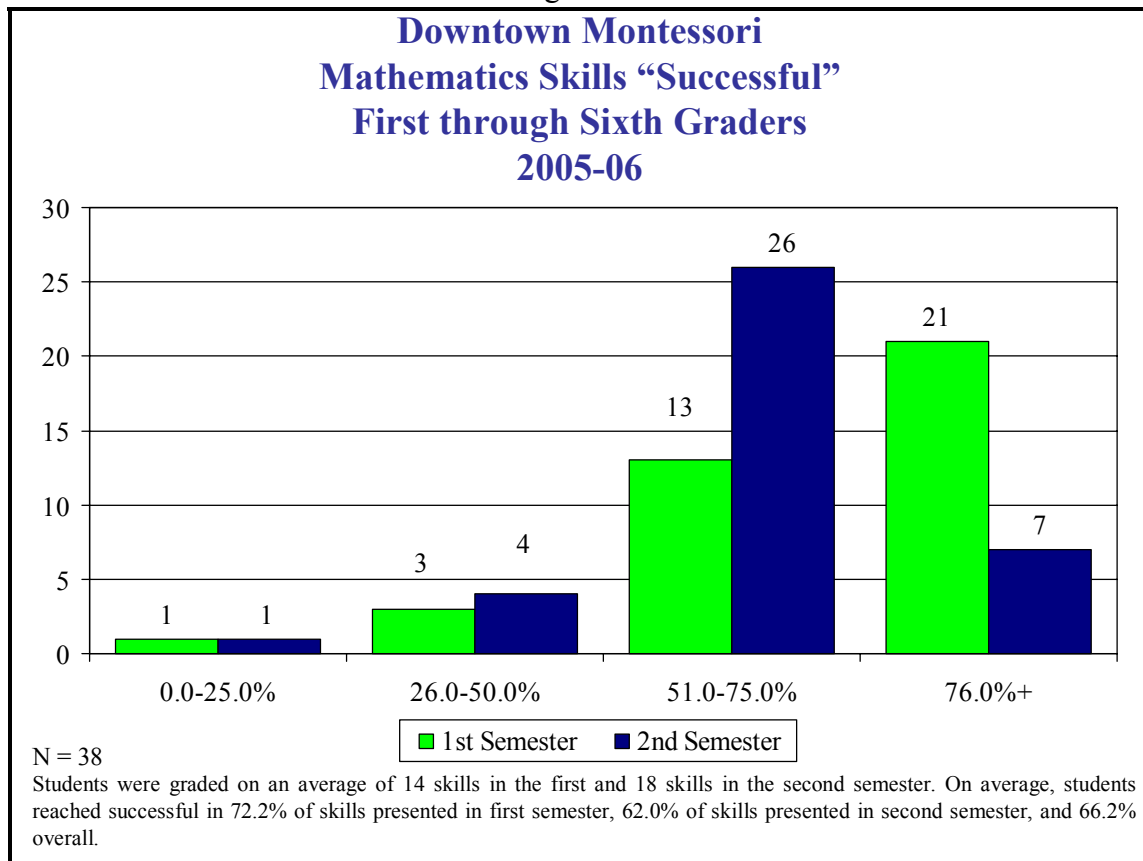


Figure 15



By the end of the school year,¹⁶ Downtown Montessori first through sixth graders, on average, achieved “successful” in the following:

- 81.5% of language skills. Students reached “successful,” on average, in 80.5% of the skills presented during the first semester and 83.8% of those presented during the second semester.
- 66.2% of the math skills presented throughout the year. Students reached “successful,” on average, in 72.2% of the skills presented during the first semester and 62.0% presented in the second semester.

2. McGraw-Hill Reading Program

In 2004-05, the school adopted the McGraw-Hill Reading Program to monitor students’ progress in gaining reading skills. The school administered a placement test to students in first through sixth grades at the beginning of the year to identify each child’s reading level. Results were combined with SDRT results and teacher assessments to place each child in an instructional level, unrelated to the traditional concept of “grade level.” Children with similar instructional levels were placed in reading groups.

During each semester, students were taught three reading units. Results were summarized on student report cards in ten competency areas, such as overall reading performance, completion of nightly reading homework, and responsibility for reading materials. Each competency was assigned a proficiency level.

Results from the end of the year indicate that most students’ overall reading performance was proficient (47.4%) or advanced (36.8%). In writing, 44.7% of the students exhibited proficient and 23.7% advanced skills. Results from each semester are illustrated in Tables 7 and 8.

¹⁶ End-of-the-year percentage includes achieving “successful” on skills presented in the first or second semester.

Table 7

**Downtown Montessori
Reading/Writing Program Proficiency Levels
McGraw-Hill Reading Program Summary
End of First Semester
First through Sixth Graders
2005-06**

Area Tested	Proficiency Level									
	Minimal		Basic		Proficient		Advanced		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Overall Reading Performance	1	2.6%	5	13.2%	18	47.4%	14	36.8%	38	100.0%
Complete Nightly Reading Homework*	0	0.0%	9	26.5%	13	38.2%	12	35.3%	34	100.0%
Attendance/Tardiness	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	11	29.0%	23	60.5%	38	100.0%
Responsibility for Reading Materials	1	2.6%	4	10.5%	13	34.2%	20	52.6%	38	100.0%
Oral Reading Skills	2	5.3%	5	13.2%	19	50.0%	12	31.6%	38	100.0%
Writing Skills	1	2.6%	11	29.0%	17	44.7%	9	23.7%	38	100.0%
Comprehension Skills	1	2.6%	3	7.9%	17	44.7%	17	44.7%	38	100.0%
Analysis Skills	1	2.6%	10	26.3%	15	39.5%	12	31.6%	38	100.0%
Spelling	2	5.3%	11	29.0%	12	31.6%	13	34.2%	38	100.0%
Grammar	1	2.6%	3	7.9%	28	73.7%	6	15.8%	38	100.0%

*Homework did not apply to all students.

Table 8

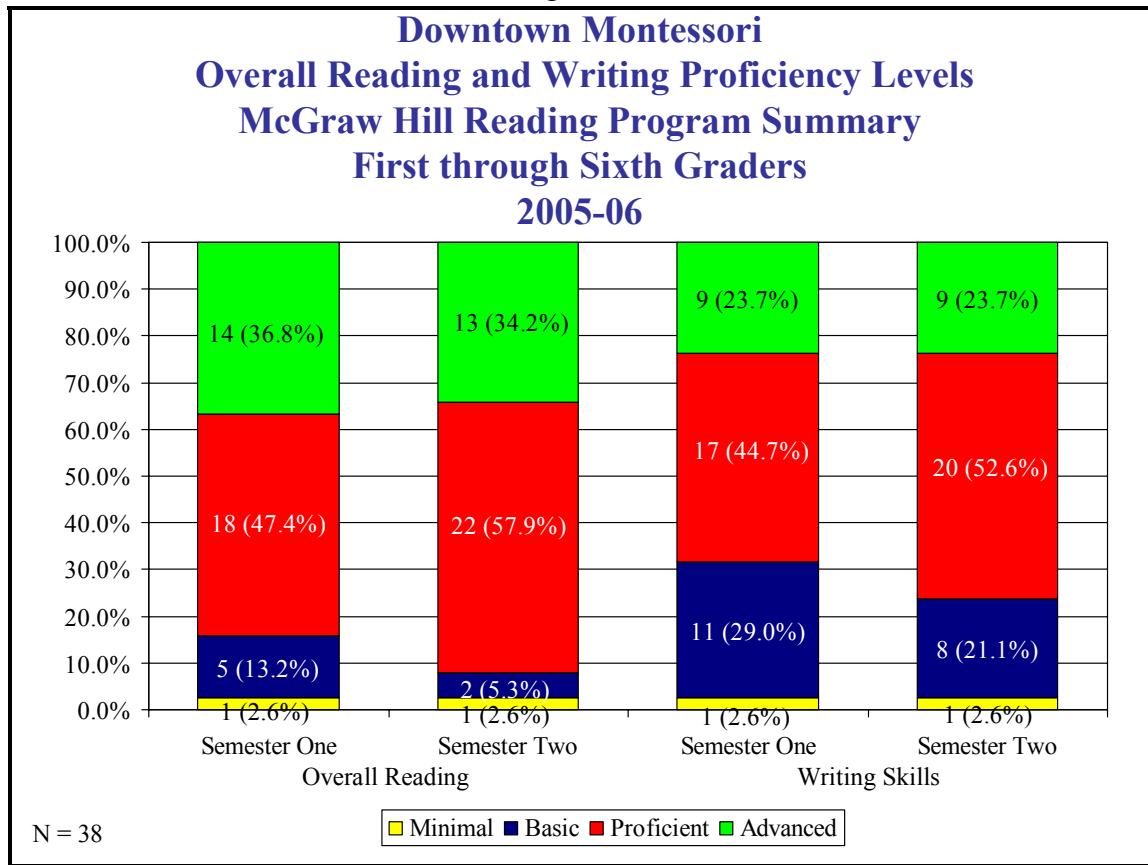
**Downtown Montessori
Reading/Writing Program Proficiency Levels
McGraw-Hill Reading Program Summary
End of Second Semester
First through Sixth Graders
2005-06**

Area Tested	Proficiency Level									
	Minimal		Basic		Proficient		Advanced		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Overall Reading Performance	1	2.6%	2	5.3%	22	57.9%	13	34.2%	38	100.0%
Complete Nightly Reading Homework*	1	2.9%	5	14.3%	15	42.9%	14	40.0%	35	100.0%
Attendance/Tardiness	1	2.6%	2	5.3%	7	18.4%	28	73.7%	38	100.0%
Responsibility for Reading Materials	1	2.6%	1	2.6%	9	23.7%	27	71.1%	38	100.0%
Oral Reading Skills	1	2.6%	4	10.5%	18	47.4%	15	39.5%	38	100.0%
Writing Skills	1	2.6%	8	21.1%	20	52.6%	9	23.7%	38	100.0%
Comprehension Skills	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	15	39.5%	21	55.3%	38	100.0%
Analysis Skills	0	0.0%	5	13.2%	17	44.7%	16	42.1%	38	100.0%
Spelling	0	0.0%	7	18.4%	14	36.8%	17	44.7%	38	100.0%
Grammar	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	24	63.2%	10	26.3%	38	100.0%

*Homework did not apply to all students.

A summary of students' proficiency levels in overall reading and writing skills in the first and second semesters is provided in Figure 16. As illustrated, most students were at proficient or advanced in overall reading and writing skills. At the end of the year, only three students remained at minimal (2.6%) or basic (5.3%) in overall reading, an improvement from first semester, when 15.8% of students exhibited minimal or basic skills. Also, only nine students were rated as having minimal or basic writing skills, compared to 12 students who were minimal (2.6%) or basic (29.0%) in the first semester.

Figure 16



3. Summary of Scholastic Progress

Downtown Montessori's local measure related to report cards for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten was that students would demonstrate "making steady progress" or "has mastered the skills" on the skills presented each semester. Report cards indicate that, on average, K4 and K5 students made steady progress or mastered between 79.6% and 98.5% of the skills presented, depending on the skill area.

The school did not specifically identify a local measure for the Elementary Progress Reports used in first through sixth grades. When analysis was limited to skills in which students were "successful," results showed that on average, students reached "successful" in 66.2% of math and 81.5% of language skills. Based on the McGraw-Hill Reading Program test results at the end of the year, most students' overall reading performance was proficient (57.9%) or advanced (34.2%). Finally, 52.6% of percent of students exhibited proficient and 23.7% advanced writing skills. Therefore, this local measure of academic achievement was met.

E. Standardized Measures of Educational Performance

The SDRT is the standardized test required by the CSRC for administration to first, second, and third graders enrolled in city charter schools to assess student reading skills. Results are provided as grade level equivalents (GLE). The test was to be administered between March 15 and April 15, 2006.

The CSRC also requires that students in third through eighth grade take the WKCE-CRT. This test is also required by the State of Wisconsin and is administered to all students in Wisconsin public schools. The WKCE-CRT meets federal No Child Left Behind requirements that students in third through eighth grades be tested in reading and mathematics. Students in fourth and eighth grades are also tested in language arts, science, and social studies. Results are provided as proficiency levels. The following describes results of the standardized measures of

academic performance. (Note: Standardized testing was not an appropriate measure of educational performance for the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten students enrolled at Downtown Montessori during the academic year because of their age and developmental level.)

1. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test for First through Third Grade

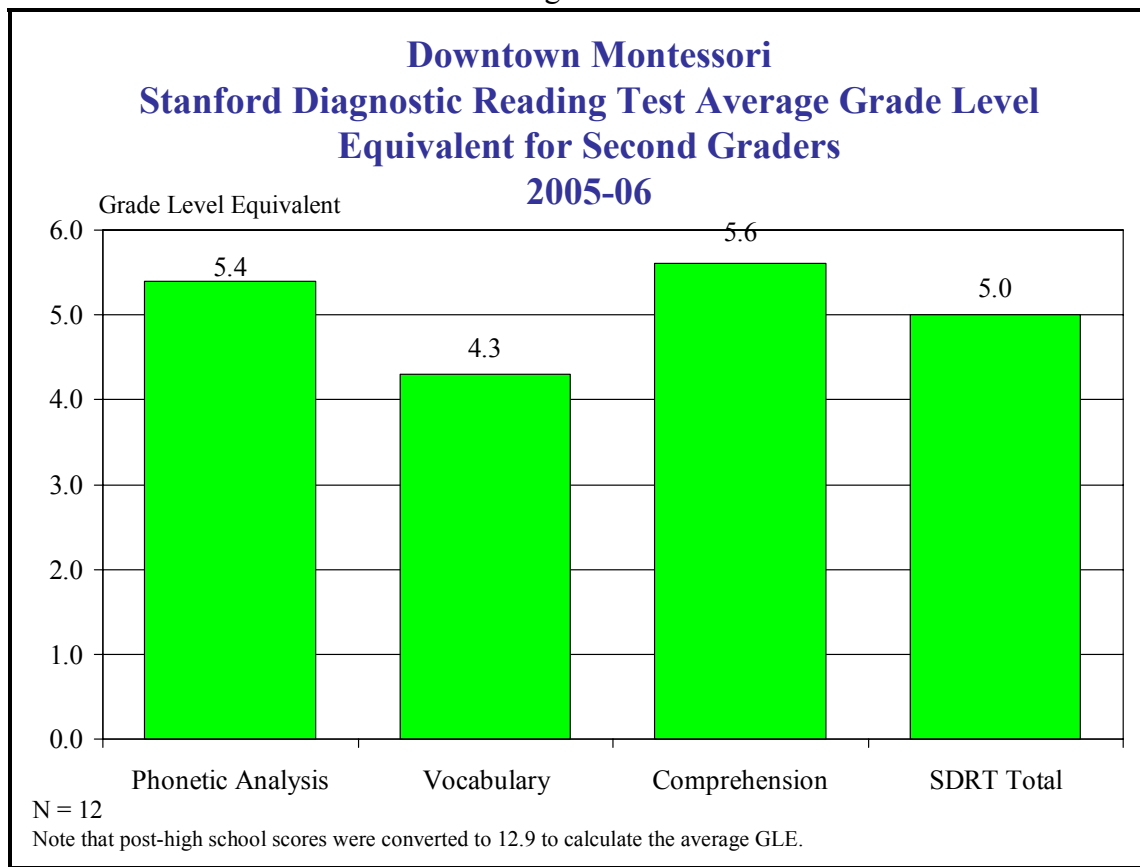
In April 2006, the SDRT was administered to eight first graders,¹⁷ 12 second graders, and eight third graders. Student performance is reported in phonetic analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, and a total SDRT score. For confidentiality reasons, results for the first and third grade classes could not be included in this report.¹⁸

¹⁷ One additional first grader took part of the test. His/her scores are not included in the analysis.

¹⁸ To protect student identity, the CSRC requires group sizes of ten or more.

Results for second graders are presented in Figure 17 and Table 9. Second graders were functioning, on average, at fourth and fifth grade level equivalents in the areas tested.

Figure 17



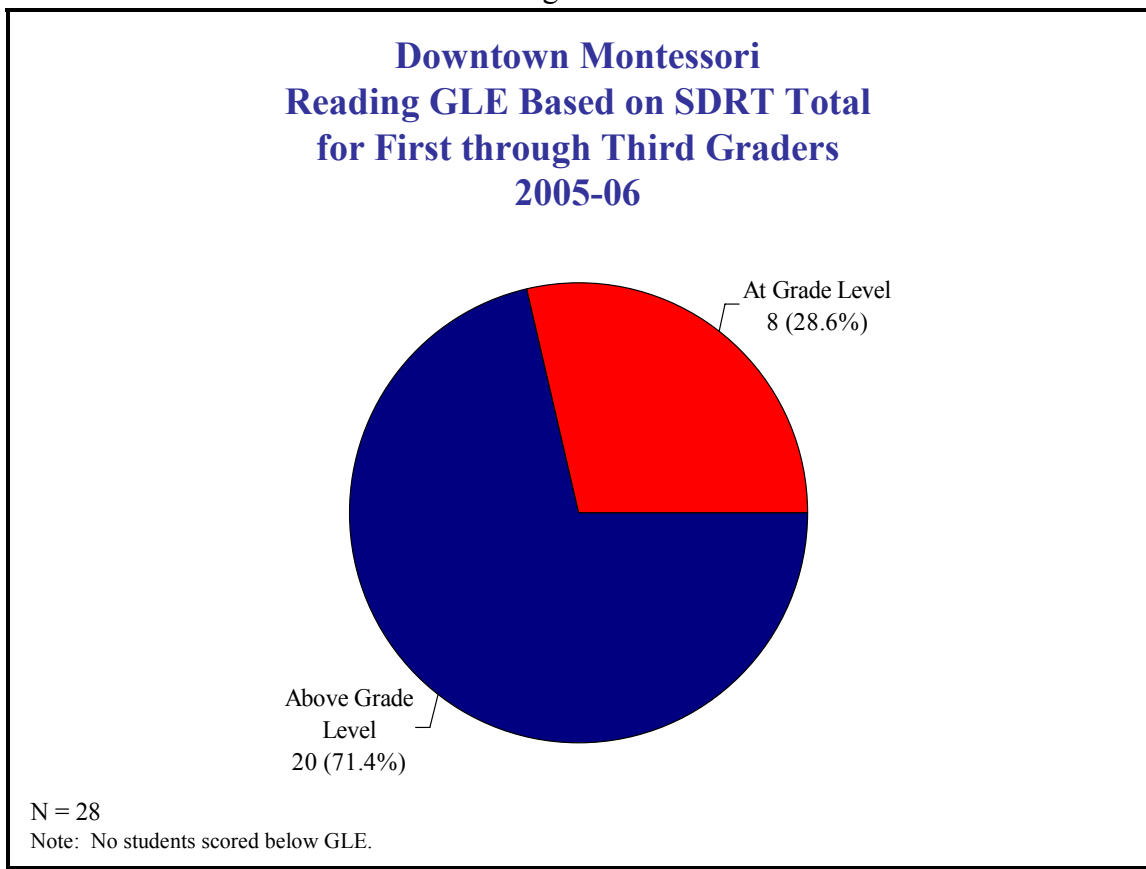
**Table 9
Downtown Montessori
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
Grade Level Equivalent Range for Second Graders
2005-06
(N = 12)**

Area Tested	Lowest Grade Level Scored	Highest Grade Level Scored	Median
Phonetic Analysis	2.1	10.9	3.6
Vocabulary	2.1	8.1	4.1
Comprehension	2.2	PHS*	4.4
SDRT Total	2.3	PHS*	4.0

*Note that post-high school scores were converted to 12.9 to calculate the average GLE.

Although results for first and third grade could not be reported for each grade, CRC combined results to provide an indication of how many students in first, second, or third grade were reading at grade level. Results indicate that eight (28.6%) first through third graders were reading at grade level and 20 (71.4%) were reading above grade level. No students scored below GLE (see Figure 18).

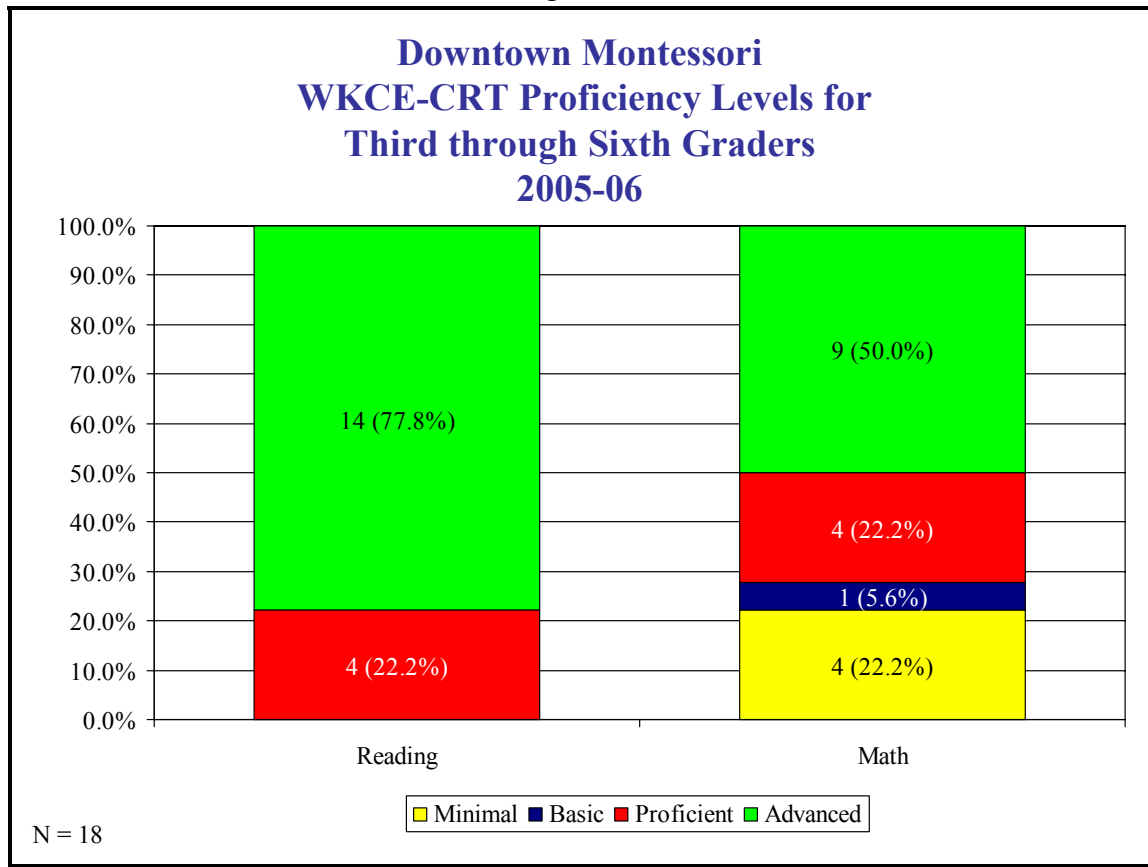
Figure 18



2. Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination – Criterion Referenced Test for Third through Sixth Grade

In October 2005, all public school students in third through eighth grades and tenth grade in Wisconsin participated in statewide assessments called the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination – Criterion Referenced Test (WKCE-CRT). This test is similar to the *TerraNova* and WKCE used in previous years in that, based on how they score on these assessments, students are placed in one of four proficiency categories: advanced, proficient, basic, or minimal performance. They differ from previous years' tests in that tests used in the past reflected how students performed compared to a national sample of students. The WKCE-CRT results reflect student performance relative to the state of Wisconsin model academic standards. This year, there were eight third, six fourth, three fifth, and one sixth grader who were administered the WKCE-CRT. Due to the small size of these cohorts, results for each grade level could not be included in this report. However, when results for all grades were combined, 14 (77.8%) students were reading at advanced, and four (22.2%) scored in the proficient level. No students scored in the basic or minimal reading categories. In math, nine (50.0%) students exhibited advanced skills, four (22.2%) scored proficient, one (5.6%) scored in the basic range, and four (22.2%) students scored minimal math proficiency (see Figure 19).

Figure 19



F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year student progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. The tests used to examine progress have been the SDRT (reading only), the *TerraNova* and WKCE test results from 2004-05, and the WKCE-CRT for 2005-06. In addition, the CSRC requires that progress for fourth through sixth grade students who met proficiency expectations be reported separately from those who did not.

The following section includes all students for whom standardized test data were available in consecutive years.

1. First through Third Graders

First through third grade reading progress is measured using the SDRT. Results from this test are stated in GLEs. The CSRC expects all students, on average, to advance at least one year from spring to spring testing. The expectation for students with below-grade-level scores in the previous year is more than one year GLE advancement.

The following table describes reading progress results, as measured by SDRT, over consecutive academic years for students enrolled as first graders in 2004-05 and as second graders in 2005-06, and for second graders who returned as third graders in 2005-06. Overall, SDRT totals indicate an average improvement of 2.0 GLE from first to second grade. Average advancement from second to third grade could not be reported due to the small size of this cohort. Results were combined to show an overall average advancement 2.2 GLE for second and third graders combined.

Table 10				
Downtown Montessori				
Average GLE Advancement in Reading				
Based on SDRT				
Grades	Grade Level Equivalent			
	Average GLE (2004-05)	Average GLE (2005-06)	Median Advancement	Average Advancement
First to Second (N = 12)	3.0	5.0	1.6	2.0
Second to Third (N = 6)	Cannot be reported	Cannot be reported	Cannot be reported	Cannot be reported
Total (N = 18)	--	--	1.6	2.2

It is possible to compare SDRT results from 2003-04 to 2005-06 using scores from students who took the SDRT in 2003-04 as first graders and again in 2005-06 as third graders. Six of this year's third graders were administered the SDRT as first graders in 2003-04. Due to the small size of this cohort, progress could not be included in this report.

G. Multiple-Year Progress for Students Who Met Proficiency Expectations

The CSRC requires that multiple-year standardized test results be reported for students who met proficiency level expectations in the previous school year. Multiple-year progress for fifth and sixth graders can be examined using the WKCE and *TerraNova* examinations from 2004-05 and the WKCE-CRT from 2005-06. For this year, there was no test series to compare third to fourth grade results. Next year, the WKCE-CRT can be used for all students in third through eighth grades.

This year, there were two fifth graders and one sixth grader who had scores from consecutive years. All met reading proficiency level expectations, and one met expectations in math. Due to the small size of these cohorts, progress could not be included in this report.

All students in second and third grade met GLE expectations based on the SDRT. As illustrated in the previous section, these students progressed an average of 2.2 GLE from 2004-05 to 2005-06.

H. Multiple-Year Progress for Students Who Did Not Meet Proficiency Expectations

In addition to examining progress for students who met expectations, the CSRC requires that the school report grade and proficiency level advancement for children who did not meet proficiency level expectations in reading, language, and/or math in the previous academic year. Because the SDRT does not translate into proficiency levels, CRC selected second and third graders who tested below GLE in 2004-05 as first and second graders.

This year, there were:

- No second graders who tested below GLE in reading, based on the 2004-05 SDRT;
- No third graders who tested below GLE in reading, based on the 2004-05 SDRT; and

- No fifth graders who tested at minimal or basic, i.e., did not meet proficiency expectations in reading; and two who tested at minimal or basic in math, based on the 2004-05 WKCE.
- No sixth graders who tested at minimal or basic level in reading and/or math, based on the 2004-05 *TerraNova*.

Due to the small size of the cohorts, and the fact that no students met the criteria, there are no reportable results for students below GLE or for those who did not meet proficiency level expectations.

I. Annual Review of the School's Adequate Yearly Progress

1. Background Information¹⁹

State and federal laws require the annual review of school performance to determine student academic achievement and progress. In Wisconsin, the annual review of performance required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act is based on each school's performance on four objectives:

- The test participation of all students enrolled.
- A required academic indicator (either graduation or attendance rate).
- The proficiency rate in reading.
- The proficiency rate in mathematics.

In Wisconsin, the DPI releases an Annual Review of School Performance for each chartered school with information about whether the school has met the criteria for each of the four required adequate yearly progress (AYP) objectives. If a school fails to meet the criteria in the same AYP objective for two consecutive years, the school is designated as "identified for improvement." Once designated as "identified for improvement," the school must meet the

¹⁹ This information was taken from the DPI website: www.dpi.state.wi.us.

annual review criteria for two consecutive years in the same AYP objective to be removed from this status.

The possible school status designations are as follows:

- “Satisfactory,” which means that the school is not in improvement status.
- SIFI, or “School Identified for Improvement,” which means that the school did not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same objective.
- SIFI Levels 1-5, which means that the school missed at least one of the AYP objectives and is subject to state requirements and additional Title I sanctions, if applicable, assigned to that level.
- SIFI Levels 1-4 Improved, which means that the school met the AYP in the year tested, but it remains subject to sanctions due to the prior year. AYP must be met for two consecutive years in that objective to return to “satisfactory” status from “improvement” status.
- Title I Status, which identifies whether Title I funds are directed to this school. If so, the schools are subject to the federal sanctions.²⁰

2. Three-Year Adequate Yearly Progress

According to Downtown Montessori’s Adequate Yearly Progress Review Summary School Performance: 2005-06²¹ published by DPI, the school has demonstrated “Satisfactory” performance on all four objectives: test participation, attendance, reading, and mathematics objectives. In addition, DPI reported that Downtown Montessori received a “Satisfactory” designation in all four objectives applicable for the past three years. The school has met all requirements for AYP for the 2005-06 academic year.

²⁰ For complete information about sanctions, see www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/esea/doc/sanctions-schools; www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/esea/bul_0402.html; and www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/esea/doc/sanctions-districts.doc.

²¹ For a copy of the Downtown Montessori Annual Review of School Performance, see the DPI website www2.dpi.state.wi.us/sifi/AYP_Summary.

V. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the eighth year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. For the 2005-06 academic year, Downtown Montessori has met all of its educationally related contract provisions. In addition to the information explained in the body of this report, please see Appendix A for an outline of specific contract provision compliance information.

This year, the CSRC expanded its monitoring plans to include surveys of parents and interviews with staff and board members. A few highlights of the results indicated:

- Three of the four teachers interviewed rated the school as "excellent" overall; the fourth rated the school as "good."
- 79.5% of the 39 parents surveyed indicated the school overall as "excellent" and 20.5% indicated the school overall as "good."
- The two board members interviewed mentioned that the school needed a larger facility, a foreign language added to the curriculum, and increased parent involvement.
- Teachers suggested that there was a need for a larger physical space and more resources to support a full-time assistant director, more planning time, and a librarian.

The major educationally related findings for this year were as follows:

- Average student attendance was 92.5%, exceeding the school's goal of 80.0%.
- All (100.0%) of the parents attended both scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

Downtown Montessori's local measures of academic progress indicated that:

- By the end of the school year, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students reached steady progress or mastery of the following skills:
 - ▶ 98.5% of the practical life skills;
 - ▶ 92.1% of the sensorial discrimination skills;
 - ▶ 79.6% of the math skills;

- ▶ 89.7% of the language skills; and
- ▶ 81.5% of the cultural skills.
- By the end of the school year first through sixth graders were “successful” in:
 - ▶ 81.5% of language skills; and
 - ▶ 66.2% of the math skills.
- McGraw-Hill Reading Program results for 38 first through sixth grade indicated that by the end of the second semester:
 - ▶ Most students’ overall reading performance was proficient (57.9%) or advanced (34.2%).
 - ▶ 52.6% of the students exhibited proficient writing skills, and 23.7% of the students exhibited advanced writing skills.

Standardized tests results for Downtown Montessori students were as follows:

The April 2006 SDRT results indicated that:

- Second graders were, on average, reading at a fifth grade level (5.0 GLE); and
- 71.4% of first through third graders were reading above grade level, and 28.6% were reading at grade level.

The WKCE-CRT for 18 third through sixth graders indicated that in:

Reading:

- 77.8% were functioning at the advanced level; and
- 22.2% were functioning at the proficient level.

And in math:

- 50.0% were functioning at the advanced level;
- 22.2% were functioning at the proficient level;
- 5.6% were functioning at the basic level; and
- 22.2% were functioning at the minimal level.

SDRT multiple-year advancement results indicated that second and third graders advanced an average of 2.2 GLEs in reading.

WKCE-CRT results for multiple-year advancement were not reportable due to small cohort sizes.

After reviewing the information in this report and considering the information gathered during the administration interview in June 2006, it is recommended that the focus of activities for the 2006-07 school year include the following:

- Focus on marketing and advertising relative to the school's move and increased space.
- Develop plans to increase the student population at the school in order to extend the program to eighth grade. With this accomplished, develop the curriculum to include higher level mathematics and foreign language.
- Fully implement Powerschool, including the capacity to generate electronic reports. Identify which electronic reports can be used to provide data for monitoring purposes.

APPENDIX A

Contract Compliance Chart

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
Overview of Compliance for Educationally Related Contract Provisions
2005-06

Section of Contract	Educationally Related Contract Provision	Monitoring Report Reference Page	Contract Provision Met or Not Met
Section B	Description of educational program of the school and curriculum focus	pp. 2-3	Met
Section B	875 hours of instruction	p. 8	Met
Section C	Educational methods	pp. 2-3	Met
Section D	Montessori Learning Review (see local measures below)		Met
Section E	Parental involvement	pp. 4-5	Met
Section B	Teacher certification: Montessori	p. 4	Met
Section F	DPI license or permit	p. 4	Met
Section I	Student database information including information regarding special education students	pp. 7-8	Met
Section K	Procedures for disciplining students	pp. 5-6	Met
Memo subsequent to contract	Administration of required standardized tests	pp. 43-88	Met
Memo subsequent to contract	Academic criteria #1: Maintain local measures, showing student growth in demonstrating curricular goals.	pp. 30-42	Met
Memo subsequent to contract	Academic criteria #2: Achievement measure a. Second and third grade students: Advance average of 1.0 GLE in reading. b. Fourth through sixth grade students proficient or advanced in reading: At least 75.0% maintain proficiency level. c. Fourth through sixth grade students proficient or advanced in language arts: At least 75.0% maintain proficiency level. d. Fourth through sixth grade students proficient or advanced in mathematics: At least 75.0% maintain proficiency level.	a. p. 49 b. p. 50 c. p. 50 d. p. 50	a. Met* b. N/A** c. DPI testing does not include language arts for these grades d. N/A**
Memo subsequent to contract	Academic criteria #3: Year-to-year achievement measure a. Second and third grade students with below grade level 04-05 scores in reading: Advance more than 1.0 GLE in reading. b. Fourth through sixth grade students below proficient level in 04-05 reading test: Advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency level range. c. Fourth through sixth grade students below proficient level in 04-05 language arts test: Advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency level range. d. Fourth through sixth grade students below proficient level in 04-05 math test: Advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency level range.	a. pp. 50-51 b. pp. 50-51 c. pp. 50-51 d. pp. 50-51	a. N/A*** b. N/A*** c. DPI testing does not include language arts for these grades d. N/A**

*There were fewer than ten third graders. The 12 second graders advanced an average of 2.0 GLEs. The average advancement of the second and third graders combined was 2.2 GLEs.

**Group size too small for grade level, or school-wide report could not be reported.

***There were no students who tested below grade level in 2004-05.

APPENDIX B

Outcome Measures Agreement Memo

Downtown Montessori Academy
2319 E Kenwood Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI. 53211

Student Learning Memorandum
2005-06 School Year

The following procedures and outcomes will be used for the 2006-06 school year monitoring of the education programs of Downtown Montessori. The data will be provided to Children’s Research Center, the monitoring agent contracted by the City of Milwaukee, Charter School Review Committee.

Attendance:

The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of eighty percent (80%). Attendance rates will be reported as present, excused, unexcused.

Enrollment:

Upon admission, individual student information will be added to the school database .

Termination:

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

Parent Conferences:

On average, parents will participate in at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Dates for the events and names of the parent participants will be recorded by the school and provided to Children’s Research Center in June of each school year.

Parent Contract:

Eighty percent (80%) of parents 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, IEP completion date, IEP review dates and any reassessment results.

Academic Achievement: Local Measures
Montessori Skills

Students’ Montessori curricular experiences, skills, and content included in local measures assessment are in the areas of Sensorial, Practical Life, Mathematics, Language Arts, and Culture. The following scale will be used for the local measures assessment:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 – New presentation | 3 – Making steady progress |
| 2 – Having difficulty | 4 – Has mastered the skill |

Beginning with four year old kindergarten through sixth grade students will demonstrate “Making steady progress” or “Has mastered the skill” on the skills presented each semester. Measurement will occur once each semester.

These measures are based on the Montessori approach where the teacher first presents the skill; and the student then practices the skill until reaching mastery at that particular skill. Teachers will document the semester when a skill is presented and the semester when the student reaches the Mastery level. At the end of the school year, all skills that were presented to the student and in which the student has not yet reached “Has mastered the skill” will be recorded as “Making steady progress,” “Having difficulty,” or “New presentation.”

Writing Skills will continue to be part of our local measures and progress will continue to be measured and reported as part of our present local measures.

McGraw Hill Reading Program – Using the McGraw Hill reading tests throughout the year we will be able to measure the students annual reading progress. The placement tests will be administered in the fall to 1st Grade and new students, unit tests will be administered through out the year. Results are combined from the SDRT and teacher assessment place each child at an instructional level ,unrelated to the traditional concept of ‘grade levels.’

Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures

The following standardized test measures will assess academic achievements in reading and mathematics.

Grades 1, 2, 3

Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test will be administered March 15th thru April 15th. The first year testing will serve as baseline data. Progress will be assessed based on the results of the testing in reading in the second and subsequent years.

Grade 3, 4, 5, 6

WKCE will be administered in the fall on an annual basis as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The areas to be evaluated will be reading and math for all students and the additional subjects of Science Social Studies and Language Arts for 4th Grade.