

# 2022–23 PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE AND EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI  
ACADEMY**

August 2023



## **ABOUT EVIDENT CHANGE**

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

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FOR DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 2022–23

This is the 25th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, one of seven schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee during the 2022–23 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.

Evident Change has determined the following, based on the information gathered and discussed in the report.

### I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

Downtown Montessori met or partially met all but one of the educational provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent CSRC requirements. See Appendix A for a list of contract provisions and report page references.

### II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

#### A. LOCAL MEASURES 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*

- Of the 74 K3 – K5 students enrolled all year who took both fall and spring assessments, 89.2% were at or above the developmental range for five completed tasks. The school's goal was 95.0%.
- Of the 79 first through third graders who completed the spring Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment, 54 (68.4%) were at or above the spring benchmark. The school's goal was 85%.
- Of the 89 fourth through eighth graders who completed the fall and spring STAR Reading assessments, 58 (65.2%) showed progress on the spring test. The school's goal was 70%.
- Overall, 178 (73.6%) of 242 K3 through eighth graders who were considered in the school's outcomes made progress and met their literacy local measure goal during the school year.

b. *Math*

This year, Downtown Montessori had separate assessment methods for first through third graders and for fourth through eighth graders. First through third graders were assessed on a number of Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core State Standards math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Fourth through eighth graders were assessed using the STAR Math assessment.

- Of the 74 K3 – K5 students enrolled all year who took both fall and spring assessments, 93.2% were at or above the developmental range for five completed tasks. The school's goal was 95.0%.
- By the end of the year, 71 (89.9%) of 79 first through third graders who took both fall and spring assessments met the grade-level goal of demonstrating progress in acquiring at least five grade-level Common Core math skills. The school's goal was 95%.
- Of the 89 fourth through eighth graders tested in the fall, 59 (66.3%) demonstrated a student growth percentile (SGP) of 40 or higher from fall to spring. The school's goal was 70%.

Overall, 199 (82.2%) of 242 K3 through eighth graders met the school's local measure goals in math.

c. *Writing*

Writing skills were assessed using the Six Traits of Writing.

Overall, 118 (68.6%) of 172 first through eighth graders increased their fall average writing level score by at least a half point (0.5) on the spring writing sample if they scored below 4.0 or maintained or improved a score of at least 4.0 from the fall to spring. The school's goal was 80%.

#### *d. Special Education*

A total of 10 (83.3%) of 12 elementary academy students with individualized education program (IEP) goals reviewed during the year met one or more of their goals this year. The school's goal was that 95% of students with active IEPs who had been at the school for one entire IEP year would meet at least one of their IEP goals at the time of their annual review.

## **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. Of the three goals pertaining to the secondary measures, the school met two (parent participation and attendance) and partially met one (special education records).

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

Downtown Montessori administered all required standardized tests noted in its contract with the City of Milwaukee.

Evident Change examined year-to-year results of the PALS exam for second graders. Of the 18 students at or above the summed score benchmark as first graders, 14 (77.8%) remained at or above the summed score benchmark as second graders. The goal was 75.0%.

In the spring of 2022, a total of 48 third through seventh graders tested as proficient or advanced on the English/Language Arts (ELA) Forward exam. When this same group of students was tested in the spring of 2023, 44 (91.7%) tested as proficient or advanced. There were 32 students who tested as below proficient on the ELA Forward exam in the spring of 2022; 18 (51.4%) showed progress in 2023.

Of the 41 third through seventh graders who were proficient or advanced on the Forward math exam in 2022, 27 (65.9%) were proficient or advanced in 2023. Of the 42 students who tested as below proficient in math in the spring of 2022, 10 (33.3%) showed progress in 2023.

## **C. CSRC SCHOOL SCORECARD**

Downtown Montessori scored 71.4% of the 100.0 possible scorecard points.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Downtown Montessori addressed the recommendations from its programmatic profile and educational performance report from the previous year. 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 2023–24 school year.

- Equity training, restorative practice training, and social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum will be expanded to a schoolwide initiative to strengthen relationships between students; among teachers, students, and parents; and in the school community as a whole.
- Staff will work proactively to address student behavior through embedding the research-based SEL curriculum, Second Step.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, a full-time counselor will be hired to implement the SEL curriculum alongside instructional staff and offer tiered support with behavioral issues.
- School leadership, with the support of the Board of Directors, will expand their membership by developing a parent advisory board in an effort to understand and support the needs of the school community.

### IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND REPORTING

This report covers the 25th year of Downtown Montessori’s operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements. This year, it has met or partially met all but one of the contract requirements. Based on contract compliance, as well as the school’s trend data, Evident Change recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> [Second Step Programs](#) | [Second Step](#)



# 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 session with the school to collect information related to contract requirements and to draft a learning memo for the new school year.
- Conducted an in-person year-end interview to review progress related to recommendations and changes that occurred during the year.
- Visited the school to conduct a random review of special education files.
- Visited the school to observe classroom instruction and school culture.
- Attended 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.
- 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 them 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**

The school delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society. Montessori education is a philosophy of child growth and 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 DIRECTORS<sup>2</sup>**

The school's leadership includes a head of school, principal, 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. This year, the board had five members: a president, a vice president, a treasurer, and two 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.

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<sup>2</sup> This information comes from the fall and spring interviews with school leadership and from the school's website, <http://downtownmontessori.com>

The board met with the CSRC program analyst and the Evident Change researcher who serves as the school monitor to review the previous school year report data, including school improvement recommendations and general updates. This included recent information from the City of Milwaukee.

## **2. AREAS OF INSTRUCTION<sup>3</sup>**

Downtown Montessori is divided into four levels of programming. The Children's House contains the Montessori primary program, which is open to students ages 3 to 6 and covers grades K3, K4, and K5.<sup>4</sup> Children's House students begin to acquire knowledge through the Montessori Curriculum, which is made up of five areas of study: practical life, sensorial learning, language, math, 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).

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. 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 students' 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 Montessori 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, 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 in fourth grade and above. The school's internet use policy requires 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Information from the school's website can be found at <https://downtownmontessori.com/academics>

<sup>4</sup> 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; the full-day program consists of half-day Montessori and half-day childcare.

### 3. CLASSROOMS

In the fall of the 2022–23 academic year, the school began the program with each classroom consisting of an average of 23 students.

### 4. CERTIFIED STAFF INFORMATION

The school employed 27 staff in the following certified positions.<sup>5</sup>

- One principal
- 13 classroom teachers
- One special education director
- Two part-time social workers
- One reading interventionist
- One reading teacher
- One part-time school psychologist
- Two part-time occupational therapists
- One speech and language therapist
- One part-time literacy teacher
- One art teacher
- Two part-time special education aides

Four classroom teachers taught at the Children’s House, three taught lower elementary, three taught upper elementary, and three taught the adolescent program. All 27 staff members in certified positions remained at the school for the entire school year, resulting in a 100% retention rate.

At the end of the 2021–22 school year, 24 instructional staff were employed by the school and eligible to return in the fall of 2022. Of those 24, 19 returned, resulting in a return rate of 79.2%.

All but three (11%) of 27 instructional staff<sup>6</sup> employed at the end of the year did not hold a current Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) license or permit. The Downtown Montessori Academy

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<sup>5</sup> The school contracted with MJ Care for the services of a speech pathologist and, if needed, an occupational therapist. If physical therapy, vision-related services, or nursing care are needed, the school uses First Aid through the Cooperative Educational Service Agency.

<sup>6</sup> Includes one administrator who holds a lifetime teacher license and has an expired administrator’s license

Employee Handbook, which was revised in February 2022, explains that informal performance evaluation is ongoing. A formal performance evaluation occurs once per year, and it 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 CPR/first aid, mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, mandatory reporting of threats of school violence, bloodborne pathogens, restorative practices, and effective educator orientation. The school also hosted a “getting to know yourself and coworkers” team-building day and a Dare to Lead book club. The adolescent program teachers also participated in restorative justice training.

## **5. SCHOOL HOURS AND CALENDAR**

A printed calendar of the 2022–23 school year was provided to all families during open house, supply drop-off, and adolescent orientation and it was available in the school’s front office. The first day of school was September 6, 2022, for K5 – eighth grade; September 8 for K4; and September 9 for K3. The last day of school for all students was June 2, 2023. The hours of school operation for this year were 8:40–11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4 and 8:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for K5 through eighth grade.

## **6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

As described in the parent/student handbook, Downtown Montessori seeks and relies on the energy and spirit of parents, who 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 student benefits from the school.

Examples of active parental involvement include accompanying students on field trips; reading stories to the class; volunteering at school events (e.g., hot lunches, Art Gala, family outings, fall parade, bookfair, Fun Friday); assisting in building improvements, such as repairing equipment; organizing and leading afterschool clubs; planning family events; stapling and labeling flyers; making copies for teachers; and donating equipment or other classroom supplies. The school expects all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. The school posts 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. The school’s all-volunteer parent group, called the Parent Engagement Network, is

dedicated to supplementing and enriching student education by providing parent involvement opportunities.<sup>7</sup> All parents of enrolled students are members.

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 are also 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. The handbook indicates that in terms of 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 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.

The school does not tolerate student behavior that is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the student 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 behavioral 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.

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<sup>7</sup> The Parent Engagement Network is fully described in the parent/student handbook.

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 17 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, Downtown Montessori graduates plan to attend Ronald Reagan, St. Thomas More, Tenor, St. Francis, Waukesha West, and Muskego high schools.

## **C. STUDENT POPULATION**

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 255 students in K3 through eighth grade (Figure 1).<sup>8</sup> By the end of the year, four additional students enrolled and eight withdrew. Because only eight students withdrew this year, withdrawal reasons are not included.<sup>9</sup>

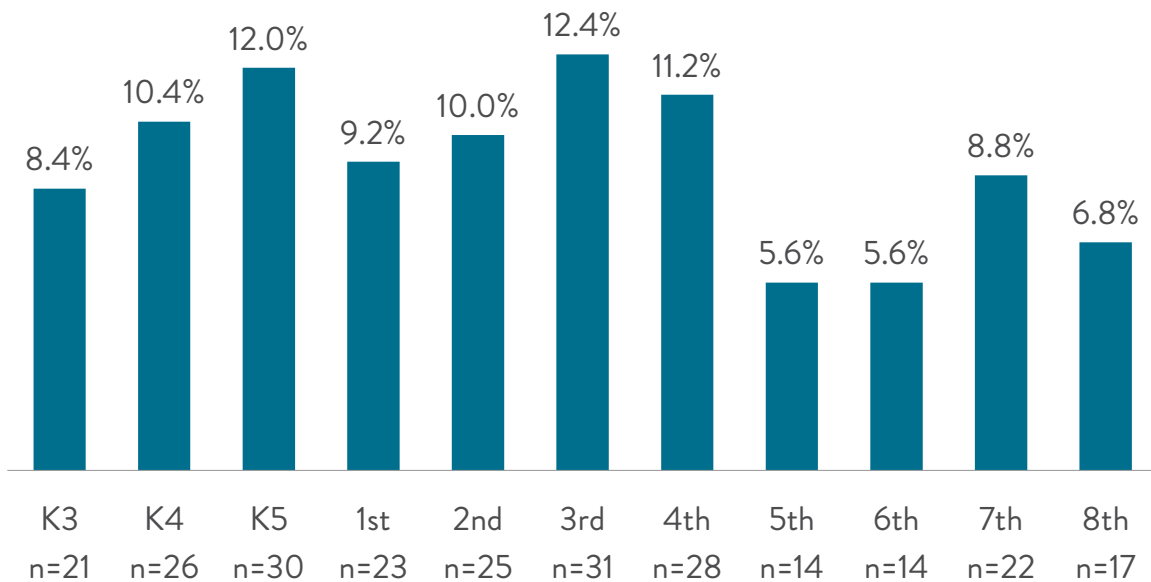
At the end of the school year, 251 students were enrolled.

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<sup>8</sup> As of September 16, 2022. The third Friday of September is considered the beginning of the school year for student tracking purposes.

<sup>9</sup> To protect student identity, Evident Change does not include results for fewer than 10 students.

**Figure 1**  
**Downtown Montessori Academy Enrollment by Student Grade Level, 2022–23**  
**N = 251**



- Of these students, 160 (63.7%) were White, 54 (21.5%) were Hispanic/Latino, 19 (7.6%) were Black or African American, 15 (6.0%) were Asian, two (0.8%) were Pacific Islander, and one (0.4%) was American Indian.<sup>10</sup>
- There were 129 (51.4%) male students and 122 (48.6%) female students.<sup>11</sup>
- A total of 24 (9.6%) students had special education needs: 14 had speech and language needs, seven had other health impairments, two had autism, two had specific learning disabilities, and two had significant developmental delay.<sup>12</sup>
- There were 43 (17.1%) students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- There were 77 students in the Children’s House, 79 in lower elementary, 56 in upper elementary, and 39 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).

Of the 255 students who began the year, 247 (96.9%) remained enrolled at the end of the school year.

<sup>10</sup> Race/ethnicity categories reflect those reported by the school.

<sup>11</sup> Gender categories reflect those reported by the school.

<sup>12</sup> Because some students have multiple special education needs reported, the total exceeds the number of students enrolled with special education needs.



On the last day of the 2021–22 academic year, 224 students attending Downtown Montessori were eligible for continued enrollment for 2021–22 (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 201 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2022. This represents a return rate of 89.7%.

## 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 previous academic year. At that time, the recommendation was that the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2022–23 school year. Each recommendation and response by the school follows.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.

**Response:** The leadership team contracted with Chauna Perry Finch of Restorative TCS<sup>13</sup> to conduct monthly student circles (sixth through eighth grade), monthly parent meetings on restorative practices, and teacher restorative practice training. Additionally, leadership increased the school social worker’s hours from one day a week to three days a week to support student social–emotional health.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to maintain accuracy of reporting of reporting monitoring data.

**Response:** The school has implemented computer-based local measures, making it easier to pull reports and data for submission.

After reviewing the information in this report, and in consultation with the school’s leader at the end -of -year interview in May 2023, Evident Change recommends the following activities to support school improvement for the 2023–24 school year.

- Equity training, restorative practice training, and social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum will be expanded to a schoolwide initiative to strengthen relationships between students; among teachers, students, and parents; and in the school community as a whole.
- Staff will work proactively to address student behavior through embedding the research-based SEL curriculum, Second Step.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, a full-time counselor will be hired to implement the SEL curriculum alongside instructional staff and offer tiered support with behavioral issues.

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<sup>13</sup> Restorative Cultures - Restorative TCS LLC

<sup>14</sup> Second Step Programs | Second Step

- School leadership, with the support of the board of directors, will expand their membership by developing a parent advisory board in an effort to understand and support the needs of the school community.

### 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 the school's 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 the Wisconsin Forward Exam.

#### A. ATTENDANCE

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 90%. This rate includes all students enrolled at any time during the school year. "Present" was defined as being present for at least half the day. There were 259 students enrolled at any time during the school year. Those students attended, on average, 93.1% of the time this year, meaning the attendance goal was met. When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 100.0%.

Downtown Montessori's policy is not to suspend students except as a last resort. In 2022-23, no students were suspended.

#### 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 (100.0%) students 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, 28 of the 29 students who required special education services received them. Four students were evaluated or reevaluated during the current year and were dismissed from or did not qualify for special education services. An individualized education program (IEP) was developed for 23 of the 24 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; however, due to the transition of a staff member, one student's file was not updated as required.

## 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.

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

### 1. LITERACY

#### a. Progress Reports for K3 Through K5

Downtown Montessori uses the Montessori Progress reports in the Children's House (K3, K4, and 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)

The language skill area is used to assess literacy progress in K3 through K5 students. Students are rated as presented, practiced, improving, or proficient in each skill in each area. This year, the school established a goal that 95% of 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.

There were 74 students enrolled all year who took both fall and spring assessments for literacy. Of those students, 66 (89.2%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five literacy skills (Table 1).

<b>TABLE 1</b>  <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b> <b>K3 – K5 FALL-TO-SPRING PROGRESS IN LITERACY 2022–23</b> <b>N = 74</b>		
<b>SKILL</b>	<b>STUDENTS MET GOAL</b>	<b>%</b>
Skill 1	74	100.0%
Skill 2	74	100.0%
Skill 3	71	95.9%
Skill 4	71	95.9%
Skill 5	71	95.9%
<b>All five literacy skills</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>89.2%</b>

## **b. PALS for First Through Third Graders**

This year, first through third graders were administered the PALS assessment in the fall and spring. The school established a goal that 85% of the cohort for each grade taking both tests would meet the spring benchmark.

Of the 79 first through third graders who took the PALS assessment in both the fall and the spring, 54 (68.4%) met the spring benchmark (Table 2).

TABLE 2			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PALS READING ASSESSMENT FOR 1ST – 3RD GRADES 2022–23			
GRADE	STUDENTS	STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE SPRING BENCHMARK 2023	
		n	%
1st	23	20	87.0%
2nd	25	14	56.0%
3rd	31	20	64.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>68.4%</b>

### c. STAR Reading Assessment for Fourth Through Eighth Graders

Literacy skills for students in fourth through eighth grades were measured in the fall and spring using the STAR Reading assessment. The school's goal was that 70% of students would demonstrate a student growth percentile (SGP) of 40 or higher from fall to spring. Of 89 students who took both fall and spring assessments, 58 (65.2%) had a SGP of 40 or higher in the spring (Table 3).

TABLE 3			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STAR READING ASSESSMENT FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES 2022–23			
GRADE	STUDENTS	STUDENTS WITH SGP OF 40 OR ABOVE 2023	
		n	%
4th	26	21	80.8%
5th	14	10	71.4%
6th	14	11	78.6%
7th	20	10	50.0%
8th	15	6	40.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>65.2%</b>

Overall, 178 (73.6%) of 242 K3 through eighth graders met their literacy local measure goal, and 112 (66.7%) of the 168 first- through eighth graders met theirs.

## 2. MATH

### a. Progress Reports for K3 Through K5

Downtown Montessori measures progress for K3 through K5 students using the Mathematical development area from the same Montessori Progress described in the literacy section. Students are rated as presented, practiced, improving, or proficient in each skill in each area.

There were 74 students enrolled all year who took both fall and spring math assessments. Of these, 69 (93.2%) maintained proficiency or showed progress in all five math skills (Table 4).

TABLE 4		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY		
K3 – K5 FALL-TO-SPRING PROGRESS IN MATH 2022–23		
N = 74		
SKILL	STUDENTS MET GOAL	%
Skill 1	74	100.0%
Skill 2	74	100.0%
Skill 3	71	95.9%
Skill 4	70	94.6%
Skill 5	73	98.6%
All five math skills	69	93.2%

### b. Math Common Core Assessment for First Through Third Grades

First through third graders were assessed on Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least five 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,” or “Advanced: Mastery.”

The school’s goal was that 95% of first through third graders would demonstrate progress in acquiring at least five grade-level Common Core math skills. Of the 79 students tested, 71 (89.9%) made progress by the end of the school year (Table 5).

TABLE 5			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY MATH 1ST – 3RD GRADES 2022–23			
GRADE	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
1st	23	22	95.7%
2nd	25	22	88.0%
3rd	31	27	87.1%
Total	79	71	89.9%

### c. Math Skills for Fourth Through Eighth Graders

Math progress for students in fourth through eighth grades was assessed in the fall and spring using the STAR Math assessment. The school's goal was that 70% of students would demonstrate a student growth percentile (SGP) of 40 or higher from fall to spring. Of 89 students who took both fall and spring assessments, 59 (66.3%) had an SGP of 40 or higher in the spring (Table 6).

TABLE 6			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STAR MATH ASSESSMENT FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES 2022–23			
GRADE	STUDENTS	STUDENTS WITH SGP OF 40 OR ABOVE 2023	
		n	%
4th	27	19	70.4%
5th	14	12	85.7%
6th	14	11	78.6%
7th	19	12	63.2%
8th	15	5	33.3%
Total	89	59	66.3%

Overall, 199 (82.2%) of 242 K3 through eighth graders met the school's local measures in math.

## 3. 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 80% of 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 2023 and that students with an average of 4.0 or higher in the fall would score 4.0 or higher in the spring.

This year, 172 first through eighth graders were tested in the fall and the spring. Of 22 students who received an average score of 4.0 or higher in the fall, 17 (77.3%) maintained an average score equal to or above 4.0 in the spring. Of 150 students who received an average score below 4.0 in the fall, 101 (67.3%) improved by at least 0.5 in the spring. Overall, 118 (68.6%) of 172 students demonstrated progress, falling short of the school's goal of 80%. Progress by grade level is shown in Table 7.

<b>TABLE 7</b>  <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b> <b>WRITING ASSESSMENT FOR 1ST – 8TH GRADES 2022–23</b>			
GRADE	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	
		n	%
1st	23	19	82.6%
2nd	25	15	60.0%
3rd	31	18	58.1%
4th	27	23	85.2%
5th	14	11	78.6%
6th	14	11	78.6%
7th	21	13	61.9%
8th	17	8	47.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>68.6%</b>

#### 4. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT PROGRESS

The school set a goal for special education students to demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals. To measure this, the school decided that 95% of students with active IEPs who had been at the school for one entire IEP year would demonstrate progress by meeting at least one 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 attached to the regular report cards.) There were 12 students with active IEPs for an entire IEP year at the school, and 10 (83.3%) met one or more 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 readiness assessment to K4 through second graders. 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.

These tests and results are described in the following sections.

### 1. PALS<sup>15</sup>

The PALS assessment aligns with 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.

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<sup>15</sup> More Information about the PALS assessments can be found here: <https://palsresource.info/wisconsin> and <https://pals.virginia.edu>

A total of 25 K4 students enrolled since the beginning of the year 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 8.

<b>TABLE 8</b>  <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PALS-PREK FOR K4 STUDENTS</b> <b>STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE THE SPRING DEVELOPMENTAL RANGE 2021-22</b> <b>N = 25</b>		
<b>TASK</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>%</b>
Name writing	23	92.0%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	20	80.0%
Lowercase alphabet recognition <sup>16</sup>	17	100.0%
Letter sounds <sup>17</sup>	17	100.0%
Beginning sound awareness	25	100.0%
Print and word awareness	22	88.0%
Rhyme awareness	23	92.0%

## **b. PALS-K and PALS Plus**

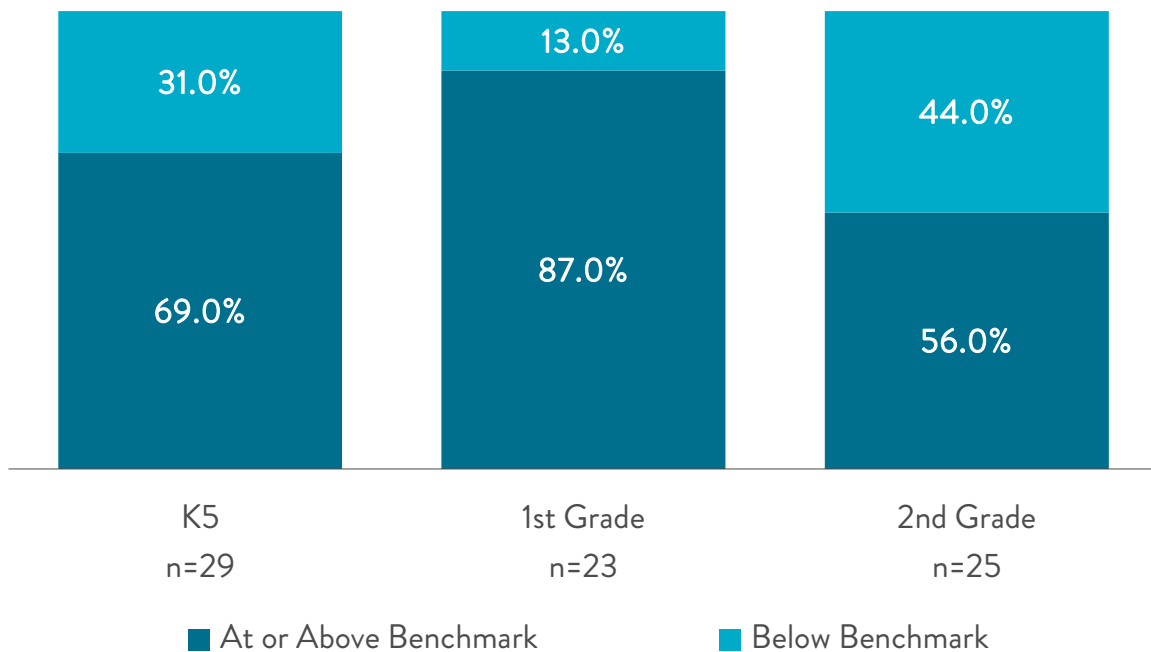
The PALS-K and PALS Plus are administered in the fall and spring. Both tests result in a summed score that can be compared to a reading readiness benchmark set for each of the test administrations. Evident Change examined spring reading readiness for students who were enrolled for the entire year and completed the spring tests. At the time of the spring assessment, 69.0% of 29 K5 students, 87.0% of 23 first graders, and 56.0% of 25 second graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark for their grade level (Figure 2).

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<sup>16</sup> Students who score 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task complete the lowercase alphabet recognition task; 17 students qualified.

<sup>17</sup> Students who score 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task complete the letter sounds task; 19 students qualified, but two did not score high enough on the uppercase alphabet recognition task to test for the letter sounds task.

**Figure 2**  
**Downtown Montessori Academy Spring 2022 PALS Results**  
**N = 77**

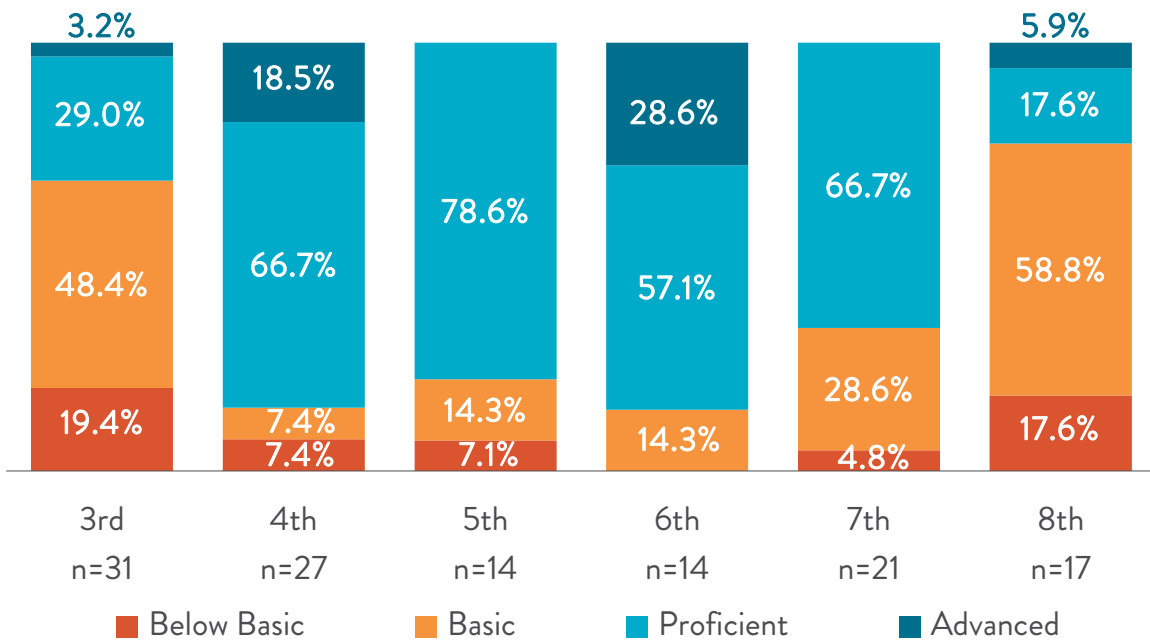


## 2. WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM FOR THIRD THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

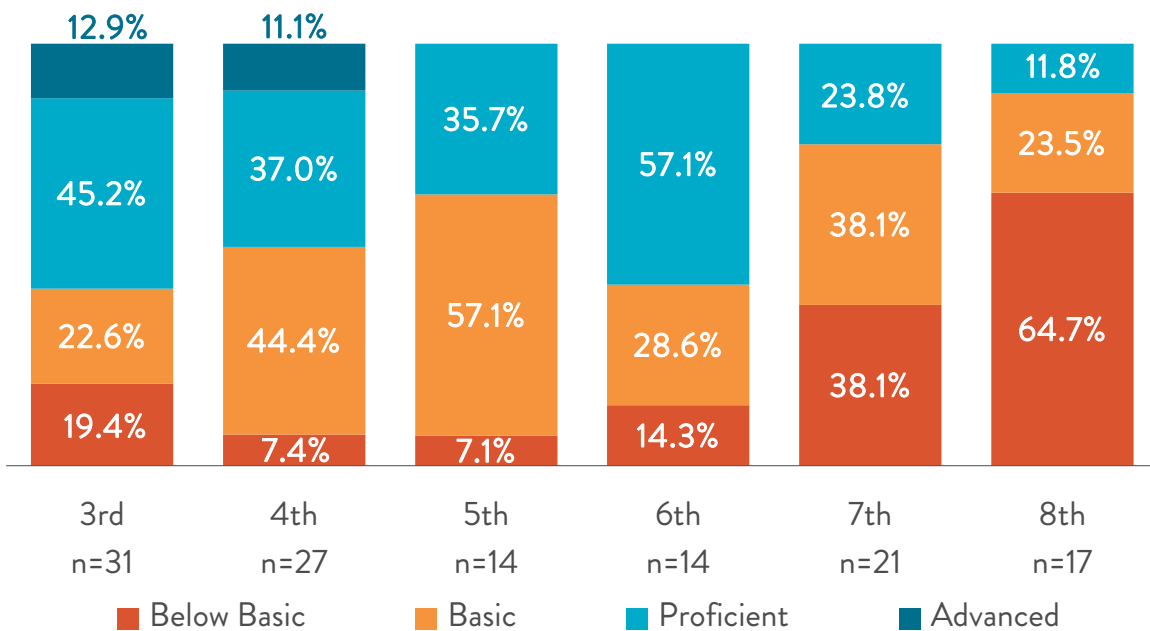
The Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state’s standardized test for English/language arts (ELA) and math for third through eighth graders; science for fourth and eighth graders; and social studies for fourth, eighth, and tenth graders. Scores for each test are translated into one of four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

In the spring of 2023, 124 third through eighth graders enrolled since the start of the year (the third Friday in September) completed the ELA and math assessments. Of these students, 74 (59.7%) were proficient or advanced in ELA, and 51 (41.1%) were proficient or advanced in math (not shown). Results by grade level are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

**Figure 3**  
**Downtown Montessori Academy**  
**Forward Exam English/Language Arts Assessment 2022–23<sup>18</sup>**

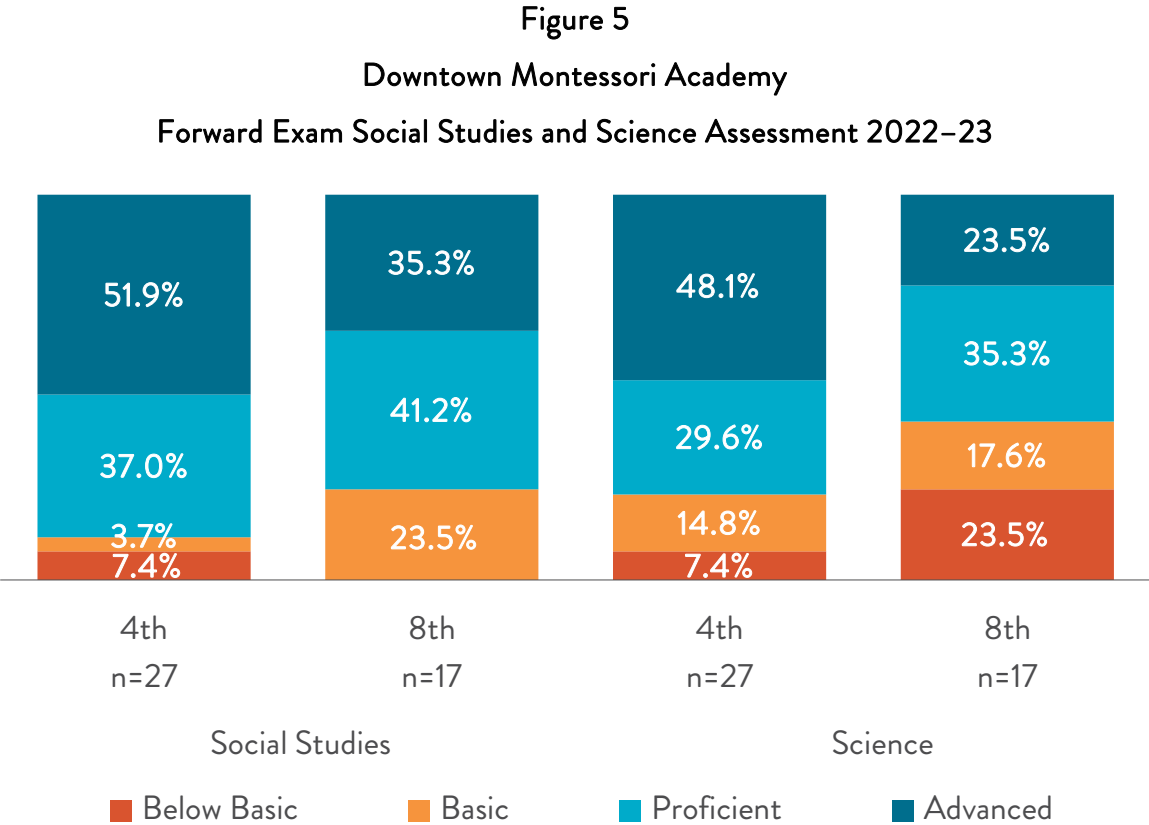


**Figure 4**  
**Downtown Montessori Academy**  
**Forward Exam Math Assessment 2022–23**



<sup>18</sup> Percentages in Figures 3–5 may not total 100% due to rounding.

Of 44 fourth and eighth graders, 37 (84.1%) were proficient or advanced in social studies, and 31 (70.5%) were proficient or advanced in science. Results by grade level appear in Figure 5.



**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 performance expectation is that at least 75.0% of students at or above the summed score benchmark in first grade will 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 used to assess student progress. Expectations for year-to-year progress on the exam were adopted by the CSRC for the 2020–21 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. Additionally, it is expected that at least 35% of fourth through eighth graders who were below proficiency in ELA the prior year will demonstrate progress and that at least 35% of fourth through eighth graders who were below proficiency in math will demonstrate progress.

## **1. SECOND-GRADE PROGRESS BASED ON PALS**

A total of 25 students completed the PALS spring assessment in 2022 as first graders and in 2023 as second graders. Of those, 18 (72.0%) were at or above the spring summed score benchmark as first graders, and 14 (77.8%) of them remained at or above the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2023 as second graders (not shown).

## **2. FOURTH- THROUGH EIGHTH-GRADE PROGRESS BASED ON FORWARD EXAM**

A total of 83 students completed the Forward Exam in the spring of 2022 and the spring of 2023. Year-to-year progress was measured for students at or above proficient and for students below proficient in ELA and/or math in the spring of 2022.

### **a. Students At or Above Proficient**

In the spring of 2022, 48 students were proficient or advanced in ELA; 91.7% of them maintained proficiency in the spring of 2023 (Table 9A). There were 41 students at or above proficient in math in the spring of 2022, and 65.9% maintained proficiency in the spring of 2023 (Table 9B).

TABLE 9A			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY YEAR-TO-YEAR PROGRESS IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM: STUDENTS PROFICIENT IN 2022			
CURRENT GRADE LEVEL	STUDENTS PROFICIENT/ADVANCED IN 2022	MAINTAINED PROFICIENCY IN 2023	
		n	%
4th	12	12	100%
5th	11	10	90.9%
6th	11	10	90.9%
7th	Cannot report due to <i>n</i> size		
8th			
Total	48	44	91.7%

TABLE 9B			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY YEAR-TO-YEAR PROGRESS IN MATH FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM: STUDENTS PROFICIENT IN 2022			
CURRENT GRADE LEVEL	STUDENTS PROFICIENT/ADVANCED IN 2022	MAINTAINED PROFICIENCY IN 2023	
		n	%
4th	18	13	72.2%
5th	Cannot report due to <i>n</i> size		
6th			
7th			
8th			
Total	41	27	65.9%

## b. Students Below Proficient

To determine whether students who were not proficient or advanced the previous year were making progress, Evident Change examined whether these students improved scores by moving up one or more categories (e.g., below basic to basic, basic to proficient, or below basic to proficient). If students did not improve by a level, Evident Change examined student progress within the student’s skill level by equally dividing the below-basic and basic levels into quartiles. The lower threshold for “below basic” was the lowest

scale score possible on the examination. The lower threshold for the basic level and the upper threshold for both levels reflected the scale scores used by DPI to establish proficiency levels.<sup>19</sup>

In the spring of 2022, 35 students were below proficient in ELA, and 51.4% of those students showed progress in 2023 (Table 10A). For math, 42 students were at or below proficient in the spring of 2022, and 33.3% demonstrated progress in 2023 (Table 10B).

TABLE 10A					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY					
YEAR-TO-YEAR PROGRESS IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES					
WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM: STUDENTS BELOW PROFICIENT IN 2022					
CURRENT GRADE LEVEL	STUDENTS BELOW PROFICIENT IN 2022	STUDENTS PROGRESSED IN 2023			
		INCREASED 1+ LEVEL	INCREASED A QUARTILE	OVERALL PROGRESS	
				n	%
4th	14	10	2	12	85.7%
5th	Cannot report due to <i>n</i> size				
6th					
7th					
8th	11	1	2	3	27.3%
Total	35	14	4	18	51.4%

TABLE 10B					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY					
YEAR-TO-YEAR PROGRESS IN MATH FOR 4TH – 8TH GRADES					
WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM: STUDENTS BELOW PROFICIENT IN 2022					
CURRENT GRADE LEVEL	STUDENTS BELOW PROFICIENT IN 2022	STUDENTS PROGRESSED IN 2023			
		INCREASED 1+ LEVEL	INCREASED A QUARTILE	OVERALL PROGRESS	
n	%				
4th	Cannot report due to <i>n</i> size				
5th					
6th					
7th	12	1	5	6	50.0%
8th	12	0	1	1	8.3%
Total	42	4	10	14	33.3%

<sup>19</sup> This method is used by Evident Change to examine student progress in the schools chartered by the city.



## 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. These included performance on standardized tests and local measures. The measures also included 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. 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 C for detailed information on the revised scorecard.

Downtown Montessori scored 71.4% of the 100.0 possible scorecard points.

## IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 25th year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements. This year, it has met or partially met all except one of 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. TREND INFORMATION**
- C. CSRC 2022–23 SCHOOL SCORECARD**
- D. STUDENT LEARNING MEMORANDUM**

# APPENDIX A: CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CHART

TABLE A			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY			
OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2022–23			
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.	p. 2	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.	p. 2	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 16–21	Met
Section I, D	<b>Academic criterion #1:</b> Maintain local measures, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals in reading, math, writing, and special education.	pp. 11–16	Met
	<b>Academic criterion #2:</b> Year-to-year achievement measures for students who are proficient.		
	a. 4th – 8th graders at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 60% will maintain proficiency.	a. pp. 22–23	a. Met
	b. 4th – 8th graders at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 50% will maintain proficiency.	b. pp. 22–23	b. Met
	c. Second graders at or above summed score benchmark in reading (PALS): At least 75.0% will remain at or above.	c. p. 22	c. Met
Section I, D	<b>Academic criterion #3:</b> Year-to-year achievement measures: progress for students below proficient.		
	a. 4th – 8th graders below proficiency on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.	pp. 23–24	a. Met
	b. 4th – 8th graders below proficiency on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.	p. 23–24	b. Not Met

<b>TABLE A</b>  <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b> <b>OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2022–23</b>			
<b>SECTION OF CONTRACT</b>	<b>CONTRACT PROVISION</b>	<b>REPORT REFERENCE PAGE</b>	<b>CONTRACT PROVISION MET OR NOT MET</b>
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	pp. 5–6	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	pp. 4–5	Partially Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 7–9, 11	Partially Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures	pp. 6–7	Met

## APPENDIX B: TREND INFORMATION

The following tables present five-year trends for enrollment and measures of academic progress. In 2019–20, 2020–2021, and 2021–22, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of student education, including attendance, enrollment, and academic assessment. Therefore, while data from these years are included in the trend tables, results should not be compared with results from previous or subsequent years.

TABLE B1					
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)
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%)
2021–22	241	10	8	243	236 (97.9%)
2022–23	255	4	8	251	247 (96.9%)

TABLE B2	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT RETURN RATES	
SCHOOL YEAR	RATE
2018–19	91.4%
2019–20	94.4%
2020–21	91.8%
2021–22	76.9%
2022–23	89.7%

TABLE B3	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES	
SCHOOL YEAR	RATE
2018–19	95.6%
2019–20	94.2%
2020–21	96.8%
2021–22	92.6%
2022–23	93.1%

TABLE B4		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS		
SCHOOL YEAR	% SUSPENDED	AVG. DAYS OUT
2018–19	Downtown Montessori's policy is not to suspend students except as a last resort. No out-of-school suspensions occurred during any of these years.	
2019–20		
2020–21		
2021–22		
2022–23		

TABLE B5	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PARENT PARTICIPATION	
SCHOOL YEAR	% PARTICIPATED
2018–19	100.0%
2019–20	
2020–21	
2021–22	
2022–23	

TABLE B6	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETENTION	
SCHOOL YEAR	RETENTION RATE: EMPLOYED ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR
2018–19	100.0%
2019–20	
2020–21	
2021–22	
2022–23	

TABLE B7			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETURN RATES			
SCHOOL YEAR	NUMBER AT END OF PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR	RETURNED FIRST DAY OF CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR	RETURN RATE
2018–19	19	19	100.0%
2019–20	20	19	95.0%
2020–21	21	19	90.5%
2021–22	20	17	85.0%
2022–23	24	19	79.2%

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

# APPENDIX C: CSRC 2022–23 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



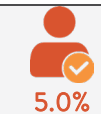
#### LOCAL MEASURES

- % 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 C

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
CSRC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K THROUGH 8TH GRADE) SCORECARD FOR 2022-23**

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%	87.0%	3.5
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0		77.8%	4.7
Student Academic Progress: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam English/ language arts: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	35.0%	91.7%	4.6
	Forward Exam math: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0		65.9%	3.3
	Forward Exam English/language arts: % below proficient who progressed	12.5		51.4%	6.4
	Forward Exam math: % below proficient who progressed	12.5		33.3%	4.2
Local Measures	% met reading	6.25	25.0%	73.6%	4.6
	% met math	6.25		82.2%	5.1
	% met writing	6.25		68.6%	4.3
	% met special education	6.25		83.3%	5.2
Student Academic Achievement: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam English/language arts: % at/above proficient	2.5	5.0%	59.7%	1.5
	Forward Exam math: % at/above proficient	2.5		41.1%	1.0
Engagement	Student attendance rate	5.0	25.0%	93.1%	4.7
	Student return rate	5.0		89.7%	4.5
	Student retention	5.0		96.9%	4.8
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		79.2%	4.0
Total Possible Points		100.0			71.4
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCORECARD PERCENTAGE					71.4%

# APPENDIX D: STUDENT LEARNING

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Evident Change and the CSRC  
**FROM:** Downtown Montessori Academy  
**SUBJECT:** Learning Memo for the 2022–23 Academic Year  
**DATE:** October 20, 2022

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 Downtown Montessori Academy in consultation with staff from Evident Change and the CSRC.

Downtown Montessori will record student data in Skyward or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and provide them to Evident Change, the educational monitoring agent contracted by the CSRC. The school will also provide, for all standardized tests, results downloaded directly from the test publisher. If such data files are not available, the school will provide paper printouts (scanned or via mail) that include standardized test results from the test publisher.

Evident Change requests electronic submission of year-end data by the fifth business day after the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 9, 2023.

All required elements related to the outcomes below are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

### ENROLLMENT

Downtown Montessori will record enrollment dates for every student. Upon admission, each student will have their information and actual enrollment date added to the school's database.

## **TERMINATION/WITHDRAWAL**

For every student who leaves the school, the exit date and reason will be recorded in the school's database. A specific reason is required.

## **ATTENDANCE**

The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 90%.

During regular in-person instruction, any student who attends school will be counted as present. A student is considered present for the entire day if they attend school between 8:40 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION**

Parents or guardians of all (100%) students enrolled at the time of each of the two scheduled parent-teacher conferences will participate in that conference, which may occur in person, virtually, or by phone.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENTS**

Downtown Montessori 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.

## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: LOCAL MEASURES<sup>20</sup>**

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE: LITERACY AND MATH**

Students attending the Children's House (K3, K4, and K5) will demonstrate progress in acquiring literacy and math skills. Each student's development will be reported to their parents or guardians on report cards, and this information will be collected in Skyward.

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<sup>20</sup> 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 reflect each school's unique philosophy and curriculum. The CSRC requires local measures of academic achievement in literacy, math, writing, and individualized education program goals.

The following scale will be used to track skill levels and changes in skill acquisition.

- Presented
- Practiced
- Improving
- Proficient

Students will be assessed on all five math skills and five literacy representative skills in the fall. At least 95% of students who attend all year will move at least one step (presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in the five grade-level skills in each area by the end of the year. Students who are initially proficient in a skill will maintain proficiency.

## **ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: LITERACY**

### **First Through Third Graders**

First- through third-grade students will be administered the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening in the fall and again in the spring. At least 85% of the cohort for each grade taking both tests will meet the spring benchmark.

### **Fourth Through Eighth Graders**

All fourth- through eighth-grade students will complete the Star reading assessment in the fall and spring. At least 70% of students will demonstrate a student growth percentile (SGP) of 40 or higher from fall to spring.

## **ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: WRITING**

Writing skills will be assessed in the fall and spring using the Six Traits of Writing.<sup>21</sup> Both writing samples will have grade-level prompts based on grade-level topics within the narrative genre.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The six traits of writing are organization, sentence fluency, conventions, ideas, voice, and word choice.

<sup>22</sup> Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.

The six traits are 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.
- Fourth through sixth graders will focus on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions.
- Seventh and eighth graders will focus on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions.

The scores of these traits for each sample will be used to measure student progress toward the goal.<sup>23</sup> At least 80% of students whose average score is lower than 4 in the fall will increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in the spring. Students with an average of 4 or higher in the fall will score 4 or higher in the spring.

## **ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: MATH**

### **First Through Third Graders**

At least 95% of first- through third-grade students will demonstrate progress in acquiring at least five grade-level Common Core math skills.

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 math skills in the fall. Students who attend all year will show improvement (from minimal to basic or basic to proficient in all five grade-level indicators of math growth) by the end of the year. Students who are initially proficient in a skill will maintain proficiency or improve to advanced.

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<sup>23</sup> The highest possible average score is 5.0.

## **Fourth Through Eighth Graders**

All fourth- through eighth-grade students will complete the Star math assessment in the fall and spring. At least 70% of students will demonstrate an SGP of 40 or higher from fall to spring.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENTS**

At least 95% of students with active individualized education programs (IEPs) who have been at the school for one entire IEP year will meet at least one 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.

## **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: STANDARDIZED MEASURES**

### **PALS FOR K4 THROUGH SECOND-GRADE STUDENTS**

PALS will be administered to all K4 and K5 students in the spring and first- and second-grade students in the fall and spring of each school year within the timeframe required by DPI.

### **WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM FOR THIRD- THROUGH EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS**

The Wisconsin Forward Exam will be administered annually within the timeframe specified by DPI. This standardized assessment will produce an English/language arts (ELA) score and a math score for all third through eighth graders. Fourth- and eighth-grade students will also complete the science and social studies tests.

## YEAR-TO-YEAR ACHIEVEMENT<sup>24</sup>

Evident Change will report results from the 2022–23 Forward Exam. In addition, progress will be reported for students who completed the Forward Exam in two consecutive years at the same school.

Evident Change will report results of the DPI-required assessments in each school's annual report. Evident Change also will report year-to-year progress for students who completed the assessments in consecutive school years at the same school.

- The CSRC expects at least 75% of first graders who met the summed score benchmark for reading readiness in the spring will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of the subsequent year.
- At least 60% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in ELA the prior year will maintain proficiency. At least 50% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year will maintain proficiency. At least 35% of fourth through eighth graders who were below proficiency in ELA and/or math the prior year will demonstrate progress.
- 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 2021–22 school year and met the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2022 will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2023.

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<sup>24</sup> The CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 and K5.