

2017–2018 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

October 2018



Downtown Montessori Academy

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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
FOR DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY
2017–18**

This is the 20th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, one of eight schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee during the 2017–18 school year. It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC). Based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report, CRC has determined the following.

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

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

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

II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

A. Local Measures

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

The CSRC requires the school to track elementary student progress in literacy, writing, math, and special education goals throughout the year to identify students in need of additional help and to assist teachers in developing strategies to improve students’ academic performance. Downtown Montessori also reported skill measure goals for K3, K4, and K5. This year, Downtown Montessori’s local measures of academic progress for elementary students resulted in the following outcomes.

a. Literacy

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

- All 17 (100.0%) first- through third-grade students who scored below grade level and 62 out of 66 (93.9%) students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level on the spring Fountas and Pinnell assessment. All 19 (100.0%) students above grade level in the fall maintained above-grade-level status in the spring. The school's goal was for 75.0% and 80.0% of students below and at grade level, respectively, to gain at least half a grade level by the spring; and 100.0% of students above grade level maintaining above-grade-level status.
- All 82 fourth- through eighth-grade students (100.0%) met their literacy goal based on their functional and grade-level status using the QRI. The school's goal was that 90.0% would make progress depending on their fall assessment.

Overall, 180 (97.8%) of 184 first- through eighth-grade students who were considered in the school's outcomes made progress on their literacy skills during the school year.

b. Math

First- through eighth-grade students were assessed on grade-level Montessori sequential math skills. This was supplemented with math skills not in the Montessori sequence: Common Core State Standards for first- through sixth-grade students and MobyMax for seventh- and eighth-grade students.

- By the end of the year, 165 (97.6%) of 169 first- through sixth-grade students reached or maintained proficiency or showed improvement in 60.0% of grade-level math skills. The school's goal was 100.0%.
- Of the 15 seventh- and eighth-grade students tested in the fall, 13 (86.7%) either improved by half a grade level if they were below grade level or maintained above-grade-level status in the spring. The school's goal was 80.0%.

Overall, 178 (96.7%) of 184 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math.

c. Writing

Writing skills were assessed using the Six Traits of Writing. Overall, 172 out of 184 (93.5%) first- through eighth-grade students either increased their fall average writing level score by at least a half point (0.5) on the spring writing sample or maintained or improved a score of at least 4.0 from the fall to spring. The school's goal was 100.0%.

2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress

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

The school met its goals in all of these outcomes.

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

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

CRC examined year-to-year results of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) exam for second graders. Of the 34 students at or above the summed score benchmark as first graders, 32 (94.1%) remained at or above the summed score benchmark as second graders. The goal was at least 75.0%.

A total of 43 third- through seventh-grade students who were proficient or advanced in English/language arts (ELA) and 41 who were proficient or advanced in math in 2017 took the assessments again in 2018. Of these students, 41 (95.3%) were proficient or advanced in ELA and 38 (92.7%) were proficient or advanced in math in 2018.

Of the 35 students who were below proficient in ELA in the spring of 2017, 65.7% showed progress in 2017. Of the 37 students who were below proficient in math in the spring of 2016, 51.4% showed progress in 2018.

C. CSRC School Scorecard

Downtown Montessori scored 84.2% of the pilot scorecard points compared with 75.2% on the 2016–17 pilot scorecard. This indicates an overall increase from last year.

III. SURVEY/INTERVIEW RESULTS

Every other year, CRC collects feedback from parents, students, board members, and teachers to assess their perceptions of the school. This year, parents and students were offered the chance to complete their surveys online. Follow-up phone calls were made to parents who did not submit a survey. Teachers and board members were interviewed personally. See Appendices E through H.

Parent surveys representing 140 (71.8%) of 195 families were completed.

- Almost all (99.3%) parents rated the school's overall performance in contributing to their child's learning as "excellent" or "good."
- Nearly all (98.6%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Parents' favorite characteristics included the staff, classroom size and environment, and teaching approach.
- The least favorite characteristics were lack of extracurricular activities, lack of diversity, limited space, and lack of communication about expectations and school policies.

Board interviews were conducted with six of the seven board members.

- All (100.0%) reported that the board receives a presentation of the school's annual academic performance report.
- The main suggestions for school improvement were: to improve math performance and support for students struggling with math and to expand the building to allow for physical education.

CRC interviewed 15 teachers, with the following key results.

- School climate opinions showed that all of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that:
 - » Adults in the school respect students and their different points of view;
 - » Staff typically work well with one another; and
 - » All families are encouraged to become involved in the school.
- Very or somewhat important reasons for teaching at the school, expressed by most teachers, included:
 - » Atmosphere;
 - » Educational methodology;
 - » Class size; and
 - » Administrative leadership.
- All teachers rated the program of instruction, the students' academic progress, teacher collaboration, parent/teacher relationships, and administrative staff performance as excellent or good.

- All (100.0%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed that student academic performance is an important part of teacher assessment. A total of 80.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the school has clear teacher-performance assessment processes and that they were satisfied with the school's teacher performance assessment criteria.

A total of 15 seventh and eighth graders completed online surveys. The students agreed or strongly agreed that:

- They liked their school (100.0%);
- Their teachers talk with them about high school plans (93.3%);
- They feel safe in school (100.0%); and
- They have improved in reading/writing and math (100.0%).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Downtown Montessori addressed the recommendations from its 2016–17 programmatic profile and educational performance report. Based on results in this report and in consultation with school staff, CRC recommends the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2018–19 school year.

- Continue working with Dr. Suzanne Terry from Cardinal Stritch University with a focus on spelling, writing workshops, and in-services in Words Their Way.
- Improve the use of data from the Wisconsin Forward Exam, PALS, and local measures of academic progress to focus on students who did not meet expectations.
- Improve submission of required data at the end of the school year by using the data addendum to the school's learning memo as the model for data submission.

V. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND REPORTING

Based on consistent contract compliance over the years and considering that the school increased the results on its pilot scorecard by nine points, CRC recommends Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee and the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC). 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, CRC:

- Conducted an initial school visit to collect information related to contract requirements and to draft a learning memo for the new school year as well as a year-end interview to review progress on recommendations and changes that occurred during the year;
- Visited the school throughout the year to observe classrooms and overall school operations and to conduct a random review of special education files;
- Surveyed or interviewed parents, board members, and a sample of teachers and students to gather feedback about the school;
- Attended a school board of directors meeting, along with CSRC representatives, to provide an update regarding compliance with the City of Milwaukee’s academic expectations and contract requirements; and
- Collected and analyzed data submitted by the school to complete an annual report.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy
2507 S. Graham St.
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Telephone: (414) 744-6005

Website: <http://downtownmontessori.com>

Head of School: Virginia Flynn

Executive Director: Ian Spanic

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

A. Description and Philosophy of Educational Methodology¹

1. Mission

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

2. Instructional Design

Downtown Montessori delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society. Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities.

Teachers were asked about the methodology/curriculum and program of instruction during end-of-year interviews. All 15 teachers interviewed considered the educational methodology/curriculum approach a very important reason for continuing to teach at the school, and 100.0% of the 15 rated the program of instruction as excellent (80.0%) or good (20.0%).

¹ *The Parent/Student Handbook 2017–2018*

B. School Structure

1. Leadership and Board of Directors²

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

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

2. Areas of Instruction

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

² Information comes from the *2015–16 Annual Report* and the school's website, <http://downtownmontessori.com>.

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

The upper elementary program follows a three-year curriculum cycle in all areas of study except math. For this program, learning how to ask, investigate, and resolve questions plays a dominant role. Materials and group activities are designed to develop individual and collaborative skills in biology, math, language, history, geography, music, and visual arts. The school seeks to reinforce upper elementary students' natural curiosity and community.

The adolescent program reflects a more rigorous level of academic challenge and preparation for high school, including study skills, time management, and high work and social standards.

Downtown Montessori has generic personal computers. Fourth through eighth grade students are provided with their own Chromebook. The school's Internet use policy requires parent and student signatures on an elementary/adolescent student computer-use contract. The school uses MS Excel spreadsheets and Skyward to collect student data and data related to academic progress.

The school provided enrichment activities through programs at the Urban Ecology Center, the STARBASE STEM program, and Discovery World. In addition, the school provided afterschool activities including Girls on the Run and Spanish Club.

During the interview and survey process, board members were asked about the school's program of instruction. All six board members agreed or strongly agreed that the program of instruction is consistent with the school's mission.

3. Classrooms

During the 2017–18 academic year, the school consisted of 12 classrooms: four Children’s House classrooms for 3 to 6-year-olds (K3 through K5 students), four lower-elementary classrooms (first through third grades), and three upper-elementary classrooms (fourth through sixth grades). The adolescent program classroom—an open-concept space—was on the second floor of the newly renovated building on the same property. Each classroom has approximately 25 students.

All board members agreed that the teacher/student ratio at Downtown Montessori was appropriate. Of 15 teachers interviewed, 93.3% rated class size/teacher ratio as excellent, and 6.7% rated it as fair.

4. Teacher Information

Throughout the year, the school employed 17 instructional staff and nine teaching assistants. Instructional staff included 13 classroom teachers, one of whom also provided special education services; an art teacher; a school psychologist; a Title I reading teacher; and a literacy teacher.⁴ Four classroom teachers taught at the Children’s House, four taught lower elementary, three taught upper elementary, and two taught the adolescent program. All 17 instructional staff started and completed the school year, resulting in an instructional staff retention rate of 100.0%.

⁴ The school contracted with MJ Care for the services of a speech pathologist and, if needed, an occupational therapist.

At the end of the 2016–17 school year, 16 instructional staff (13 classroom teachers and three other instructional staff) were employed by the school and eligible to return in the fall of 2017. All eligible instructional staff returned in the fall of 2017 for a return rate of 100.0%.

All instructional staff held Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) licenses. All classroom teachers also held Montessori certifications.

The Downtown Montessori Academy Employee Handbook for 2017–18 explains that informal performance evaluation is ongoing. A formal performance evaluation occurs once per year and includes classroom observation and a performance review with the head of school, the executive director, and the teacher.

Regarding professional development, Downtown Montessori began to focus on their development as a trauma-informed school. This involved working on understanding the impact of trauma and insight into the symptoms and reactions to stress. The staff will be better able to support the whole child through understanding trauma's impact on memory and learning.

The school is working on building a resilient school community and following the Montessori holistic approach to the child. They have studied how to establish diverse learning environments that support all learners.

In addition, the school continued training in the areas of school safety with a Web certification for all staff in alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate (ALICE) training that supports response to emergency situations.

The school also continued to support the writing curriculum with whole-school approach to developing literacy. Downtown Montessori has continued to grow internal leadership teams with Level lead teachers and Level groups.

During the interview process, CRC asked teachers about professional support. Of the 15, 93.3% rated it as excellent or good; 6.7% rated it as fair. Regarding the performance review procedure, 80.0% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the school has a clear teacher performance assessment process. Four fifths (80.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the school's teacher performance assessment criteria, and all agreed or strongly agreed that student academic performance is an important part of teacher assessment.

Parents were also asked about the school's staff. A total of 97.3% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am comfortable talking with the staff," and 96.6% agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with overall staff performance. Nearly all (94.6%) of the parents strongly agreed or agreed that people in this school treat each other with respect.

All (100.0%) seventh and eighth graders surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the teachers help them succeed in school. Also, 93.3% indicated that teachers respect students, with 6.7% neither agreeing or disagreeing. Almost all (93.3%) agreed that their teachers talk with them about high school plans.

5. School Hours and Calendar

The school posted its 2017–18 calendar on its website. The calendar also was available in hard copy in the school's office. The hours of school operation for this year were 8:40 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4, and 8:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for K5 through eighth grades.

6. Parent Involvement

As described in the *Parent/Student Handbook 2017–2018*, Downtown Montessori seeks and depends upon the energy and spirit of its parents. Parents are urged to contact their child's teacher for volunteer opportunities in and out of the classroom. Downtown Montessori's handbook states that current research, as well as their prior experience, show a direct relationship between parental involvement and how much the child benefits from the school.

Examples of active parental involvement include accompanying students on field trips, reading stories to students, assisting in building improvements such as constructing shelves and assembling playground equipment, organizing publicity events, preparing snacks, and donating equipment. The school expects all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. The school posts activity sign-up sheets throughout the year and sends emails and notes home with students to encourage parents to participate. Parents also are encouraged to visit their child's class at least once a year. To aid parent involvement, the school's all-volunteer parent group, Parent Engagement Network, is dedicated to supplementing and enriching student education by providing parent involvement opportunities.⁵ All parents of enrolled students are members.

Each student has a folder in which notices, school forms, and schoolwork are sent home. The school endeavors to communicate as much as possible through email to prevent unnecessary paper use in accordance with the principles of being a Green and Healthy School. Teacher email addresses are listed in the Parent/Student Handbook on the school website,

⁵ The Parent Engagement Network is fully described in the Parent/Student Handbook and on the school's website at <http://downtownmontessori.com/parent-info/parent-engagement-network/>.

where current information and notices also are available. Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year and upon parent request.

When asked about parental involvement, all (100.0%) of the 15 teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the staff at this school encourage all families to become involved in school activities; 93.3% of teachers rated parental involvement as excellent or good, and 6.7% rated it as fair. All (100.0%) teachers rated parent/teacher relationships as excellent or good.

Almost all (95.3%) parents agree that staff keep them informed about their child's academic performance, and 95.3% of parents agreed that the staff responds to their worries and concerns.

7. Waiting List

In May 2018, the school reported 31 students on the waiting list for admission to the school in the fall, primarily for openings in the Children's House.

8. Discipline Policy

The school's code of conduct and discipline policy from the Parent/Student Handbook, 2017–18 indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is important for all involved adults to deal with the problem in 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 own 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.

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

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

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

Teachers, students, and parents were asked about the discipline policy at Downtown Montessori. Opinions were mixed. Of the 15 teachers interviewed, 93.3% considered school discipline a very or somewhat important reason for continuing to teach there; 80.0% rated the school's adherence to the policy as excellent or good, and 20.0% rated it as fair.

Of the 15 students who completed the survey, all (100.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that the rules are fair. Of parents, 89.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable with how the staff handles discipline.

9. Graduation and High School Information

All eight eighth graders graduated. In the fall, school staff informed students and parents of high school options, testing requirements, early admission, and other sign-up dates throughout the year. At parent-teacher conferences, school staff discussed high school options and what the students were interested in pursuing. Staff held individual discussions by request. School staff assisted students with required admission essays. Representatives from Milwaukee High School for the Arts and St. Thomas More High School came to the school to share information about their programs. Downtown Montessori students are planning to attend Carmen High School (two), Reagan High School (four), St. Thomas More High School (one), and Wauwatosa East High School (one).

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

C. Student Population

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 286 students in K3 through eighth grade.⁶ By the end of the year, two more students had enrolled, and two had withdrawn. To

⁶ As of September 15, 2017.

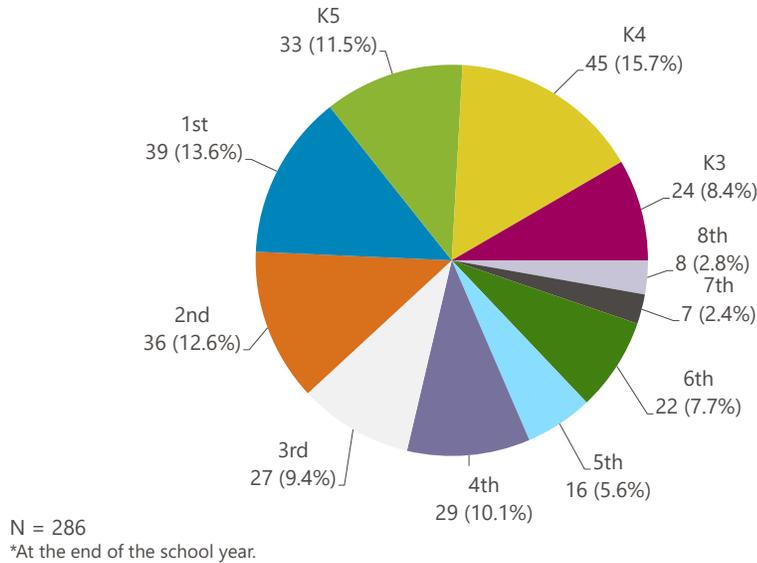
protect student identity, CRC does not include results for groups of fewer than 10 students; there were too few withdrawals this year to provide reasons. Of the students who began the year, 284 (99.3%) finished the school year at Downtown Montessori. This retention rate was slightly higher than in the 2016–17 school year.

At the end of the year, 286 students were enrolled.

- Of these, 201 (70.3%) students were white, 43 (15.0%) were Latino/a, 22 (7.7%) were black or African American, 14 (4.9%) were Asian, three (1.0%) were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and three (1.0%) were American Indian/Alaska Native.
- There were 141 (49.3%) girls and 145 (50.7%) boys.
- A total of 16 (5.6%) students had special education needs: 13 had speech and language needs, two had specific learning disabilities, and two had other health impairments.⁷
- There were 35 (12.2%) students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- There were 102 students in the Children’s House, 102 in lower elementary, 67 in upper elementary, and 15 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).

⁷ Each student may have more than one type of identified need.

Figure 1
Downtown Montessori Academy
Enrollment by Student Grade Level*
2017–18



On the last day of the 2016–17 academic year, 263 students attending Downtown Montessori were eligible for continued enrollment for 2017–18 (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 238 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2017. This represents a return rate of 90.5%, slightly higher than the return rate of 87.1% in the fall of 2016.

Of the seventh and eighth graders in attendance on a day toward the end of the school year, 15 completed an online survey. All (100.0%) students surveyed reported that they felt safe in school. Almost all (93.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they liked being in school; 6.7% neither agreed nor disagreed. When asked what they liked best about the school, the students mentioned the nice and helpful teachers, the personalized learning approach, and the community-based environment.

D. Activities for Continuous School Improvement

Following is Downtown Montessori's response to the activities recommended in the programmatic profile and educational performance report for the 2016–17 academic year. At that time, the recommendation was that the school continue a focused improvement plan by revamping the literacy program during the 2017–18 school year.

- Recommendation: Continue efforts to meet the academic needs of individual students while balancing Montessori skill development with Common Core curriculum skills.

Response: The school reported that the teachers continue to assess the Montessori measures along with teacher-developed measures of progress. They used AIMSweb, a progress-monitoring tool that allows more frequent assessment for individual students. With the knowledge of which Montessori skills relate to the Common Core skills, teachers approach each student at their level. They address Common Core skills slightly below, at, or above the student's grade level. Thus, the timing may be different depending on where the student is functioning. The expectation is that by third grade, the Common Core skills are achieved for that grade level or beyond.

- Recommendation: Continue working with Dr. Sue Terry from Cardinal Stritch University to develop and implement a writing program at all levels, which balances the Montessori approach with the DPI Common Core State Standards.

Response: Dr. Terry worked with teachers at the beginning of the year to review the teachers' plan for the year. The teachers collected writing samples in the fall and throughout the year. Four times during the year, Dr. Terry conducted in-services at all levels for all teachers, sometimes in groups and sometimes individually. Activities included review of the writing samples and discussion efforts to improve student writing skills. The teachers learned what the writing expectations were for all students regardless of the student's grade level.

After reviewing the information in this report, and in consultation with the school's leader at the end-of-school interview in May 2018, CRC recommends the following activities for the 2018–19 school year.

- Continue working with Dr. Terry with a focus on spelling, writing workshops, and in-services in Words Their Way.
- Improve the use of data from the Wisconsin Forward Exam, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and local measures of academic progress to focus on students who did not meet expectations.
- Improve submission of required data at the end of the school year by using the data addendum to the school's learning memo as the model for data submission.

III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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

A. Attendance

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 95.0%. "Present" was defined as being present for at least half of the

day. The school achieved this goal, with students present on average 95.5% of the time this year.⁸ When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 100.0%.⁹

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. Excepting the parents of one student enrolled about two weeks prior to the conference, parents of all (100.0%) students enrolled at the time of the conferences attended. The school has therefore met its goal related to parent-teacher conferences.

C. Special Education Student Records

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students, including students who were evaluated but not eligible for services. During the year, 18 students with special education needs attended the school.¹⁰ Two of the students were re-evaluated during the current year and, as a result of those evaluations, were dismissed

⁸ Attendance rate is based on all 288 students enrolled at any time during the year. The rate was calculated for each student by dividing the number of days attended by the number of expected days of attendance and averaging across all students.

⁹ The CSRC requires the school to report suspensions. According to the data submitted by the school, there were no student suspensions this year.

¹⁰ A total of 21 evaluations were conducted, three of which were initial evaluations that determined the students were ineligible for services.

from special education services. An individualized education program (IEP) was developed for all 16 new or returning special education students who required one.

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

D. Local Measures of Educational Performance

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula 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 expectation is that, at a minimum, schools establish local measures in literacy (i.e., reading), writing, math, and special education. Results for K3 through K5 are not part of the overall local measure score for the scorecard because of the students' young age; these results are combined below. Results in each academic content area for students in first through eighth grades are illustrated subsequently.

1. Progress Reports for K3 Through K5

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

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

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

This year, while the school addressed all areas mentioned above, progress data were provided in the areas of literacy (language) and math (mathematical development). Data were submitted for 100 K3 through K5 students who were enrolled for the entire year.¹¹ All 100 students maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five math skills, and 97 (97.0%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five literacy skills (Table 1).

¹¹ Two students had initial and final scores but were not enrolled for the entire year.

Table 1 Downtown Montessori Academy Students Proficient or Progressing in Math and Literacy K3 – K5 2017–18 N = 100		
Skill	Students	%
Math		
All five skills	100	100.0%
Literacy		
Skill 1	99	99.0%
Skill 2	99	99.0%
Skill 3	98	98.0%
Skill 4	100	100.0%
Skill 5	100	100.0%
All five skills	97	97.0%

2. Literacy for First Through Third Grades

This year, first- through third-grade students were administered a grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage by the end of September 2017, and again in May 2018. The score consisted of a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade, third month of instruction = 4.3). The school established the following goals.

- At least 75.0% of students below grade level in the fall would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) on the spring Fountas and Pinnell.
- At least 80.0% of the students who are at their current grade level in the fall (e.g., a fourth-grade student in the fall at or above 4.0) would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) at the time of the spring test.

- Any student scoring at least one grade level above the student’s current grade level in the fall would maintain above-grade-level status in the spring (e.g., a fourth-grade student must have a score of 5.0 or above to be above grade level).¹²

A total of 102 first- through third-grade students took the literacy assessment in both the fall and spring. All 17 students (100.0%) below grade level in the fall gained at least a half a grade level by the spring; 93.9% of the 66 students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level by the spring; and all 19 students above grade level maintained above-grade-level status by the spring (Table 2).

Table 2			
Downtown Montessori Academy			
Students Progressing or Maintaining Above-Grade-Level Literacy			
1st – 3rd Grades			
2017–18			
Fall Status	Students	Met Goal	% Met Goal
Below Grade Level	17	17	100.0%
At Grade Level	66	62	93.9%
Above Grade Level	19	19	100.0%
Total	102	98	96.1%

3. Literacy for Fourth through Eighth Grades

Literacy skills for students in fourth through eighth grades were measured in fall and spring using the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). QRI helps teachers assess student skills in a variety of areas. All students in fourth through eighth grades were administered components

¹² One student who placed in this group in the fall declined in the spring by multiple grade levels. Although this student was still above grade level in the spring, meeting the school’s goal, the school should continue to monitor progress in the coming year.

of the QRI in the fall of 2017 (no later than November) and again in the spring of 2018. Student scores for all subtests are averaged and result in a QRI-tested grade level and a functional level of learning for that tested grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent) for the fall and spring assessments. Progress was measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement were based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in Table 3. The school’s goal was that at least 90.0% of students will make progress as described in the table.

Table 3			
Spring Goals Based on the Fall Grade Level and Functional Level Status			
Fall Functional Level	Fall Grade Level Status		
	Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level
Frustration	Frustration at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	Maintain above-grade-level status, regardless of functional level
Instructional	Instructional at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	
Independent	Independent at the next grade level	Instructional at the next grade level	

A total of 82 students were assessed in both the fall and spring. Of them, 57 tested at the instructional level and 25 tested at the independent level below, at, or above grade level in the fall (none were at the frustration level). Of the 82 students (two below grade level, 67 at grade level, and 13 above grade level)¹³ considered in the school’s outcomes, 100.0% met or exceeded their literacy goals during the school year (not shown).

¹³ The number of students below grade level was too small to report goal information.

Overall, 180 (97.8%) of 184 first- through eighth-grade students met their literacy local measure goal.

4. Writing Skills for First Through Eighth Graders

Students were assessed on two or more of the Six Traits of Writing. First through third graders focused on organization and conventions; fourth through sixth graders focused on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions; and seventh and eighth graders focused on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. Student skills on each trait were assessed on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced), and the total for all traits was averaged and converted into an overall writing level. The school set a goal that all students who received an average score below 4 in the fall would increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2018; and students with an average of 4.0 or above in the fall would score 4.0 or above in the spring.

This year, 184 first- through eighth-grade students were tested in the fall and the spring. All 12 students (100.0%) who received an average score of 4.0 or higher in the fall maintained an average score above or equal to 4.0 in the spring. Of 172 students who averaged below a 4.0 in the fall, 160 (93.0%) improved by at least 0.5 in the spring. Overall, 172 (93.5%) of 184 students demonstrated progress, falling short of the school's goal of 100.0%.

5. Math Skills for First Through Eighth Graders

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Each math skill was rated as Minimal: Needs Support; Basic: Progressing; Proficient: Meets Expectation; and Advanced: Mastery. The school’s goal was that all students enrolled for the year would maintain proficiency (if proficient or above in the fall) or show improvement in at least three (60.0%) out of five grade-level math skills. Scores were provided for 169 first through sixth graders who attended all year. By the end of the year, 165 (97.6%) students reached or maintained proficiency or showed progress in 60.0% of skills (Table 4).

Table 4			
Downtown Montessori Academy			
Math Progress/Proficiency			
1st – 6th Grades			
2017–18			
Students	Grade	Met Goal	% Met Goal
1st	39	39	100.0%
2nd	36	36	100.0%
3rd	27	27	100.0%
4th	29	28	96.6%
5th	16	14	87.5%
6th	22	21	95.5%
Total	169	165	97.6%

Math progress for seventh and eighth graders was examined using MobyMax, which results in a grade-level equivalency based on Common Core standards. Grade level is established when a student demonstrates proficiency in required grade-level standards using a

75.0% threshold. By the end of spring, 80.0% of the seventh- and eighth-grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall were expected to improve at least half of a grade level. Students above grade level in the fall were expected to maintain above grade-level status in the spring. Of the 15 students tested, 13 (86.7%) improved by half a grade level or maintained their grade-level status in the spring.¹⁴

Overall, 178 (96.7%) of 184 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math, nearly reaching their 100.0% goal.

6. Special Education Student Progress

The school set a goal for special education students to demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals. To measure this goal, the school decided that students with active IEPs who had been at the school for one entire IEP year would demonstrate progress toward meeting at least 80.0% of their total IEP goals at the time of their annual review or reevaluation. (Note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports that are attached to the regular report cards.) Of the 10 students with active IEPs for an entire year at the school, nine (90.0%) met or exceeded 80.0% of their IEP goals at the time of the annual review.

E. External Standardized Measures of Educational Performance

DPI requires all schools to administer a DPI-approved reading achievement test to K4 through second-grade students. In 2016, the CSRC selected the PALS assessment for students in

¹⁴ Due to the small number, results are not reported out by fall performance group.

first and second grade at all city-chartered schools; Downtown Montessori also chose PALS to meet the DPI requirement for students in K4 and K5.

For students in third through eighth grades, DPI requires the Wisconsin Forward Exam. These tests and results are described in the following sections.

1. PALS¹⁵

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

a. *PALS-PreK*

The PALS-PreK includes five required tasks (name writing, uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and 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. Schools can choose whether to administer the optional nursery rhyme awareness task. Because it is optional, CRC will not report data on nursery rhyme awareness.

The 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.

¹⁵ Information about the PALS assessments taken from <https://palsresource.info/wisconsin/> and <https://pals.virginia.edu/>; for more information, visit these sites.

A total of 45 K4 students completed the PALS-PreK in the fall and spring. Although the spring developmental ranges relate to expected age-level development by the time of the spring semester, CRC applied the ranges to both test administrations to see if more students were at or above the range for each test by the spring administration. The number of students at or above the developmental range increased for each task from fall to spring (Table 5).

Table 5				
Downtown Montessori Academy				
PALS-PreK for K4 Students				
Students at or Above the Spring Developmental Range				
2017-18				
N = 45				
Task	Fall		Spring	
	Students	%	Students	%
Name writing	30	66.7%	41	91.1%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	19	42.2%	33	73.3%
Lowercase alphabet recognition ¹⁶	17*	100.0%	30 [†]	100.0%
Letter sounds ¹⁷	15 [‡]	88.2%	29 [§]	96.7%
Beginning sound awareness	42	93.3%	44	97.8%
Print and word awareness	39	86.7%	38	84.4%
Rhyme awareness	37	82.2%	41	91.1%

*Of 17 qualified students who completed the fall lowercase task.

†Of 17 qualified students who completed the spring lowercase task.

‡Of 30 qualified students who completed the fall letter sounds task.

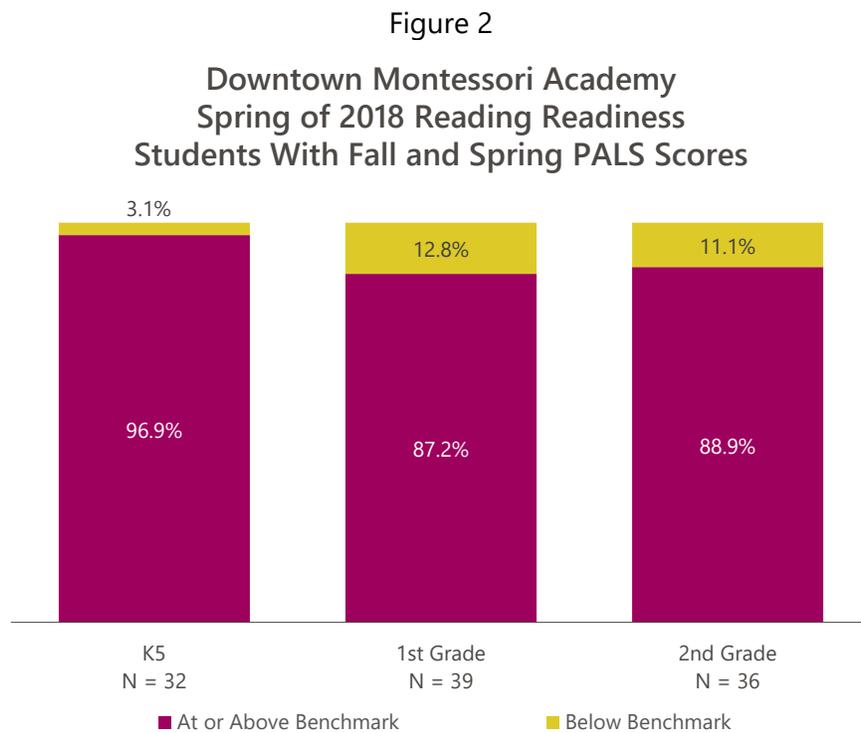
§Of 30 qualified students who completed the spring letter sounds task.

¹⁶ Students who score 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task complete the lowercase alphabet recognition task. There were 14 additional students who completed the lowercase task in the fall and nine additional students who completed the lowercase task in the spring despite not achieving a 16 or higher score on the uppercase alphabet recognition task. These students are not included in results.

¹⁷ Students who score 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task complete the letter sounds task. Seven additional students completed the letter sounds task in the fall, and five additional students completed the letter sounds task in the spring, despite not achieving a nine or greater on the lowercase alphabet recognition task and/or the preceding uppercase alphabet task. These students are not included in results.

b. *PALS-K and PALS Plus*

CRC examined spring reading readiness for students who completed both the fall and spring tests. At the time of the spring assessment, 96.9% of 42 K5 students, 87.2% of 39 first graders, and 88.9% of 36 second graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark for their grade level (Figure 2).



2. Wisconsin Forward Exam for Third Through Eighth Graders¹⁸

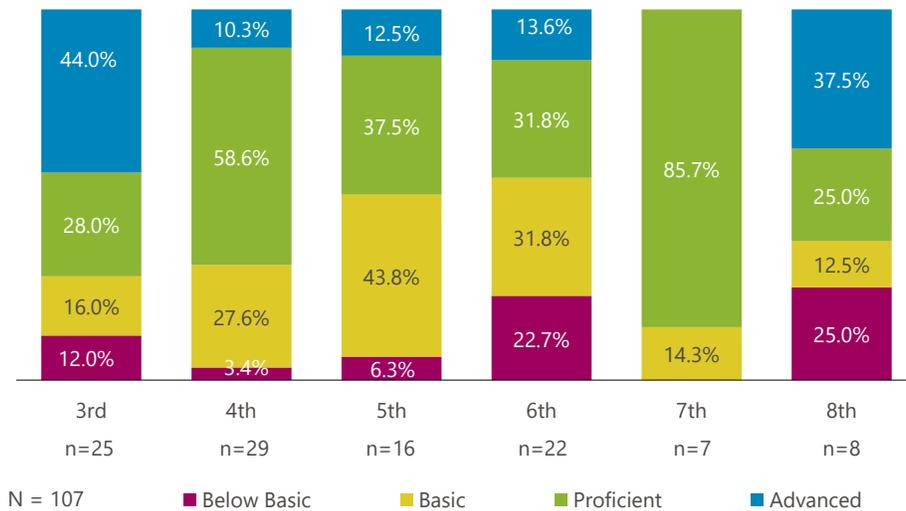
The Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state’s standardized test for English/language arts (ELA) and math for third through eighth graders; science for fourth and

¹⁸ Information taken from the DPI website (<http://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward>) and Wisconsin Forward Exam family brochure. (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/assessment/pdf/Forward%20brochure%20for%20families%202017-18.pdf>).

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 Wisconsin Forward Exam is administered in the spring of each school year.

In the spring of 2018, 107 third through eighth graders completed the ELA and math assessments. Of all students enrolled in the school for the entire school year, 67 (62.6%) were proficient or advanced in ELA, and 67 (62.6%) were proficient or advanced in math. Results by grade level are presented in Figures 3 and 4.¹⁹

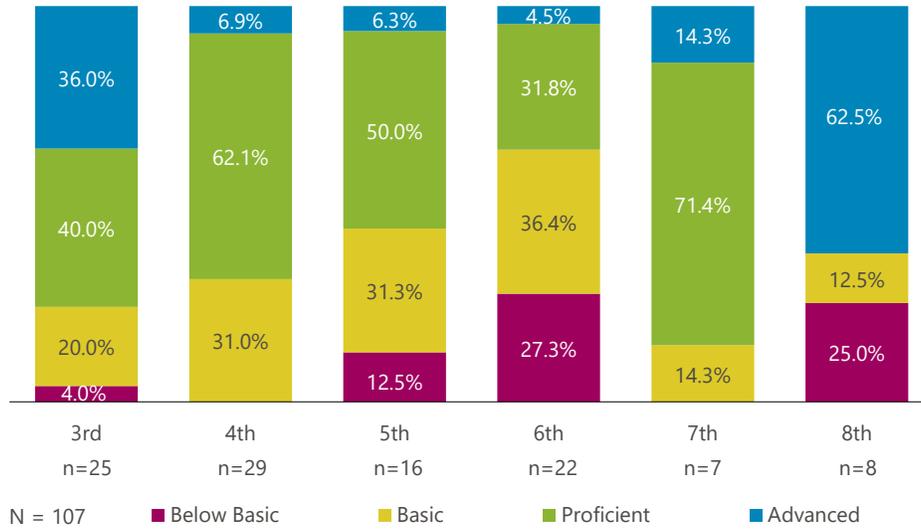
Figure 3
Downtown Montessori Academy
Forward Exam English/Language Arts Assessment
2017–18



¹⁹ One student was in fifth grade in 2016 and 2017 but took the sixth-grade Wisconsin Forward Exam in 2017 and is included in the sixth-grade results.

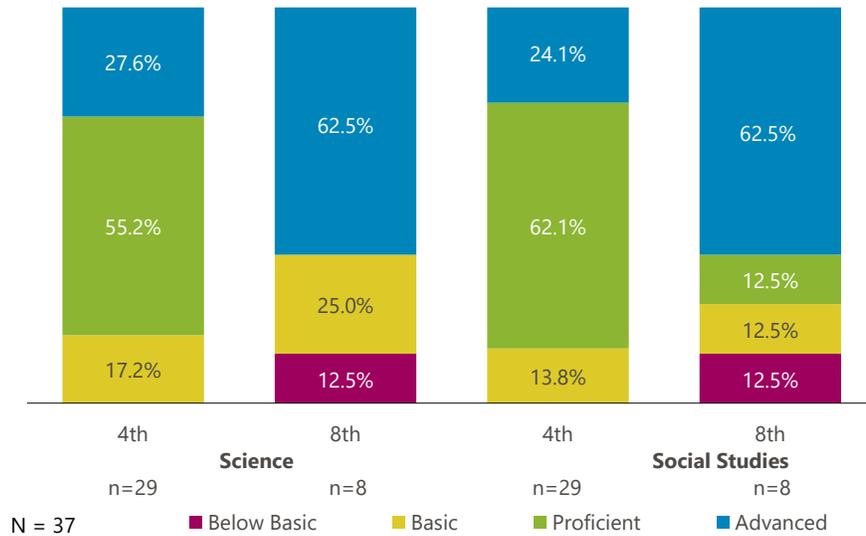
Figure 4

Downtown Montessori Academy
Forward Exam Math Assessment
2017-18



Among 37 fourth and eighth graders who completed the social studies and science tests, 29 (78.4%) were proficient or advanced in social studies, and 31 (83.8%) were proficient or advanced in science. Results by grade level appear in Figure 5.

Figure 5
**Downtown Montessori Academy
 Forward Exam Social Studies and Science Assessments
 2017–18**



F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. Year-to-year progress expectations apply to all students with scores in consecutive years. Students in K4 through second grade take the PALS reading assessment. The PALS summed score benchmark indicates when a student requires additional reading assistance—not that the student is reading at grade level. Additionally, there are three versions of the test, which include 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, CRC only examined year-to-year results for students who were in first grade in the spring of 2017 and second grade in the spring of 2018. 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.

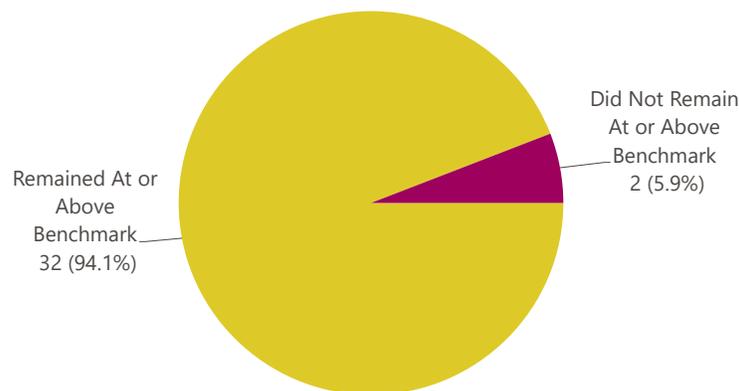
Students in third through eighth grade take the Wisconsin Forward Exam in the spring of the school year. This is only the second year that year-to-year progress can be measured using Wisconsin Forward Exam results from two consecutive school years; results will be used as baseline data to set expectations in subsequent school years.

1. Second-Grade Progress Based on PALS

A total of 35 students completed the PALS spring assessment in 2016–17 as first graders and in 2017–18 as second graders. Based on PALS results from the spring of 2017, 34 students were at or above the spring summed score benchmark as first graders; 32 (94.1%) of those students remained at or above the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2018 as second graders (Figure 6).

Figure 6

**Downtown Montessori Academy
Year-to-Year Reading Readiness for
2nd Graders*
2017–18**



*Those who completed PALS 1–3 in two consecutive years and were at or above benchmark as first graders.

2. Fourth- Through Eighth-Grade Progress Based on Wisconsin Forward Exam

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 2017.

a. *Students at or Above Proficient*

In the spring of 2017, 43 third- through seventh-grade students were proficient or advanced in ELA, and 41 were proficient or advanced in math. Of the 43 students who took the ELA assessment in the spring of 2018, 41 (95.3%) maintained proficiency. Of the 41 students who took the math assessment in the spring of 2018, 38 (92.7%) maintained proficiency.

b. *Students Below Proficient*

For students below proficient the previous year, progress was measured in two ways: by improving a minimum of one proficiency level or by improving at least one quartile within their proficiency level from 2017 to 2018.

In the spring of 2017, 35 third- through seventh-grade students were below proficient (i.e., basic or below basic) in ELA; all of these students took the test again in the spring of 2018. Of these 35, 23 (65.7%) showed progress in 2018. Also in the spring of 2017, 37 third- through seventh-grade students were below proficient (i.e., basic or below basic) in math; all of these students took the test again in the spring of 2018. Of those 37, 19 (51.4%) demonstrated progress in 2018.

G. CSRC School Scorecard

In the fall of 2012, after a three-year pilot, the CSRC adopted its first school scorecard with related standards and expectations. In 2014–15, due to significant changes required by DPI for new standardized tests, the scorecard was revised. Like the original, the revised scorecard includes multiple measures of student academic progress, including performance on standardized tests and local measures, point-in-time academic achievement, and engagement elements such as attendance and student and teacher retention and return. The revised scorecard was partially piloted for the first two years. In February 2017, after the same standardized tests had been used for two consecutive school years, the revised scorecard was accepted by the CSRC to replace the original scorecard as an indicator of school performance but will remain a pilot for an additional two to three years. The overall scorecard percentage (percentage of available points earned) is used to monitor school improvement from year to year.

This year, Downtown Montessori scored 84.2% of the pilot scorecard points, compared with 75.2% on the 2016–17 pilot scorecard. This indicates an increase in total scorecard results. See Appendix D for the 2017–18 pilot scorecard results.

H. Satisfaction Regarding Student Academic Progress

Sections E and G above describe student academic progress across several measures using multiple metrics. In addition to those quantitative measures, CRC surveyed 148 parents and 15 seventh- and eighth-grade students; and CRC interviewed 15 teachers and six board members regarding student academic progress at Downtown Montessori. Of the parents

surveyed, nearly all (98.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that their child is learning what is needed to succeed in later grades, 95.3% indicated that they are informed about their child's academic performance, and nearly all (99.3%) rated the school's contribution to their child's learning as excellent or good. Of the 15 teachers, 100.0% rated student academic progress as excellent or good; and all board members agreed that students are making significant academic progress and that the school is making progress toward becoming a high-performing school. All 15 of the students agreed or strongly agreed that their reading/writing and math skills have improved.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 20th year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori met all of the educational provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent CSRC requirements.

Based on consistent contract compliance and the school increasing the results on its pilot scorecard by nine points, CRC recommends Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

Appendix A

Contract Compliance Chart

Table A
Downtown Montessori Academy
Overview of Compliance for Education-Related Contract Provisions
2017–18

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. 7	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods.	p. 2	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 24–30	Met
Section I, D	<u>Academic criterion #1</u> : Maintain local measures, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals in reading, math, writing, and special education.	pp. 17–24	Met
Section I, D	<u>Academic criterion #2</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures for students who are proficient. a. Due to recent change in standardized assessments for 3rd through 8th-grade students, no expectation is in place at this time. b. Second-grade students at or above summed score benchmark in reading: At least 75.0% will remain at or above.	a. Not applicable (N/A) b. p. 31	a. N/A b. Met
Section I, D	<u>Academic criterion #3</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures: progress for students below proficient. Due to recent changes in standardized assessments for 3rd through 8th-grade students, no expectation is in place at this time.	N/A	N/A
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	pp. 8–9	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	pp. 4–7	Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 11–13, 16–17	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures.	pp. 9–11	Met

Appendix B

Student Learning Memorandum

Student Learning Memorandum for Downtown Montessori Academy

To: NCCD Children’s Research Center and Charter School Review Committee
From: Downtown Montessori Academy
Re: Learning Memo for the 2017–18 Academic Year
Date: October 6, 2017

This memorandum of understanding includes the *minimum* measurable outcomes required by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) to monitor and report students’ academic progress. These outcomes have been defined by the leadership and/or staff at the school in consultation with staff from the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC) and the CSRC. The school will record student data in Skyward or MS Excel spreadsheets and provide the data to CRC, the educational monitoring agent contracted by the CSRC. Additionally, paper test printouts or data directly from the test publisher will be provided to CRC for all standardized tests unless CRC is able to access the results directly from the test publisher. All required elements related to the outcomes below are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section of this memo. CRC requests electronic submission of year-end data on the fifth day following the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 14, 2018.

Enrollment

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

Termination/Withdrawal

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

Attendance

The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95%. Any student who attends school for at least half of the day will be counted as present. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

Parent/Guardian Participation

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

Special Education Needs Students

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

Academic Achievement: Local Measures²⁰

Children's House Literacy and Math

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Local measures of academic achievement are classroom- or school-level measures that monitor student progress throughout the year (formative assessment) and can be summarized at the end of the year (summative assessment) to demonstrate academic growth. They are reflective of each school's unique philosophy and curriculum. The CSRC requires local measures of academic achievement in the areas of literacy, math, writing, and IEP goals.

Elementary and Adolescent Program Literacy

First- through third-grade students will be administered a grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage by the end of September 2017, and again in May 2018. The score will be reported as a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade, third month of instruction = 4.3). Any student scoring below the first-grade level will have a score of K for kindergarten without a month indicator.

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

All students in fourth through eighth grades will be administered components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) no later than the end of the first quarter (November 2017) and again in the spring. Progress will be measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement will be set based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in the table below. At least 90% of students will make progress as described below.

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

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

Elementary and Adolescent Program Writing

Writing skills will be assessed in the fall and spring of the school year using the Six Traits of Writing.²¹ Both writing samples will have grade-level prompts based on grade-level topics with the narrative genre.²²

Each of the six traits will be scored on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced). Grade levels and the 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 average score of these traits for each sample will be used to measure student progress toward the goal.

All students who receive an average score below 4 in the fall will increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2018. Students with an average of 4 or above in the fall will score 4 or above in the spring.

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

Elementary and Adolescent Program Math

First Through Sixth Graders

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

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

²¹ The six traits of writing are organization, fluency, conventions, ideas, voice, and word choice.

²² Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.

Students will be assessed on all five representative skills no later than November 1, 2017. Students who attend all year will show improvement (e.g., from minimal to basic) in at least three out of five grade-level math indicators of math growth by the end of the year. Students with initial proficiency in a skill will maintain proficiency.

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

Seventh and Eighth Graders

All seventh- and eighth-grade students will be given a benchmark assessment in the fall, by the end of September 2017; and in the spring, by the end of May 2018. This benchmark assessment will be completed using MobyMax, an evaluation program, resulting in a grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards. Grade-level equivalency is established when the student demonstrates proficiency in the required standards for a particular grade level. The assessment uses a 75% threshold to determine proficiency.

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

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

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

Special Education Students

Students with active individualized education programs (IEPs) who have been at the school for one entire IEP year will demonstrate progress toward meeting at least 80% of their total IEP goals *at the time of their annual review or reevaluation*. Progress on each goal is defined as achieving at least 75% of the benchmarks under that goal. Please note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports attached to the regular report cards.

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

Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures

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

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

Wisconsin Forward Exam for Third- Through Eighth-Grade Students

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

Year-to-Year Achievement²³

1. CRC will report results from the 2017–18 Wisconsin Forward Exam. In addition, progress will be reported for students who completed the Forward Exam in two consecutive years at the same school. When sufficient year-to-year data are available, the CSRC will set its expectations for student progress, and these expectations may be effective in subsequent years.
2. The CSRC’s expectation for students maintaining reading readiness on the PALS is that at least 75% of students who were in first grade in the 2016–17 school year and met the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2017 will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2018.

²³ The CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 and K5.

Appendix C

Trend Information

Table C1					
Downtown Montessori Academy Enrollment					
Year	Enrolled at Start of School Year	Enrolled During Year	Withdrew	Number Enrolled at End of Year	Retention (Enrolled for Entire Year)
2013–14	233	2	5	230	228 (97.9%)
2014–15	249	2	3	248	246 (98.8%)
2015–16	264	6	4	266	260 (98.5%)
2016–17	274	4	4	274	270 (98.5%)
2017–18	286	2	2	286	284 (99.3%)

Figure C1

Downtown Montessori Academy
Student Return Rates

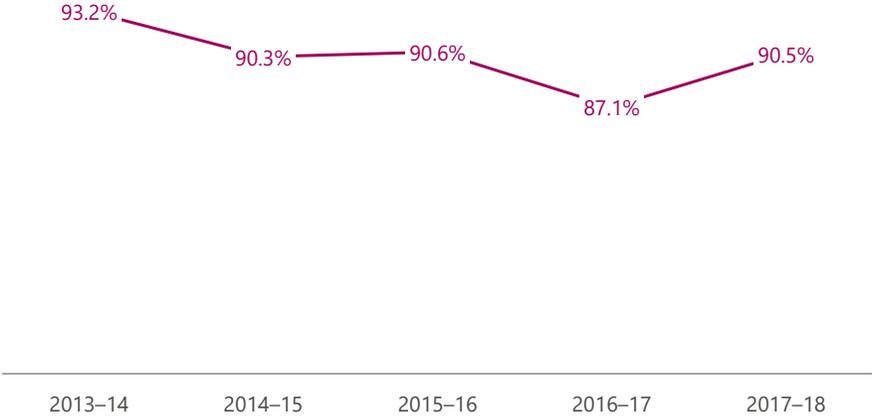


Figure C2

Downtown Montessori Academy
Student Attendance Rates

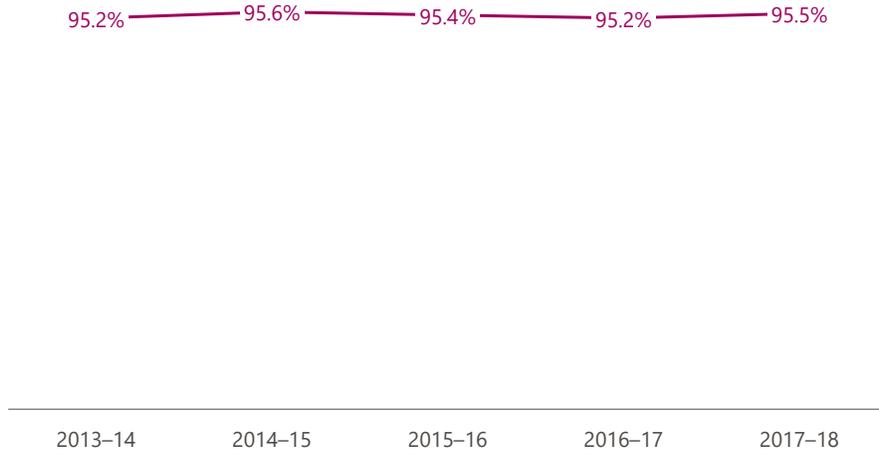


Table C2	
Downtown Montessori Academy Parent Participation	
School Year	% Participated
2013-14	100.0%
2014-15	
2015-16	
2016-17	
2017-18	

Table C3	
Downtown Montessori Academy Teacher Retention	
School Year	Retention Rate: Employed Entire School Year
2013–14	100.0%
2014–15	
2015–16	
2016–17	
2017–18	

Table C4			
Downtown Montessori Academy Teacher/Instructional Staff Return Rates			
Teacher Type	Number at End of Prior School Year	Returned First Day of Current School Year	Return Rate
2013–14			
Classroom teachers	10	9	90.0%
All instructional staff	15	14	93.3%
2014–15			
Classroom teachers	10	10	100.0%
All instructional staff	13	13	100.0%
2015–16			
Classroom teachers	11	11	100.0%
All instructional staff	15	15	100.0%
2016–17			
Classroom teachers	13	10	76.9%
All instructional staff	17	13	76.5%
2017–18			
Classroom teachers	13	13	100.0%
All instructional staff	16	16	100.0%

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

Table C5	
Downtown Montessori Academy CSRC Scorecard Results	
School Year	Scorecard Result
2013–14	89.3%
2014–15	93.4%
2015–16	91.9%
2016–17*	75.2%
2017–18	84.2%

*The revised pilot scorecard was implemented in 2016–17; results are not directly comparable to scorecard percentages in previous years.

Appendix D

CSRC 2017–18 School Scorecard

City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee Pilot School Scorecard
K-8TH GRADE **HIGH SCHOOL**

r: 6/15

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	
		10.0%

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	10.0	
• Forward Exam math—% below proficient who progressed	10.0	
		30.0%

LOCAL MEASURES

• % met reading	6.25	
• % met math	6.25	
• % met writing	6.25	
• % met special education	6.25	
		25.0%

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3–8

• Forward Exam reading—% proficient or advanced	5.0	
• Forward Exam math—% proficient or advanced	5.0	
		10.0%

ENGAGEMENT

• Student attendance	5.0	
• Student reenrollment	5.0	
• Student retention	5.0	
• Teacher retention	5.0	
• Teacher return*	5.0	
		25.0%

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 9, 10, AND 12

• ACT Aspire—% 10th graders who were at or above the composite benchmark score two consecutive years	5.0	
• ACT Aspire—% 10th graders below the composite benchmark in 9th grade but progressed at least one point in 10th grade	10.0	
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	5.0	
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	5.0	
• DPI graduation rate	5.0	
		30.0%

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 21.25 or higher	2.5	15.0%

LOCAL MEASURES

• % met reading	5.0	
• % met math	5.0	
• % met writing	5.0	
• % met special education	5.0	
		20.0%

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 9 AND 10

• ACT Aspire English—% students at or above spring benchmark	5.0	
• ACT Aspire math—% students at or above spring benchmark	5.0	
		10.0%

ENGAGEMENT

• Student attendance	5.0	
• Student reenrollment	5.0	
• Student retention	5.0	
• Teacher retention	5.0	
• Teacher return*	5.0	
		25.0%

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

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

Table D					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
CSRC Pilot Elementary School (K Through 8th Grade) Scorecard					
2017–18					
Area	Measure	Maximum Points	% Total Score	Performance	Points Earned
Student Reading Readiness: PALS	% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0	10.0%	87.2%	3.5
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0		94.1%	5.6
Student Academic Progress: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam reading: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	30.0%	95.3%	4.8
	Forward Exam math: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0		92.7%	4.6
	Forward Exam reading: % below proficient who progressed	10.0		65.7%	6.6
	Forward Exam math: % below proficient who progressed	10.0		51.4%	5.1
Local Measures	% met reading	6.25	25.0%	97.8%	6.1
	% met math	6.25		96.7%	6.0
	% met writing	6.25		93.5%	5.8
	% met special education	6.25		90.0%	5.6
Student Academic Achievement: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam English/ language arts: % at/above proficient	5.0	10.0%	62.6%	3.1
	Forward Exam math: % at/above proficient	5.0		62.6%	3.1
Engagement	Student attendance rate	5.0	25.0%	95.5%	4.8
	Student return rate	5.0		90.5%	4.5
	Student retention	5.0		99.3%	5.0
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
Total		100.0			84.2
Elementary School Scorecard Percentage					84.2

Appendix E

Board Interview Results

Board member opinions are qualitative and provide valuable, although subjective, insight regarding school performance and organizational competency. Downtown Montessori’s board of directors has seven members: a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and three additional directors. Six out of seven participated in a phone interview conducted by CRC staff.

The board members have served on the board from four to 30 years, with an average of more than 10 years. The backgrounds of the board members include education, accounting and finance, law, and business/marketing. All board members interviewed said they participate in strategic planning for the school.

All six board members interviewed received a presentation on the school’s annual academic performance report, received and approved the school’s annual budget, and reviewed the school’s annual financial audit. They also all reported that the board uses data to make decisions regarding the school. On a scale of poor to excellent, five out of six board members rated the school as excellent overall. Board member views are presented in Table E.

Table E					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
Board Member Interviews					
2017–18					
N = 6					
Measure	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teacher-student ratio/class size at this school is appropriate.	3	3			
Program of instruction (includes curriculum, equipment, and building) is consistent with the school’s mission.	4	2			
Students make significant academic progress at this school.	2	4			
The administrator’s financial management is transparent and efficient.	4	2		0	
This school is making progress toward becoming a high-performing school.	3	3			
This school has strong linkages to the community, including businesses.	1	5			
The administrative staff’s performance meets the board’s expectations.	3	3			
The majority of the board of directors take their varied responsibilities seriously.	4	2			

Table E					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
Board Member Interviews					
2017–18					
N = 6					
Measure	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This school has the financial resources to fulfill its mission.	3	3			
The environment of this school ensures the safety of its students and staff.	3	3			

When asked what they liked most about the school, the board members mentioned the following.

- Dedicated teachers and administrators
- Positive culture and welcoming environment
- Class sizes and curriculum

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

- Lack of physical space
- Lack of organized sports and gym
- Lack of diversity among students and staff

When asked for one suggestion for improving the school, board members named the following.

- Improve math performance and support for students struggling with math
- Expand the building to allow for physical education
- Expand to high school grades

Appendix F

Parent Survey/Interview Results

Parent opinions are qualitative and provide a valuable measurement of school performance. To determine parents' satisfaction with the school, parental involvement with the school, and an overall evaluation of the school, each school distributed paper surveys during spring parent-teacher conferences as well as offered the ability to complete the survey online. CRC made at least two follow-up phone calls to parents who had not completed a survey. If these parents were available and willing, CRC completed the survey over the telephone. A total of 148 surveys, representing 140 (71.8%) of 195 Downtown Montessori families, were completed and submitted to CRC.

Results are shown in Table F1. Nearly all parents either agreed or strongly agreed that their child is learning what is needed to succeed in life (98.6%), their child is safe in school (97.3%), and they are comfortable talking with staff (97.3%).

Table F1						
Downtown Montessori Academy						
Parent Satisfaction With School						
2017–18						
N = 148						
Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
I am comfortable talking with the staff.	81.8%	15.5%	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
The staff keep me informed about my child's academic performance.	64.9%	30.4%	2.0%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
I am comfortable with how the staff handle discipline.	60.8%	28.4%	9.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the staff.	73.6%	23.0%	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%
The staff recognize my child's strengths and weaknesses.	75.7%	20.9%	2.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
I feel welcome at my child's school.	73.6%	20.3%	4.1%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The staff respond to my worries and concerns.	70.9%	24.3%	3.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%
My child and I clearly understand the school's academic expectations.	64.2%	27.7%	6.1%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
My child is learning what is needed to succeed in life.	70.9%	27.7%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
My child is safe in school.	75.0%	22.3%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
People in this school treat each other with respect.	70.3%	24.3%	3.4%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%

Table F1						
Downtown Montessori Academy						
Parent Satisfaction With School						
2017–18						
N = 148						
Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
The school offers a variety of courses and afterschool activities to keep my child interested.	29.1%	29.1%	23.6%	13.5%	4.1%	0.7%

The second measure examined the extent to which parents engaged in educational activities while at home (Table F2). During a typical week, most parents of younger students (K4 through fifth grades) read to or with their children (94.2%); participate in activities outside of school with their children (89.9%); work on arithmetic or math (83.5%); encourage the use of phones, tablets, or computers for learning (76.3%); and/or work on homework with their children (72.7%).

Table F2					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
Parent Participation in Activities					
K4 – 5th Grade					
2017–18					
N = 139					
Activity	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	No Response
Read with or to your child(ren)	1.4%	1.4%	12.2%	82.0%	2.9%
Encourage the use of phones, tablets, or computers for learning	10.1%	11.5%	51.1%	25.2%	2.2%
Work on arithmetic or math	3.6%	9.4%	41.7%	41.7%	3.6%
Work on homework	14.4%	7.9%	25.2%	47.5%	5.0%
Participate together in activities outside of school (e.g., sports, library/museum visits)	1.4%	5.8%	66.2%	23.7%	2.9%

Parents of older children (sixth through eighth grades) engaged in similar activities during the week.

Table F3					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
Parent Participation in Activities					
6th – 8th Grade					
2017–18					
N = 24					
Activity	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	No Response
Monitor homework completion	0.0%	4.2%	41.7%	54.2%	0.0%
Encourage the use of phones, tablets, or computers to do research	0.0%	12.5%	54.2%	33.3%	0.0%
Participate together in activities outside of school (e.g., sports, library/museum visits)	4.2%	16.7%	62.5%	16.7%	0.0%
Discuss with your child his/her progress toward graduation	16.7%	29.2%	33.3%	16.7%	4.2%
Discuss plans for education after graduation	20.8%	25.0%	41.7%	8.3%	4.2%

Parental satisfaction was also evident in the following results.

- Most (98.6%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Most (95.3%) parents will send their child to the school next year, 2.0% of parents said they will not send their child to the school next year, and 2.7% were not sure.
- When asked to rate the school’s overall contribution to their child’s learning, nearly all (99.3%) parents rated the school’s overall contribution to their child’s learning as excellent or good.

When asked what they liked most about the school, responses included the following.

- Staff
- Small size
- Teaching approach
- Community feel and welcoming environment

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

- Lack of afterschool and extracurricular activities
- Lack of diversity
- Limited space
- Lack of communication about expectations and school policies

Appendix G

Student Survey Results

At the end of the school year, 15 seventh- and eighth-grade students completed an online survey about their school. Survey responses were generally very positive (Table G).

- All students strongly agreed that they like their school.
- All students agreed or strongly agreed that reading/writing and math skills have improved and that they regularly use computers/tablets in their school work.
- All students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe in school, that the rules are fair, and that teachers at Downtown Montessori help them succeed in school.

Table G						
Downtown Montessori Academy Elementary/Adolescent Student Survey 2017–18 N = 15						
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
I like my school.	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
My reading/writing skills have improved.	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%		
My math skills have improved.	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%		
I regularly use computers/tablets in my schoolwork.	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
The school rules are fair.	46.7%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%		
The teachers at my school help me to succeed in school.	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%		
I like being in school.	26.7%	66.7%	6.7%	0.0%		
I feel safe in school.	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
The marks I get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair.	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	0.0%		
My school has afterschool activities (e.g., field trips, clubs, computers).	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%		
My teachers talk with me about high school plans.	60.0%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%		

<p align="center">Table G</p> <p align="center">Downtown Montessori Academy</p> <p align="center">Elementary/Adolescent Student Survey</p> <p align="center">2017–18</p> <p align="center">N = 15</p>						
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
The students at my school respect each other and their different points of view.	20.0%	60.0%	13.3%	6.7%		
Teachers at my school respect students and their different points of view.	80.0%	13.3%	6.7%	0.0%		

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

- Nice and helpful teachers
- Personalized learning pathways and personalized support
- Community-based environment

When asked what they liked least, students named the following.

- Dress code
- Lack of afterschool activities and sports options

Appendix H

Teacher Interview Results

In the spring of 2018, CRC interviewed 15 teachers regarding their reasons for teaching at Downtown Montessori and solicited feedback on their overall satisfaction with the school. Interviews included a variety of classroom teachers from most grades K4 through eighth and included specialties such as reading, visual arts, and special education.

The teachers interviewed had been teaching for an average of 12 years. The number of years teaching at Downtown Montessori ranged from less than two years to 22 years.

Of teachers, 80% percent agreed or strongly agreed that the school has clear teacher performance assessment processes and that they were satisfied with the performance assessment criteria, and 100% said that student academic performance is an important part of teacher assessment (Table H1).

Table H1					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
Teacher Performance Assessment					
2017–18					
N = 15					
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school has a clear teacher performance assessment process.	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
I am satisfied with my school's teacher performance assessment criteria.	66.7%	13.3%	20.0%		
Student academic performance is an important part of teacher assessment.	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%		

Teachers seem to have a favorable view of school climate. All staff agreed or strongly agreed that staff work well with one another, encourage all families to become involved in school activities, and respect students and their different points of view (Table H2).

Table H2					
Downtown Montessori Academy					
School Climate					
2017-18					
N = 15					
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Adults who work in this school respect students and their different points of view.	86.7%	13.3%			
Staff at this school typically work well with one another.	60.0%	40.0%		0.0%	
Staff at this school encourage all families to become involved in school activities.	73.3%	26.7%			

When asked to rate the importance of various reasons for continuing to teach at the school, all teachers agreed that educational methodology was very important. The only areas that received any "Somewhat important" or "Not at all important" ratings were financial considerations, age/grade level of students, discipline practices, and students (Table H3).

Table H3				
Reasons for Continuing to Teach at Downtown Montessori				
2017-18				
N = 15				
Reason	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not at All Important
Financial considerations	40.0%	46.7%	0.0%	13.3%
Educational methodology and/or curriculum approach	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Age/grade level to which my position is assigned	73.3%	20.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Discipline practices/procedures	60.0%	33.3%	6.7%	0.0%
General atmosphere	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Class size	46.7%	53.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrative leadership	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%
My colleagues	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The students	53.3%	33.3%	6.7%	6.7%

CRC asked teachers to rate the school’s performance across several measures. Several areas received all ratings of excellent or good, including program of instruction, progress toward becoming a high-performing school, students’ academic performance, parent/teacher relationships, teacher collaboration, their own performance as a teacher, and administrative staff’s performance. No areas received “poor” ratings, and relatively few staff rated any given area as “fair” (Table H4).

Table H4				
Downtown Montessori School Performance Rating 2017–18 N = 15				
Area	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Class size/student-teacher ratio	86.7%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Program of instruction	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
Shared leadership, decision making, and accountability	26.7%	60.0%	13.3%	
Professional support/development opportunities	80.0%	13.3%	6.7%	
Progress toward becoming a high-performing school	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	
Students’ academic progress	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
Adherence to discipline policy	46.7%	33.3%	20.0%	
Instructional support	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%	
Parent/teacher relationships	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	
Teacher collaboration to plan learning experiences	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
Parent involvement	46.7%	46.7%	6.7%	
Your performance as a teacher	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	
Administrative staff’s performance	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	

Of 15 teachers, 11 (73.3%) rated the school’s overall progress in contributing to students’ academic progress as excellent, three (20.0%) rated it as good, and one (6.7%) rated it as fair.

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

- Teachers' autonomy in instructional design
- Montessori philosophy
- Open-minded administration fosters creativity of teachers
- Small size of school allows collaboration

Things teachers liked least about the school include the following.

- Small classroom space and lack of other facilities such as gym or auditorium
- Lack of communication between administrative leaders and teachers
- Limited funding to provide good health care plan and other insurance benefits

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

- Change in leadership
- Gun-safety issues (armed guards and guns are required at school)
- Stagnating salary