

# 2016–2017 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

Report Date: September 2017



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  
2016–17**

This is the 19th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, a City of Milwaukee charter school.<sup>1</sup> It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC). Based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report, CRC has determined the following findings.

**I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY**

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

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

**II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

**A. Local Measures**

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Milwaukee Common Council chartered eight schools in the 2016–17 academic year.

*a. Literacy*

- All 21 first- through eighth-grade students who scored at the frustration level at or below their tested grade level in the fall improved to the instructional level in the spring. All 80 students who were at the instructional level (at or below their tested grade level) in the fall reached or exceeded the instructional level of their next grade level in the spring. The school's goal was 100.0% for both groups of students.
- All 34 students (100.0%) who tested at least one full Qualitative Reading Inventory-tested grade level above their actual grade level in the fall maintained or improved their scores in the spring. The school's goal was 100.0%.

Overall, 135 (100.0%) of 135 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, 141 (94.6%) of 149 first- through sixth-grade students reached or maintained proficiency or showed improvement in 80.0% of grade-level math skills. The school's goal was 100.0%.
- Ten of the 17 (58.8%) seventh- and eighth-grade students who were at or below grade level in the fall increased at least one grade level by spring. The school's goal was 75.0%.
- All three students who were above grade level in the fall maintained this status in the spring. The school's goal was 100.0%.

Overall, 154 (91.1%) of 169 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. All 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. This was the second year of application of the Wisconsin Forward Exam to third- through eighth-grade students. CRC examined the year-to-year results in reading and math for students in fourth through eighth grades. At the time of this draft report, Forward Exam results were unavailable. Assuming the availability of the Forward Exam results, this information will be included in the final report.

CRC examined year-to-year results of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening exam for second graders. Of the 22 students at or above the summed score benchmark as first graders, 19 (86.4%) remained at or above the summed score benchmark as second graders. The goal was at least 75.0%.

A total of 31 third- through seventh-grade students who were proficient or advanced in English/language arts (ELA) and 29 who were proficient or advanced in math in 2016 took the assessments again in 2017. Of these students, 28 (90.3%) were proficient or advanced in ELA and 27 (93.1%) were proficient or advanced in math in 2017.

Of the 31 students who were below proficient in ELA in the spring of 2016, 45.2% showed progress in 2017. Of the 36 students who were below proficient in math in the spring of 2016, 30.3% showed progress in 2017.

### **C. CSRC School Scorecard**

Downtown Montessori scored 75.2% of the pilot scorecard points compared with 84.2% on the 2015–16 pilot scorecard. This met the CSRC expectation that schools scoring above 70.0% on the 2015–16 pilot scorecard maintain at least 70.0% in the current year.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Downtown Montessori addressed the recommendations from its 2015–16 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 2017–18 school year.

- Continue efforts to meet the academic needs of individual children while balancing Montessori skill development with Common Core curriculum skills.
- 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 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Common Core State Standards.

### **IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND REPORTING**

Based on past and current contract compliance and the school’s continuing pilot scorecard results, 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 Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) and the NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC). It is one component of the program that the CSRC uses to monitor performance of all city-chartered schools. Report information was gathered as follows.

- CRC staff visited the school in the fall to conduct a structured interview with the head of the school, review critical documents, and obtain copies for CRC files.
- CRC staff assisted the school in developing its outcome measures for the annual learning memorandum.
- Additional site visits included classroom instruction, observation, and taking notes on such issues as classroom setup, number of students and teachers, and student engagement in learning activities.
- CRC staff read case files for selected special education students to ensure that individualized education programs (IEPS) were updated.
- CRC staff verified the presence of current licenses or permits for all instructional staff using the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) teacher license website.
- CRC staff conducted a structured, end-of-the-year interview with the head of the school and the executive director.
- CRC and CSRC staff, along with a CSRC member, attended a Downtown Montessori board of directors meeting to discuss the roles of CSRC and CRC as educational monitors and expectations for board member involvement.
- The school provided electronic data to CRC.
- CRC staff compiled and analyzed results and produced this 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. Board of Directors<sup>2</sup>

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.

As the head of school and executive director manage the day-to-day activities, the board provides oversight and governance critical to the future direction and stability of the organization. In addition to long-term vision and goals, the board develops, along with the

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

administration, short-term strategic plans to identify areas of need and set objectives with definable timelines to meet those needs with the desired outcome.

## **B. Philosophy and Description of Educational Methodology**

### **1. Montessori Approach**

Downtown Montessori delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society.<sup>3</sup> Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. Begun in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced in the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. Montessori education has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years, reflecting growing recognition of the validity of its approach.

Downtown Montessori is currently divided into four levels of programming. The Children's House contains the Montessori primary program, which is open to students ages 3 to 6 and includes grades K3, K4, and K5.<sup>4</sup> The lower elementary program is designed for first

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<sup>3</sup> The *Parent/Student Handbook, 2014–2015* remained in place for the 2016–17 school year. See [http://downtownmontessori.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Parent\\_Student\\_Handbook\\_14-15.pdf](http://downtownmontessori.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Parent_Student_Handbook_14-15.pdf).

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

through third graders; the upper elementary program is open to fourth through sixth graders; and the adolescent program is for seventh and eighth graders.

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

The sense of responsibility to and respect for self and the community introduced in the Children's House is further developed at the elementary level, along with an interdisciplinary approach to learning. At the lower elementary level, the school continues to group multiple ages in an environment that encourages cooperative learning and self-discipline. This program, based on the Montessori "Great Stories,"<sup>5</sup> allows children to discover how all things are interrelated and builds on the Children's House program.

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.

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<sup>5</sup> The five Great Stories span the Montessori curriculum at a glance. Key lessons emphasize fundamental parts of each story in all subject areas.

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

All students experience extensions of classroom study through community involvement. In addition to being a state-certified “Green and Healthy School,” Downtown Montessori is a member of the Urban Ecology Center, located on the Milwaukee River, which provides a coordinated science and environmental program for students. The Montessori teacher/directress works with students individually and in groups, introducing materials and giving guidance as needed. The teacher’s role is to help students teach themselves through the use of the Montessori materials and attention to the learning environment.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Teacher/Instructional Staff Information

During the 2016–17 academic year, the school consisted of 12 classrooms: four Children’s House classrooms for 3- to 6-year-olds (i.e., 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.

Throughout the year, the school employed 16 instructional staff and eight teaching assistants. Instructional staff included 13 classroom teachers, one of whom also provided special education services; an art teacher; a school psychologist; and a Title I reading teacher.<sup>7</sup> Four

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<sup>6</sup> *Parent/Student Handbook, 2014–2015*, p. 32 (the handbook remained in effect for 2016–17).

<sup>7</sup> The school contracted with MJ Care for the services of a speech pathologist and, if needed, an occupational therapist.

classroom teachers taught at the Children's House, four taught lower elementary, three taught upper elementary, and two taught the adolescent program. All 16 instructional staff started and completed the school year, resulting in an instructional staff retention rate of 100.0%.

At the end of the 2015–16 school year, 17 instructional staff (13 classroom teachers and four other instructional staff) were employed by the school and eligible to return in the fall of 2016. Ten of the 13 (76.9%) classroom teachers returned, and three of the four (75.0%) other instructional staff returned. The overall instructional staff return rate was 76.5% (13 of 17 overall). All staff held DPI licenses; each license was verified on DPI's website. All classroom teachers also held Montessori certifications.

The school also provided enrichment activities. This year, Downtown Montessori offered an online program for gifted students through Madison's gifted and talented program as well as a membership in the Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth. The school continues to work with the Urban Ecology Center and Discovery World.

In addition to a staff meeting once every two weeks for program support, the following professional development trainings were provided.

- *Teaching Writing Across the Grades.* Dr. Sue Terry of Cardinal Stritch University presented a three-hour session in August 2016, followed by monthly meetings with individual teachers and quarterly meetings with the whole staff.
- *Creating Safe Learning Environments.* Cooperative Educational Service Agencies staff provided four sessions with the Downtown Montessori staff.
- *Weekly teacher meetings.* Lead teachers met with their level teachers to evaluate and plan. Topics from these meetings were brought once a month to a meeting with the head of school and the executive director.
- *Crisis Go Training.* A new emergency response system was presented over two sessions to all staff.

- *Trauma-Informed Care*. This workshop was held in June 2017 (with follow-up planned for the fall of 2017).
- *CPR and First Aid*. A three-hour workshop was presented to all staff in the fall of 2016.
- *Active Shooter Response*. Staff received training from the Milwaukee Police Department in the summer of 2016.
- *Montessori: In Service to the Child, Family, and Community*. This two-day conference was held at the Wisconsin Montessori Association (WMA).

### 3. Parental Involvement

As described in the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2015–2016*, which remained unchanged for the 2016–17 academic year, 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.<sup>8</sup> All parents of enrolled children are members. Monthly meetings are held in the evenings.

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

#### 4. Discipline Policy

The school's code of conduct and discipline policy from the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2015–2016* 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 engaging in activity that is 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.

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<sup>8</sup> The Parent Engagement Network is fully described in the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2014–2015* and on the school's website at <http://downtownmontessori.com/parent-info/parent-engagement-network/>.

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:

- A procedure for reporting bullying and retaliation for reporting bullying;
- A procedure for investigating reports of bullying;
- Sanctions and supports;
- Bullying prevention and management (including a team meeting when behavior interventions have been put in place); and
- The school's commitment to nonviolent communication and student support.



## 5. Waiting List

In May 2017, the school reported 61 students on the waiting list for admission to the school in the fall: 15 students at the K3 level, 19 at K4, 11 at K5, 11 for lower elementary (first through third grade), four for upper elementary (fourth through sixth grade), and one for the adolescent program (seventh/eighth grade).

## C. **Student Population**

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 274 students in K3 through eighth grade.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the year, four more students had enrolled and four had withdrawn. In order to protect student identity, CRC does not include results for fewer than 10 students; there were too few withdrawals this year to provide reasons. Of the students who began the year, 270 (98.5%) finished the school year at Downtown Montessori. This retention rate was exactly the same for the 2015–16 school year.

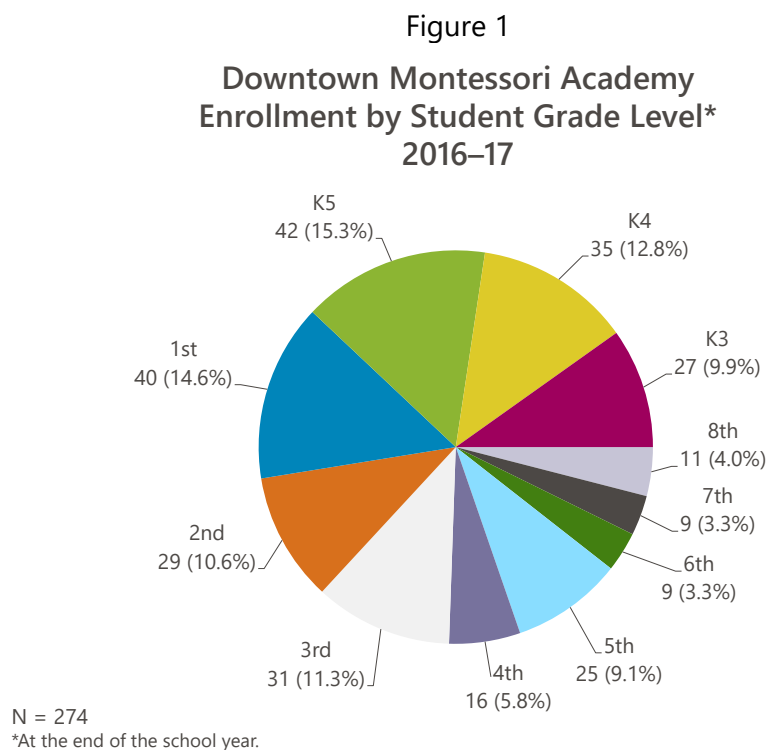
At the end of the year, 274 students were enrolled.

- Of these, 184 (67.2%) students were White, 48 (17.5%) were Latino/a, 23 (8.4%) were Black or African American, 14 (5.1%) were Asian, three (1.1%) were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two (0.7%) were American Indian/Alaska Native.
- There were 143 (52.2%) girls and 131 (47.8%) boys.

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<sup>9</sup> As of September 16, 2016.

- A total of 12 (4.4%) students had special education needs: Nine had speech and language needs, two had specific learning disabilities, and two had other health impairments.<sup>10</sup>
- There were 47 (17.2%) students eligible for free or reduced lunch prices.
- There were 104 students in the Montessori primary program (Children's House), 100 in lower elementary, 50 in upper elementary, and 20 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).



On the last day of the 2015–16 academic year, 256 students attending Downtown Montessori were eligible for continued enrollment at the school for 2016–17 (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 223 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2016. This represents a return rate of 87.1%, slightly lower than the return rate of 90.6% in the fall of 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Students may have more than one type of identified need.

#### **D. Hours of Instruction**

The school posted its 2016–17 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. to 11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4 and 8:40 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for K5 through eighth grades.

#### **E. Computer/Technology Capability**

Downtown Montessori has generic personal computers. All students have access to computer stations at various times throughout the day. 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.

#### **F. 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 2015–16 academic year. At that time, the recommendation was that the school continue a focused improvement plan by revamping the literacy program during the 2016–17 school year.

- Recommendation: Improve seventh- and eighth-grade math outcomes by using the fall achievement data to inform specific teaching strategies for specific students.

Response: The school hired a certified math teacher for the seventh and eighth grades. In the fall, benchmark testing was implemented in math for all seventh- and eighth-grade students to inform individualized teaching strategies. Students were also given the MobyMax assessment to identify their actual grade-level performance. MobyMax is an online personalized learning tool for all school subjects, including math. Throughout the year, the teacher used MobyMax to address specific skill areas for individual students with needs in math.

- Recommendation: Consider hiring a math specialist to work with all grade levels, with a focus on working with the higher grades.

Response: The school could not find a math specialist to work with all grade levels. However, the seventh- and eighth-grade teacher who was certified in math, along with the school's leadership, implemented the same math benchmarking and testing approach used in the seventh and eighth grades. The approach assisted in the development of specific strategies to meet individual students' needs in upper elementary level grades (fourth through sixth). The school also used the Aims WEB+ Math program for individualized instruction.

- Recommendation: Study and decide upon an appropriate approach to writing instruction.

Response: From August 2016 to June 2017, Dr. Sue Terry of Cardinal Stritch University conducted a class for school staff called "Teaching Writing Across the Grades." This ongoing class began with an introduction in August, followed by monthly meetings with teachers to review and plan. Classroom observations also were part of the process.

- Recommendation: Implement a consistent process for teachers to provide input to the board of directors.

Response: Within a week after every board meeting, the board president meets with the staff as a group—without the head of school or the executive director—to share information. Subsequently, the board president meets with the head of school and the executive director to discuss issues as they arise. The board president meets with the head of school and the executive director again before the next board meeting. As a policy, individual teachers are encouraged to contact the board president as needed.

After reviewing the information in this report, and in consultation with the school's leader at the end-of-school interview in May 2017, CRC recommends the following activities for the 2017–18 school year.

- Continue efforts to meet the academic needs of individual children while balancing Montessori skill development with Common Core curriculum skills.
- Continue working with Dr. Sue Terry from Cardinal Stritch University to develop and implement a writing program at all levels that balances the Montessori approach with the DPI Common Core requirements.

#### **G. Graduation and High School Guidance Information**

All 11 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 conferences, school staff discussed high school options and discussed what the students were interested in pursuing. Staff held individual discussions by request. School staff assisted students with required admission essays. Downtown Montessori students are planning to attend Milwaukee Lutheran High School, the High School of the Arts, Carmen High School, Reagan High School, Rufus King High School, Cudahy High School, and St. Francis High School.

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

### **III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

To monitor Downtown Montessori's school performance, a variety of qualitative and quantitative information was collected at specific intervals during the past several academic years. This year, the school established goals for attendance, parent conferences, 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, as students were present on average 95.2% of the time this year.<sup>11</sup> When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 100.0%.<sup>12</sup>

#### **B. Parent 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

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<sup>11</sup> Attendance rate is based on all 277 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.

<sup>12</sup> The CSRC requires the school to report suspensions. According to the data submitted by the school, there were no student suspensions this year.

by phone. This year, the school scheduled two conference sessions: one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents of all (100.0%) students enrolled at the time of the conferences attended. The school has therefore met its goal related to parent conferences.

### **C. Special Education Student Records**

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students. During the year, 16 students with special education needs attended the school. Four of the students were re-evaluated during the current year and, as a result of those evaluations, were dismissed from special education services. An IEP was developed for all 12 of the 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 the areas of 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 101 K3 through K5 students who were enrolled for the entire year.<sup>13</sup> All 101 students maintained proficiency or showed progress for all of the five math skills and 97 (96.0%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five literacy skills assessed (Table 1).

<b>Table 1</b>  <b>Downtown Montessori Academy</b> <b>Students Proficient or Showed Progress on Each of Five Math and Literacy Skills</b> <b>K3 Through K5</b> <b>2016–17</b> <b>(N = 101)</b>		
<b>Skill</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Math</b>		
Skill 1	101	100.0%
Skill 2	101	100.0%
Skill 3	101	100.0%
Skill 4	101	100.0%
Skill 5	101	100.0%
Students Met All Five	101	100.0%
<b>Literacy</b>		
Skill 1	99	98.0%
Skill 2	100	99.0%
Skill 3	100	99.0%
Skill 4	100	99.0%
Skill 5	99	98.0%
Students Met All Five	97	96.0%

<sup>13</sup> Two students had initial and final scores but were not enrolled for the entire year.

## 2. Literacy for First Through Eighth Grades

Literacy skills for students in first 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. First through third graders were assessed in QRI word recognition and a QRI reading passage (if applicable); fourth through eighth graders were assessed with the QRI reading passage and comprehension components. 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 (i.e., frustration, instructional, or independent). Progress was measured by examining fall and spring functional levels.

- Students at the frustration level in the fall were expected to be at the instructional level in the spring.
- Students at the instructional grade level in the fall will be at their next grade instructional level in the spring.
- If a student tested one full QRI-tested grade level above their actual grade level in the fall, the expectation was that the student would maintain the same level or improve.

A total of 169 students were assessed in both the fall and spring. Of these, 34 tested at the independent level at or below their grade level in the fall. These students were not contemplated in the literacy outcomes developed for the school; however, all 34 students maintained or made progress on reading by the spring. The following outcomes pertain to the remaining 135 students.

a. *Students at Frustration Level*

Twenty-one students tested at the frustration level at or below their tested grade level in the fall. All 21 students (100.0%) improved to the instructional level in the spring.

b. *Students at Instructional Level*

In the fall, 80 first- through eighth-grade students were at the instructional level (at or below their tested grade level); all of these students (100.0%) reached or exceeded their next grade level's instructional level in the spring.

c. *Students Above Grade Level*

All 34 students (100.0%) who tested at least one full QRI-tested grade level above their actual grade level in the fall maintained or improved their scores in the spring.

Results indicate that 100.0% of the 135 students who were considered in the school's outcomes made progress on their literacy skills during the school year.

3. Writing Skills for First Through Eighth Graders

This year, the school set a goal that all students who completed the writing sample in the fall would increase their overall average level by a half point (0.5) on the spring writing sample.<sup>14</sup> 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

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<sup>14</sup> Students with an average of 4.6 or higher in the fall were not able to improve their overall scores by 0.5 at the time of the spring test. Those students were expected to maintain or improve that average in the spring.

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) for each trait and the total for all traits was averaged and converted into an overall writing level.

This year, 169 first- through eighth-grade students were tested in fall and spring. All of those students (100.0%) increased their average writing level score by 0.5 or maintained or improved an overall level score of 4.0 or higher for both the fall and spring writing samples.

#### 4. Math Skills for First Through Eighth Graders

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of Montessori sequential math skills. Each math skill was rated as presented, practiced, improving, or mastered/proficient. The school's goal was that all students enrolled for the year would maintain proficiency or show improvement in four (80.0%) out of five grade-level math skills. Scores were provided for 149 first through sixth graders who attended all year. By the end of the year, 141 (94.6%) students reached or maintained proficiency or showed progress in 80.0% of skills (Table 2).

<b>Table 2</b>  <b>Downtown Montessori Academy</b> <b>Math Progress/Proficiency</b> <b>1st Through 6th Grades</b> <b>2016–17</b> <b>N = 149</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Students Who Progressed/Maintained Proficiency in 80.0% of Skills</b>	
		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1st	40	39	97.5%
2nd	28	26	92.9%
3rd	31	29	93.5%
4th	16	14	87.5%
5th	25	24	96.0%
6th	9	Cannot report due to <i>n</i> size	
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>94.6%</b>

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. Students who tested at or below grade level in the fall were expected to increase at least one grade level by spring, while students above grade level in the fall were expected to maintain above grade-level status in the spring.

Of the 20 students tested, 17 were at or below grade level in the fall; 10 (58.8%) of those students increased at least one grade level by spring. All three students who were above grade level in the fall maintained above grade-level status.

Overall, 154 (91.1%) of 169 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math.

## 5. 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 who had active IEPs should meet 80.0% of their IEP goals by the time of their annual review or re-evaluation. (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, five (50.0%) met or exceeded 80.0% of their IEP goals at the time of the annual review.

## **E. Standardized Measures of Educational Performance**

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

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

### 1. PALS

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 this latter task 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.

A total of 35 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 3).

<b>Table 3</b>  <b>Downtown Montessori Academy</b> <b>PALS-PreK for K4 Students</b> <b>Students at or Above the Spring Developmental Range</b> <b>2016–17</b> <b>(N = 35)</b>				
Task	Fall		Spring	
	n	%	n	%
Name writing	29	82.9%	34	97.1%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	25	71.4%	32	91.4%
Lowercase alphabet recognition <sup>14F15</sup>	25*	100.0%	28 <sup>†</sup>	100.0%
Letter sounds <sup>15F16</sup>	24 <sup>‡</sup>	100.0%	27 <sup>§</sup>	96.4%
Beginning sound awareness	35	100.0%	35	100.0%
Print and word awareness	34	97.1%	35	100.0%
Rhyme awareness	31	88.6%	35	100.0%

\*Out of 25 students who qualified and completed the lowercase task in the fall.

†Out of 28 students who qualified and completed the lowercase task in the spring.

‡Out of 24 students who qualified and completed the letter sound task in the fall.

§Out of 28 students who qualified and completed the letter sounds task in the spring.

*b. PALS-K and PALS Plus*

The PALS-K includes six required tasks (rhyme awareness, beginning sound awareness, alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, spelling, and concept of word) and one optional task (word recognition in isolation). The PALS Plus comprises two entry-level tasks (spelling and word recognition in isolation) as well as other tasks that can be administered based on student needs.

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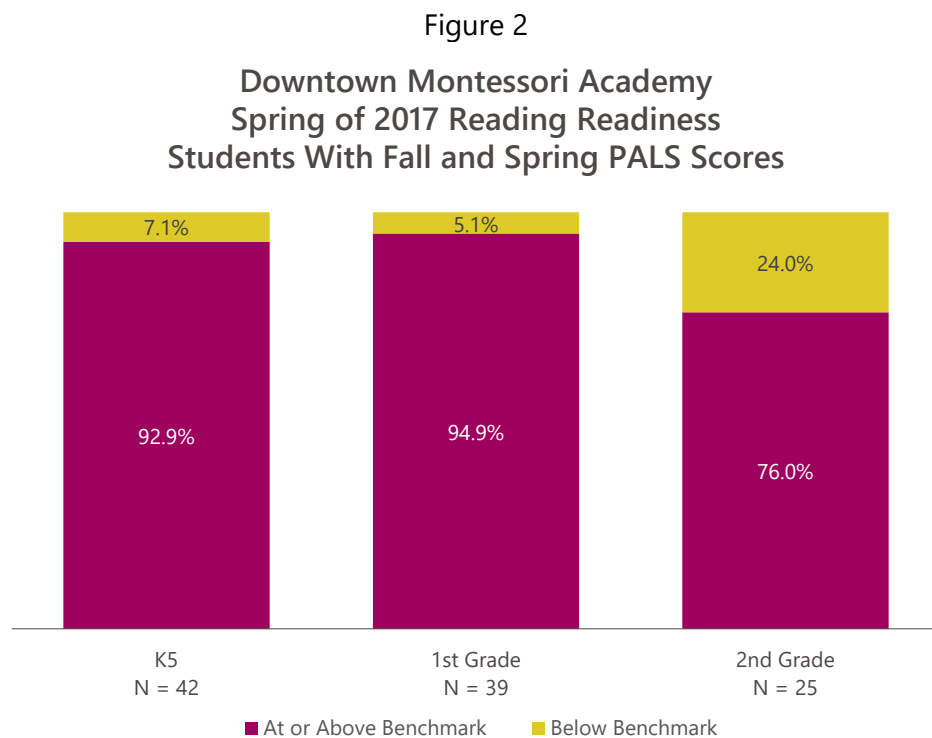
<sup>15</sup> Students who score 16 or greater on the uppercase alphabet recognition task complete the lowercase alphabet recognition task. Four additional students completed the lowercase task in the fall and six additional students completed the lowercase task in the spring, despite not achieving a 16 or greater score on the uppercase alphabet recognition task. These students are not included in results.

<sup>16</sup> Students who score nine or greater on the lowercase alphabet recognition task complete the letter sounds task. One additional student completed the letter sounds task in the fall and two additional students completed the letter sounds task in the spring, despite not achieving a nine or greater on the lowercase alphabet recognition task. These students are not included in results.



For the PALS-K and PALS Plus, specific task scores are summed for an overall summed score. Student benchmark status is only a measure of whether the student is where he/she should be developmentally to continue becoming a successful reader; results from fall to spring should not be used as a measure of individual progress.

CRC examined spring reading readiness for students who completed both the fall and spring tests. At the time of the spring assessment, 92.9% of 42 K5 students, 94.9% of 39 first graders, and 76.0% of 25 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 Graders<sup>17</sup>

In the spring of 2016, the Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state's standardized test for English/language arts and math for third through eighth graders; science for fourth and eighth graders; and social studies for fourth, eighth, and tenth graders. The Forward Exam is a summative assessment that provides information about what students know in each content area at the students' grade level. Each student receives a score based on his/her performance in each area. Scores are translated into one of four levels: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. The Forward Exam is administered in the spring of each school year.

A total of 97 third- through eighth-graders completed the English/language arts and math assessments. Of all students enrolled in the school for the entire school year, 55 (56.7%) were proficient or advanced in English/language arts and 48 (49.5%) were proficient or advanced in math. Results by grade level are presented in Figures 3 and 4.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 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%202016-17.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup> One student was in the fifth grade in 2016 and 2017, but took the sixth grade Forward assessment in 2017 and is included in the sixth grade results.

Figure 3

**Downtown Montessori Academy  
Forward Exam English/Language Arts Assessment  
2016–17**

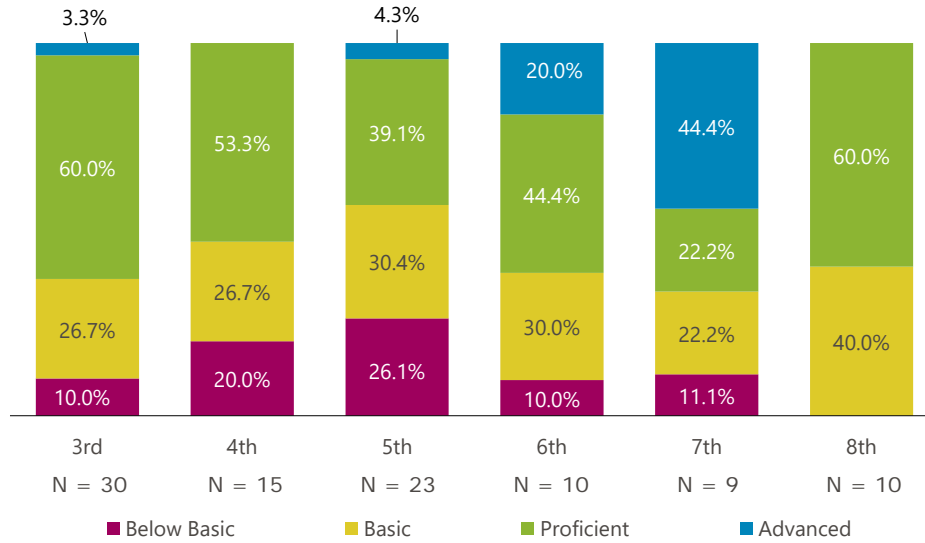
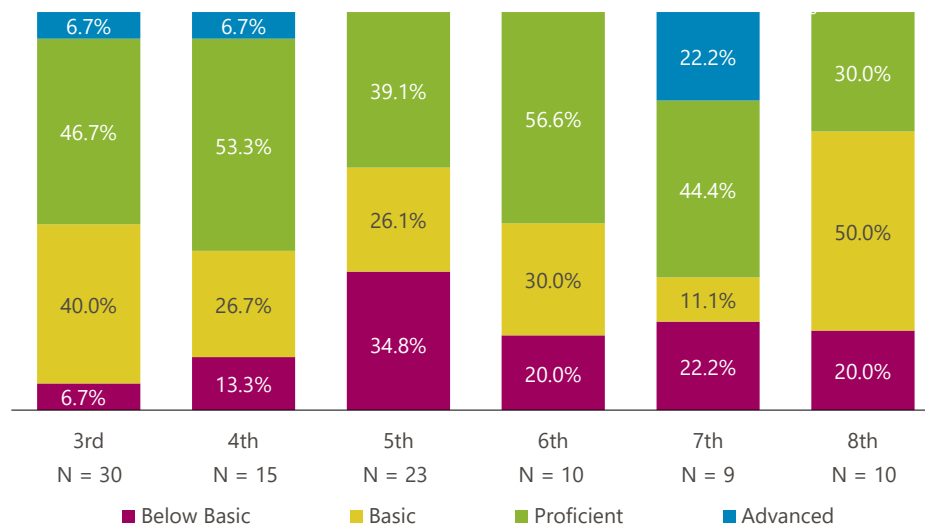
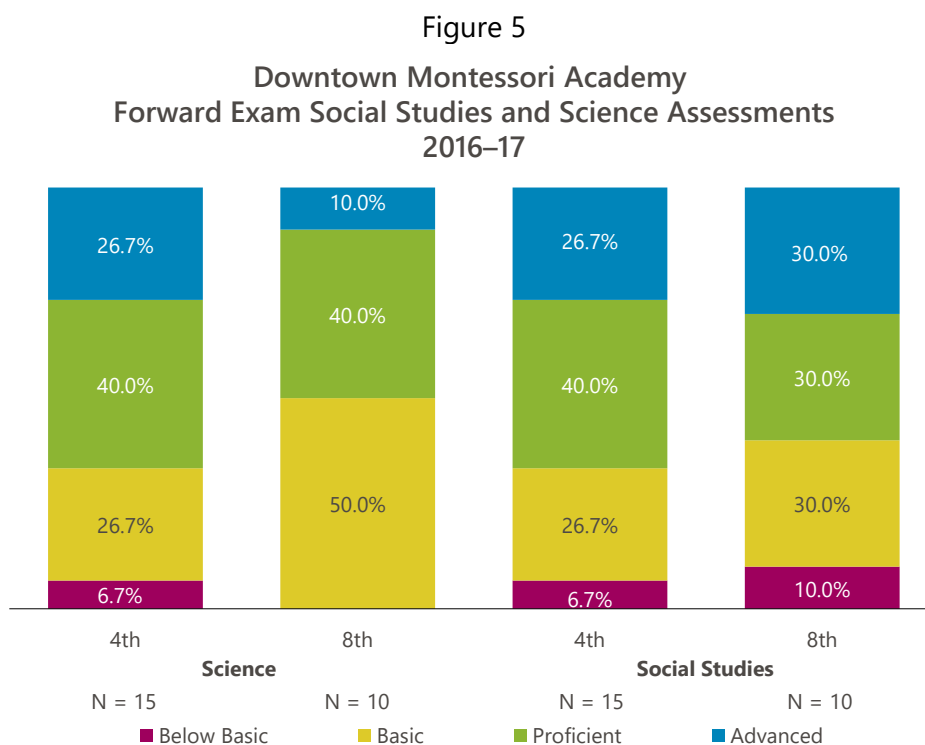


Figure 4

**Downtown Montessori Academy  
Forward Exam Math Assessment  
2016–17**



Among 25 fourth and eighth graders who completed the social studies and science tests, 16 (64.0%) were proficient in social studies (none were advanced) and 15 (60.0%) were proficient or advanced in science. Results by grade level appear in Figure 5.



## F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. Year-to-year progress expectations apply to all students with scores in consecutive years. In the fall of 2013, students in K4 through second grade began taking the PALS reading assessment. The PALS summed score benchmark is intended to show teachers which students require additional reading assistance—not to indicate that the student is reading at grade level. Additionally, there are three versions of the test, which include different formats,

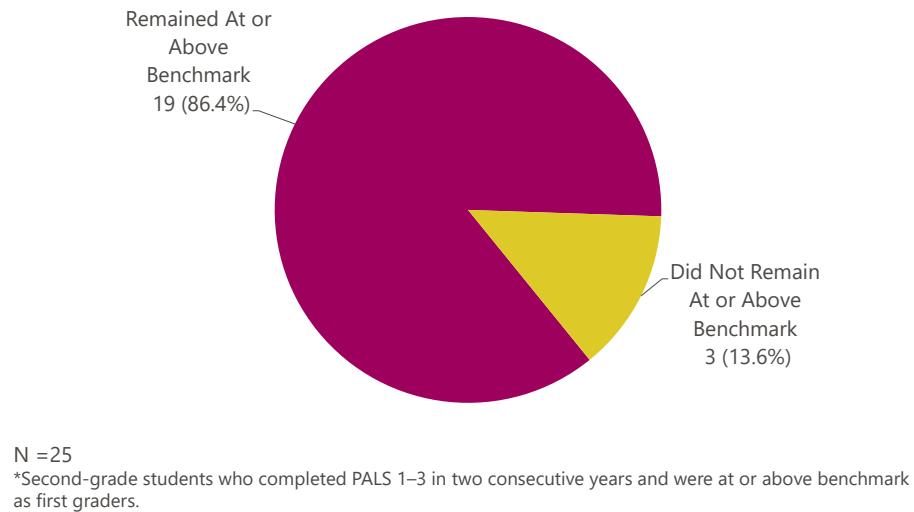
sections, and scoring. For these reasons, an examination of PALS results from one test to another provides neither a valid nor a reliable measure of student progress. Therefore, CRC examined results for students who were in first grade in 2015 and second grade in 2016 who took the PALS 1–3 during two consecutive years. The CSRC’s performance expectation is that at least 75.0% of students who were 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 began taking the Forward Exam in the spring of the 2015–16 school year. Because this is the first year that year-to-year progress can be measured using 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 25 students completed the PALS spring assessment in 2015–16 as first graders and 2016–17 as second graders. Based on PALS results from the spring of 2016, 22 students were at or above the spring summed score benchmark as first graders; 19 (86.4%) of those students remained at or above the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2017 as second graders (Figure 6).

Figure 6  
Downtown Montessori Academy  
Year-to-Year Reading Readiness for  
2nd Graders\*  
2016–17



## 2. Fourth- Through Eighth-Grade Progress Based on 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 2016.

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

In the spring of 2016, 33 third- through seventh-grade students were proficient or advanced in ELA and 30 were proficient or advanced in math. Of the 31 students who took the ELA assessment in the spring of 2017, 28 (90.3%) maintained proficiency. Of the 29 students who took the math assessment in the spring of 2017, 27 (93.1%) 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 2016 to 2017.

In the spring of 2016, 33 third- through seventh-grade students were below proficient (i.e., basic or below basic) in ELA; 31 of these students took the test again in the spring of 2017. Of these 31 students, 14 (45.2%) showed progress in 2017. Also in the spring of 2016, 36 third- through seventh-grade students were below proficient (i.e., basic or below basic) in math; 33 of these students took the test again in the spring of 2017. Of these 33 students, 10 (30.3%) demonstrated progress in 2017.

**G. CSRC School Scorecard**

In the 2009–10 school year, the CSRC piloted a multiple measure scorecard for the schools it charters. The pilot ran for three years, and the CSRC formally adopted the scorecard to help monitor school performance in the fall of 2012. In 2014–15, the CSRC began a pilot of a revised scorecard that, like the original, includes multiple measures of student academic progress. These measures include 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. Revisions include the following.

- The reading readiness measure uses PALS results in place of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, which is no longer available.

- Student academic progress (year-to-year) and student achievement (point-in-time) measures are based on Forward Exam results instead of the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination to reflect changes to the statewide assessment.
- Point values for each local measure were increased from 3.75 to 6.25 while point values for some standardized test results were decreased; this was done to ensure that point values for a single standardized test were the same for elementary and high schools.<sup>19</sup>

Due to recent changes to the standardized assessments, the revised scorecard was only partially piloted over the last two years. Now that the same assessment has been used for two consecutive school years, the revised scorecard will be fully piloted this year; it was accepted by the CSRC in February 2017 to replace the original scorecard as an indicator of school performance.

The score provides a summary indicator of school performance. The summary score is then translated into a school status rating using the ranges below.<sup>20</sup>

A	93.4% – 100.0%	C	73.3% – 76.5%
A–	90.0% – 93.3%	C–	70.0% – 73.2%
B+	86.6% – 89.9%	D+	66.6% – 69.9%
B	83.3% – 86.5%	D	63.3% – 66.5%
B–	80.0% – 83.2%	D–	60.0% – 63.2%
C+	76.6% – 79.9%	F	0.0% – 59.9%

The percentage score is then translated into a school status level (Table 4).

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<sup>19</sup> A copy of the revised pilot scorecard is located in the appendix of this report.

<sup>20</sup> In 2014, the CSRC approved this scoring system to make scorecard percentages more meaningful and to provide schools more opportunity to exhibit improvement; it differs from the system used prior to that year.



<b>Table 4</b>  <b>City of Milwaukee</b> <b>Educational Performance Rating Scale for Charter Schools</b>	
<b>School Status</b>	<b>Scale</b>
High Performing/Exemplary	83.3% – 100.0% (B to A)
Promising/Good	70.0% – 83.2% (C– to B–)
Problematic/Struggling	60.0% – 69.9% (D– to D+)
Poor/Failing	0.0% – 59.9% (F)

Since implementing the scorecard in 2014–15, the CSRC has used the score and rating to guide decisions regarding whether to accept a school’s annual education performance and continue monitoring as usual and whether to recommend a school for a five-year contract renewal at the end of its fourth year of operation under its current contract. The expectation for school performance under the original scorecard was that schools achieve a rating of 70.0% (Promising/Good) or more; if a school fell under 70.0%, the CSRC carefully reviewed the school’s performance to determine whether a probationary plan should be developed.

In 2016–17, the CSRC transitioned from the original to the revised scorecard. During this transition year, they implemented an expectation for the current school year that schools achieve a rating of 70.0% or more on the revised scorecard OR, if below 70.0%, the school shall increase their scorecard percentage by at least two points from the previous year.

This year, Downtown Montessori scored 75.2% of the pilot scorecard points, compared with 84.2% on the 2015–16 pilot scorecard. This met the CSRC expectation that schools scoring above 70.0% on the 2015–16 pilot scorecard would maintain at least 70.0% in the current year. See Appendix D for the 2016–17 pilot scorecard results.

#### **H. DPI Report Card**

At the time of the report, DPI had not produced report cards for any schools for the 2016–17 school year.

#### **IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report covers the 19th 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 past and current contract compliance and the school’s pilot scorecard results, CRC recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

## **Appendix A**

### **Contract Compliance Chart**

<p align="center"><b>Table A</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Downtown Montessori Academy</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Overview of Compliance for Education-Related Contract Provisions</b></p> <p align="center"><b>2016–17</b></p>			
<b>Section of Contract</b>	<b>Contract Provision</b>	<b>Report Reference Page</b>	<b>Contract Provision Met or Not Met</b>
Section I, B	Description of educational program of the school and curriculum focus.	pp. 3–5	Met
Section I, V	The school will provide a copy of the calendar prior to the end of the previous school year.	p. 12	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods.	pp. 3–5	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 23–32	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. 17–23	Met
Section I, D	<u>Academic criterion #2</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures.  a. Year-to-year for fourth through eighth graders at or above proficient the previous year. b. Second-grade students at or above summed score benchmark in reading: At least 75.0% will remain at or above.	a. N/A  b. pp. 26	a. TBD  b. Met
Section I, D	<u>Academic criterion #3</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures.  Progress for students below proficient.	p. 32	N/A
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	pp. 7–8	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	p. 6	Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 10–12, 16	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures.	pp. 8–10	Met

## **Appendix B**

### **Student Learning Memorandum**

## **Student Learning Memorandum for Downtown Montessori Academy**

**To:** Children's Research Center and Charter School Review Committee  
**From:** Downtown Montessori Academy  
**Re:** Learning Memo for the 2016–17 Academic Year  
**Date:** December 1, 2016

Note: 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 Children's Research Center (CRC) and the CSRC. The school will record student data in Skyward or 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 9, 2017.

### **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 a 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 Measures<sup>21</sup>**

#### Children's House

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

Children 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.

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

## Elementary and Adolescent Program

### *Literacy*

All students in first through eighth grades will be administered components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) no later than the end of the first quarter (November 2016) and again in the spring.

First-grade through third-grade students will be administered the following components.

- QRI word recognition
- QRI passage (if applicable i.e. based on their ability)

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

Students' scores will result in a QRI tested grade level (e.g., pre-primer, primer, first) and a functional level of learning for that tested grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent). Progress will be measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level.

No matter what QRI tested grade level a student tests at,

- Students at the frustration level in the fall will be at the instructional level in the spring.
- Students at the instructional level in the fall will be at their next grade instructional level in the spring.

If students test at one full QRI tested grade level above their actual grade level in the fall, the expectation is that by spring, they will maintain the same level or improve.

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

### *Writing*

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

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

<sup>23</sup> Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.



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 complete the writing sample in October will increase their overall average score by .5 on a second writing sample taken during May 2017. Students with an average of 4 or higher in the fall will be expected to maintain or improve that average in the spring.

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

#### *Mathematics: First Through Sixth Grades*

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 CCSS math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition.

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

Students will be assessed on all five representative skills no later than November 1, 2016. Students who attend all year will be proficient or show improvement (e.g., from Minimal to basic in at least four 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.

### *Mathematics: Seventh and Eighth Grades*

All seventh- and eighth-grade students are tested by the end of September 2016 and the spring during May, 2017, using MobyMax, an evaluation program that results in a grade level equivalency based on performance on common core standards. The grade level equivalency is established when the student demonstrates proficiency in the required standards. The assessment uses a 75% threshold to determine proficiency.

75% of the 7th and 8th grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall will improve by at least one grade level in the spring. 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 IEPs will demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals *at the time of their annual review or re-evaluation*. Progress will be demonstrated by reporting the number of goals on the IEP and the number of goals met. Please note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports attached to the regular report cards. Students will achieve at least 80% of the total number of goals on their IEPs. 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<sup>24</sup>

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.

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<sup>24</sup> Students who meet the summed score benchmark have achieved a level of minimum competency and can be expected to show growth given regular classroom literacy instruction. It does not guarantee that the student is at grade level. (Information taken from DPI website.)

### 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 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 Achievement:**<sup>25</sup>

1. CRC will report results from the 2015–16 and 2016–17 Wisconsin Forward Exams. If possible, CRC will also report year-to-year progress for students who completed the assessment in consecutive school years at the same school. When sufficient year-to-year data are available, CSRC will set its expectations for student progress, and these expectations will be effective for all subsequent years.
2. Data from the 2016 spring PALS assessment will be used as baseline data. CSRC's expectation for students maintaining reading readiness is that at least 75% of students who met the first grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2016 as first graders will achieve the second grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2017 as second graders.

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<sup>25</sup> 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	Number Enrolled at Start of School Year	Number Enrolled During Year	Number Withdrew	Number at End of School Year	Student Retention (Number and Percentage Enrolled for the Entire Year)
2012–13	199	4	9	194	190 (95.5%)
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%)

Figure C1  
Downtown Montessori Academy  
Student Return Rates

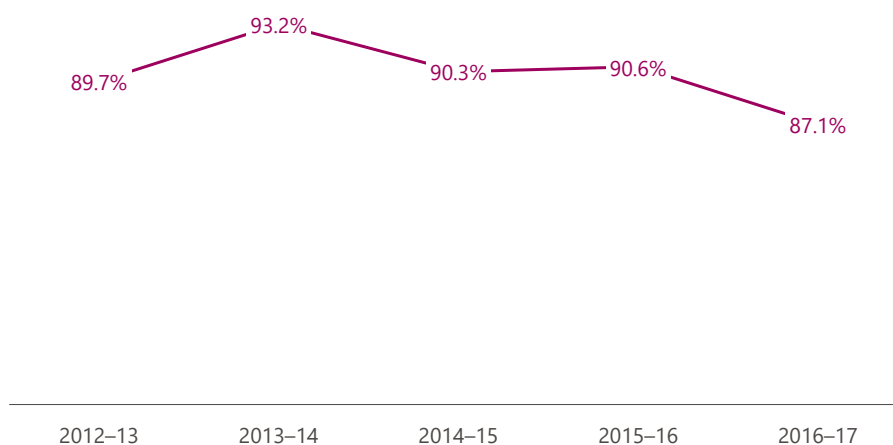


Figure C2

Downtown Montessori Academy  
Student Attendance Rates

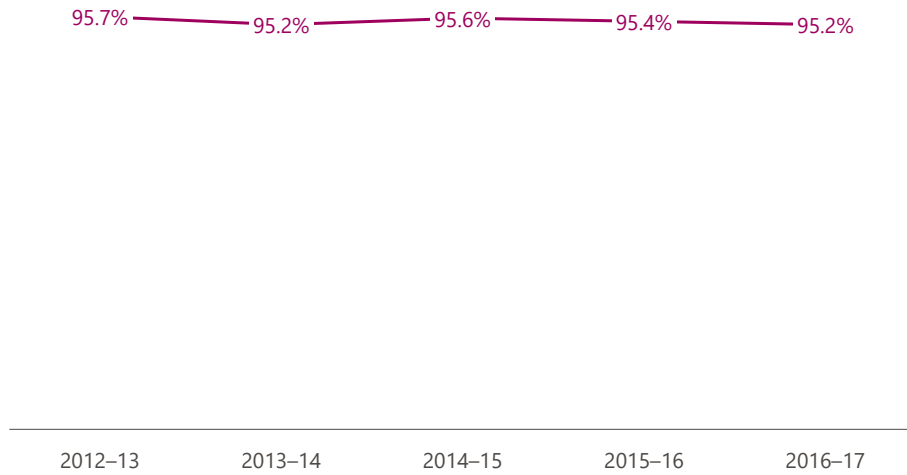


Table C2	
Downtown Montessori Academy Parent Participation	
School Year	% Participated
2012-13	100.0%
2013-14	100.0%
2014-15	100.0%
2015-16	100.0%
2016-17	100.0%

Table C3					
Downtown Montessori Academy Teacher/Instructional Staff Retention Rates					
Teacher Type	Number at Beginning of School Year	Number Started After School Year Began	Number Terminated Employment During the Year	Number at End of School Year	Retention Rate: Rate Employed at School for Entire School Year
<b>2012-13</b>					
Classroom Teachers	10	0	0	10	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	0	0	15	100.0%
<b>2013-14</b>					
Classroom Teachers	10	0	0	10	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	1	0	16	100.0%
<b>2014-15</b>					
Classroom Teachers	11	0	0	11	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	0	0	15	100.0%
<b>2015-16</b>					
Classroom Teachers	13	0	0	13	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	17	0	0	17	100.0%
<b>2016-17</b>					
Classroom Teachers	13	0	0	13	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	16	0	0	16	100.0%

Table C4			
Downtown Montessori Academy Teacher/Instructional Staff Return Rates			
Teacher Type	Number at End of Prior School Year	Number Returned at Beginning of Current School Year*	Return Rate
<b>2012–13</b>			
Classroom Teachers	8	7	87.5%
All Instructional Staff	9	8	88.9%
<b>2013–14</b>			
Classroom Teachers	10	9	90.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	14	93.3%
<b>2014–15</b>			
Classroom Teachers	10	10	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	13	13	100.0%
<b>2015–16</b>			
Classroom Teachers	11	11	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	15	15	100.0%
<b>2016–17</b>			
Classroom Teachers	13	10	76.9%
All Instructional Staff	17	13	76.5%

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

Table C5	
Downtown Montessori Academy CSRC Scorecard Results	
School Year	Scorecard Result
2012–13	85.2%
2013–14	89.3%
2014–15	93.4%
2015–16	91.9%
2016–17*	75.2%

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



## **Appendix D**

### **CSRC 2016–17 School Scorecard**

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

r: 6/15

**HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>STUDENT READING READINESS: GRADES 1-2</b>		
• PALS—% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	(4.0)	<b>10.0%</b>
• PALS—% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	(6.0)	

<b>STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3-8</b>		
• Forward Exam reading—% maintained proficient	(5.0)	<b>30.0%</b>
• 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)	

<b>LOCAL MEASURES</b>		
• % met reading	(6.25)	<b>25.0%</b>
• % met math	(6.25)	
• % met writing	(6.25)	
• % met special education	(6.25)	

<b>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3-8</b>		
• Forward Exam reading—% proficient or advanced	(5.0)	<b>10.0%</b>
• Forward Exam math—% proficient or advanced	(5.0)	

<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	<b>25.0%</b>
• Student reenrollment	(5.0)	
• Student retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher return*	(5.0)	

<b>STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 9, 10, AND 12</b>		
• ACT Aspire—% 10th graders who were at or above the composite benchmark score two consecutive years	(5.0)	<b>30.0%</b>
• 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)	

<b>POSTSECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 AND 12</b>		
• Postsecondary acceptance for graduates (college, university, technical school, military)	(10)	<b>15.0%</b>
• % of 11th/12th graders tested	(2.5)	
• % of graduates with ACT composite score of 21.25 or higher	(2.5)	

<b>LOCAL MEASURES</b>		
• % met reading	(5.0)	<b>20.0%</b>
• % met math	(5.0)	
• % met writing	(5.0)	
• % met special education	(5.0)	

<b>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 9 AND 10</b>		
• ACT Aspire English—% students at or above spring benchmark	(5.0)	<b>10.0%</b>
• ACT Aspire math—% students at or above spring benchmark	(5.0)	

<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	<b>25.0%</b>
• Student reenrollment	(5.0)	
• Student retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher return*	(5.0)	

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

Note: 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.

<b>Table D</b> <b>Downtown Montessori</b> <b>CSRC Pilot Elementary School (K–8th Grade) Scorecard</b> <b>2016–17</b>					
Area	Measure	Maximum Points	% Total Score	Performance	Points Earned
<b>Student Reading Readiness: PALS, 1st–2nd Grades</b>	% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0	<b>10.0%</b>	94.9%	3.8
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0		86.4%	5.2
<b>Student Academic Progress: 3rd–8th Grades</b>	<u>Forward Exam reading:</u> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	<b>30.0%</b>	90.3%	4.5
	<u>Forward Exam math:</u> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0		93.1%	4.7
	<u>Forward Exam reading:</u> % below proficient who progressed	10.0		45.2%	4.5
	<u>Forward Exam math:</u> % below proficient who progressed	10.0		30.3%	3.0
<b>Local Measures</b>	% met reading	6.25	<b>25.0%</b>	100.0%	6.25
	% met math	6.25		91.1%	5.7
	% met writing	6.25		100.0%	6.25
	% met special education	6.25		50%	3.1
<b>Student Academic Achievement: 3rd–8th Grades</b>	<u>Forward Exam English/ Language Arts:</u> % at/above proficient	5.0	<b>10.0%</b>	56.7%	2.8
	<u>Forward Exam math:</u> % at/above proficient	5.0		49.5%	2.5
<b>Engagement</b>	Student attendance rate	5.0	<b>25.0%</b>	95.2%	4.8
	Student return rate	5.0		87.1%	4.4
	Student retention	5.0		98.5%	4.9
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		76.5%	3.8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100.0</b>			<b>75.2</b>
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCORECARD PERCENTAGE</b>					<b>75.2%</b>