



February 15, 2018

Kevin Ingram  
Chair,  
Charter School Review Committee

Dear Kevin Ingram,

Milwaukee Math and Science (MMSA) community thanks you and the Charter School Review Committee for giving us the opportunity to update you with the progress our school has made toward the recommendations listed in the 2016–17 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance. As you will observe throughout this document, MMSA has made progress in the current school year. With the support of our management organization, Concept Schools, our staff, as a team, put strong measures in place to increase student achievement, leadership and staff consistency, attendance, and retention for both student and staff.

Below you will find the goals listed for the 2017-2018 school year for MMSA. These goals will address the concerns that were expressed in the MMSA Probation letter that was sent to our school, based on the recommendations from the CRC and the CSRC in the 2016-17 MMSA Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance. The following narrative also explains the changes/strategies that are being used to address each of these goals.

**MMSA Report Card Goals for the 2017-2018 School Year**

1. At least 80% of the first graders at the school for the entire year will meet the summed score benchmark on the spring of 2018 PALS assessment.
2. At least 75% of the second grade students with consecutive-spring PALS results will maintain the PALS reading benchmark in the spring of 2018.
3. At least 65% of the students who completed the fall NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading test will reach their target Rasch unit (RIT) score on the spring NWEA MAP reading test.
4. At least 65% of students who completed the fall NWEA MAP math test will reach their target RIT score on the spring NWEA MAP math test.
5. Increase total points earned for engagement indicators on the 2017-18 scorecard. The total points include attendance and the student and teacher return and retention rates. The total points earned in the 2016-17 for these indicators was 20.2 (80.8%) out of the possible 25 points in this area.
6. At least 20% of students in third through eighth grade will attain proficiency or above on the Forward Exam in reading.
7. At least 20% of students in third through eighth grade will attain proficiency or above on the Forward Exam in math.



8. At least 50% of students who were proficient or above in reading and/or math on the Forward Exam in the spring of 2017 will maintain proficiency in the spring of 2018.
9. At least 35% of students who were below proficient in reading and/or math on the Forward Exam in the spring of 2017 will improve by at least a quartile within their level or move up to the next level.

## **Strategies to Address the PALS Assessment Goals for K5-2nd Grade Students (Goal 1 and 2)**

All students that were identified as below the benchmark on the Fall 2017 PALS assessment receive Title I support from the reading specialist. During the previous 2 years, the reading specialist did small group pull-outs and also taught a separate reading class for K5-2nd grade students. This year, the reading specialist is only doing interventions and supporting reading centers in the classroom. She no longer teaches the reading class so her focus is solely on those students that need the most reading support. Students receive pull-out support from the reading specialist 2-3 times per week (60-90 minutes/week). (Also supports goal 3)

In Table 1 you will find data for the students that have been receiving Title I support for the 1st semester of the 2017-18 school year. Interventions began in October with the reading specialist. Due to unforeseen circumstances, our reading specialist was out on medical leave for 8 weeks during the semester. During that time, we did have another staff member cover the Title I services, but there was a transition time before we could make that happen so students didn't receive services for a couple of weeks. You can see from the data that we have had mixed results with our students on both the NWEA test and the STAR test. The STAR Early Literacy test gives research-validated, state-specific learning data on a student's early literacy skills. This is the first year that our students have taken the STAR test so they have had to acclimate themselves with the build-in graphics, structure and time limit of the test. Students have definitely struggled with the time limit for each question because most other assessments are not timed. We hope that as our students continue to use this tool, they will become more familiar and comfortable with the format so we can see growth in their scores. Because this is the first year that our students are using this assessment, teachers are also growing accustomed to the data that is provided and learning how to use it. We will continue to meet together to find strategies for using this beneficial data.



<b>Table 1</b> <b>K5-4th Grade Students Receiving Title I Services</b> <b>NWEA and STAR Reading Results</b>							
Grade	Student	Fall RIT Score	Winter RIT Score	Growth	Fall STAR	Winter STAR	Growth
K5	O	128	146	18	356	529	173
	W	141	138	-3	429	503	74
	S	145	142	-3	430	495	65
	K	141	152	11	512	542	30
	J	143	147	4	486	494	8
	T	140	137	-3	366	353	-13
	L	133	144	11	383	395	12
	T	134	144	10	393	546	153
1st Grade	G	142	168	26	400	600	200
	J	150	152	2	579	634	55
	H	151	151	0	604	686	82
	Z	154	160	6	632	490	-142
	K	153	148	-5	502	545	43
	J	143	148	5	492	569	77
	S	142	136	-6	NA	NA	NA
	R	152	140	-12	522	571	49
	D	142	147	5	515	575	60
	C	139	139	0	512	351	-161
2nd Grade	L	152	166	14	537	546	9
	S	140	162	22	575	495	-80
	A	163	175	12	542	585	43
	I	164	165	1	619	597	-19
	C	163	174	11	715	703	-12
	S	168	174	6	657	709	52
	M	169	163	-6	547	568	21
	C	156	158	2	485	645	160
	S	153	167	14	579	505	-74
	A	138	179	41	670	822	152



	B	160	165	5	611	674	63
	A	167	179	12	702	752	50
	N	157	163	6	788	790	2
	J	160	160	0	570	733	163
3rd Grade	N	154	166	12	NA	NA	NA
	N	163	162	-1	99	127	28
	M	157	167	10	87	143	56
	D	167	178	11	121	174	53
	D	169	174	5	NA	NA	NA
	A	160	190	30	171	209	38
	J	169	161	-8	NA	NA	NA
	R	163	171	8	157	182	25
	I	154	164	10	95	156	61
	S	161	156	-5	184	77	-107
	S	154	151	-3	60	74	14
	J	154	167	13	NA	NA	NA
	A	158	168	10	184	128	-56
	D	158	175	17	153	101	-52
	N	169	193	24	342	340	-2
	J	156	177	21	136	260	124
	J	183	194	11	373	330	-43
	E	177	188	11	274	337	63
	J	169	175	6	161	291	130
	J	167	182	15	253	236	-17
	C	170	193	23	209	283	74
	K	175	191	16	296	222	-74
	T	181	191	10	277	442	165
	M	182	192	10	314	294	-20



In the 2017-2018 school year, MMSA continues to have an extra reading class for all students in grades Kindergarten through second grade. This class is part of the 'specials' that our students attend, like music, computers, art and physical education. Each group meets twice per week for a total of 90 extra minutes of reading instruction beyond the regular classroom instruction. The focus of the reading class is to continue to build foundational skills: phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency for the K5-2nd grade students. (Also supports goal 3)

Each of the 1st grade classrooms have the support from a teaching assistant. The two second grade classes share a teaching assistant. These teaching assistants (TAs) help students in the classroom during work time. The TAs also work with small groups or individual students progress on foundational skills and provide that feedback to the classroom teacher and reading specialist. Flashcards, quick checks, short reading passages, classwork and center work are resources that the TAs use to assist our students. (Also supports goals 3 and 4)

Each teacher uses the Journeys resources to guide instruction in reading. The Journeys resources provide lessons in: concept of print, phonemic awareness/phonics, reading fluency, reading comprehension, letters and sound, vocabulary, spelling, language, writing and high frequency words. Teachers use the leveled readers during Guided Reading. The leveled readers consist of below-level, on grade-level and above grade-level texts. Teachers have also shared leveled readers across grade levels, depending on an individual's need for lower or higher level reading text. All teachers have access to Think Central, which is the online resource to accompany other Journeys resources. Teachers can upload their student roster and assign work to their students for independent work time. Along with the use of these resources, the K-2 curriculum director with Concept Schools has provided a scope and sequence, unit and weekly goals, authentic writing tasks, center ideas, and a variety of other practice resources for the classroom teacher. (Also supports goal 3)

The K-2 Concept Schools Curriculum Director has provided several webinars available through her website that are pre-recorded for any teachers that want professional development in these areas: balanced literacy, basics to reading instruction, guided reading, and reading and math center. She also updates her live webinars quarterly, this quarter offering: basics to reading instruction, high leverage strategies and tools for classroom management, effective guided reading in the primary classroom and the emergent reader. There are a variety of times that teachers can sign up for this live webinar, based on their planning time or after-school time. (Also supports goals 3 and 4)

Teachers utilize many online resources to supplement their lessons each day. Reading A-Z offers teachers the ability to print leveled readers for students to take home to share with their families or to be used during small group centers. Compass Learning is used to provide students with individual support based on their needs identified on the NWEA test in the fall and winter. Each student receives a learning path in Compass Learning in the following areas:



Foundation Skills (phonics and word recognition, phonological awareness, print concepts), Language and Writing (capitalize/spell/punctuate, language: grammar/usage, Writing: purposes: plan/develop/edit), Literature and Informational (key ideas, details craft and structure of informational text/ key ideas, craft and structure of literature), Vocabulary Use and Functions (context clues/references, vocabulary acquisition/use). Along with those individualized online resources, teachers also use children's videos to practice letters, sounds, sight words, etc. Other online resources that are utilized during center time include: ABCya, ReadWorks, Book It, SpellingCity, Fact Monster, Fun Brain, and countless other programs. (Also supports goals 3 and 4)

All of our K5-2nd grade teachers have access to the PALS website through CESA 1. The website offers a variety of teaching tools, webinars, reports for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, and online quick checks to monitor the student's progress between the fall, winter and spring assessment. This year, our teachers are also giving the PALS assessment in the winter session. Although the mid-year check doesn't provide a benchmark score like in the fall and spring, teachers are still able to track a student's growth or lack of progress with specific skills so interventions can be provided for students still failing to make growth.

Each of the K4-2nd grade teachers offer tutoring on Mondays and Thursdays. There are a small number of students from each teacher's class that stay on those nights so small group interventions can target skills that students need the most help with.

Although the PALS winter assessment does not assign a total benchmark score as in the fall and spring, data from the winter PALS assessment has been included below. The first table includes data from the 1st grade students that fell below the benchmark in Fall 2017 in the areas of: a total spelling score, letter sounds, beginning sounds, ending sounds, digraphs and blends. The second table includes data from the 2nd grade students that were above the benchmark in Fall 2017. The data includes: an overall spelling score, identification of 1st grade sight words, identification of 2nd grade sight words, and reading accuracy, words per minute and comprehension scores for 2nd-4th grade reading passages.

<http://www.mmsacademy.org>

Student Number	Fall Spelling Score (0-10)	Winter Spelling Score (24-44)	Fall Letter Sounds (21)	Winter Letter Sounds (26)	Fall Beginning Sounds (4)	Winter Beginning Sounds (4)	Fall Ending Sounds (4)	Winter Ending Sounds (4)	Fall Digraphs (4)	Winter Digraphs (4)	Fall Blends (4)	Winter Blends (4)
Student 1**	1	2	10	18	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Student 2**	9	23	20	24	4	4	3	4	0	2	0	3
Student 3	3	23	21	25	2	4	1	4	0	4	0	0
Student 4	0	20	7	20	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	3
Student 5*	3	27	5	18	3	4	0	4	0	2	0	2
Student 6	11	48	16	26	4	4	0	4	2	4	3	4
Student 7	2	3	8	20	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Student 8**	3	4	7	19	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Student 9	3	7	10	21	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0
Student 10	3	26	7	22	3	4	0	3	0	4	0	2
Student 11	3	15	4	20	2	4	1	4	0	1	0	1
Student 12	13	30	14	25	4	4	4	4	2	4	0	4
Student 13*	14	34	17	23	4	4	4	4	0	4	2	2
Student 14*	6	32	7	23	3	3	3	4	0	1	0	3
Student 15	11	10	17		4	4	3	4	0	0	0	0
Student 16	3	5	3	19	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0
* Denotes a student that receives ESL services												
** Denotes a student that receives Special Education services												



### 2nd Grade Students Above the Fall 2017 PALS Benchmark

Student	Fall Spelling Score (20)	Winter Spelling Score (28-56)	Fall 1st grade word list (15)	Winter 1st grade word list (16-20)	Fall 2nd grade word list (12-20)	Winter 2nd grade word list (12-20)	Winter 2nd grade reading accuracy	Winter 3rd grade Words per Minute	Winter 3rd grade Comprehension (6)	Winter 3rd grade reading accuracy	Winter 3rd grade Words per Minute	Winter 4th grade Comprehension (6)	Winter 4th grade reading accuracy	Winter 4th grade Words per Minute	Winter 4th grade Comprehension (6)
Student 1*	29	44	19	18	15	16	96%	49	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Student 2	40	47	20	20	20	20	NA	NA	NA	97	107	3	NA	NA	NA
Student 3	26	39	13	15		14	96%	45	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Student 4	28	39	20	20	16	18	NA	NA	NA	96%	74	2	NA	NA	NA
Student 5*	40	49	20	20	20	19	NA	NA	NA	97%	62	6	NA	NA	NA
Student 6	40	53	20	20	20	20	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	98%	47	3	
Student 7	20	31	20	19	19	16	NA	NA	NA	94	82	4	94	70	6
Student 8	17	41	17	16	17	17	NA	NA	NA	92	51	3	96	52	4
Student 9	19	32	16	17	4	11	95%	39	1	83	32	0	NA	NA	NA
Student 10	25	31	16	15	5	11	96%	49	3	88	33	4	NA	NA	NA
Student 11	18	24	17	13	7		89%	34	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Student 12*	38	43	19	19	19	16	92%	66	3	94%	64	2	93%	88	4
Student 13	20	30	18	17	12	14	97%	56	5	87%	36	1	NA	NA	NA
* Denotes a student that receives ESL services															
** Denotes a student that receives Special Education services															

## Strategies to Address the NWEA Goals and Forward Exam Goals (Goals 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8)

In the 2017-2018 school year, MMSA has Title I services for students in 3rd-8th grade for reading. Students were identified for these Title I services based on data from the NWEA fall/winter assessment and monthly STAR data, along with teacher recommendations. Students in Title I reading receive 90 minutes of interventions each week. The focus during these small group interventions include: reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and fluency. Four of our middle school teachers have a smaller class caseload due to the number of sections we have in 5th-8th grade. Because of that, we have filled other periods in the day with RTI groups for each of those 4 teachers (3 reading RTI teachers and 1 math RTI teacher). Each



reading RTI group consists of 4-6 students. Each group meets twice per week (T/Th or W/F). The teachers use Monday as their planning/prep time for their RTI groups each week.

In Table 2 you will find the NWEA and STAR data for the students that have received Title I services during the 1st semester of the 2017-18 school year. In most cases, our students showed tremendous growth on the NWEA assessment. This assessment is one they are familiar with and have an unlimited amount of time to complete the test. Like was mentioned earlier, this is the first year that MMSA is utilizing the STAR tests. Again, our 5th-8th grade students have had a difficult time adjusting to the timed questions. The STAR reading test has 34 questions and each question has a 60 second time-limit. Our NWEA winter data showed that of the 113 students that took the NWEA reading test, the average time it took them to complete the 42 questions was 75 minutes. I believe this is why our STAR data fails in comparison to the results we are seeing on the NWEA test. As we continue to

<b>Table 2</b> <b>5th-8th Grade Students Receiving Title I Services</b> <b>NWEA and STAR READING Results</b>							
Grade	Student	Fall Score	RIT	Winter Score	RIT	Growth	
5th Grade	A	195		204		9	NA
	J	176		196		20	NA
	T	174		197		23	NA
	L	185		195		10	NA
	L	193		207		14	430
	K	179		188		9	270
	C	191		204		13	NA
	J	205		198		-7	375
	C	194		202		8	291
	M	175		190		15	NA
	N	197		215		18	447
	N	195		193		-2	NA
5th Grade	A	193		196		3	NA
6th Grade	D	181		197		16	212



	D	180	184	4	180	184	4
	D	181	178	-3	192	169	-23
	Z	210	215	5	386	492	106
	J	197	203	6	390	392	2
	A	191	202	11	268	367	99
	K	196	216	20	368	343	-25
	C	194	204	10	406	387	-19
	D	191	207	16	286	451	165
	S	191	199	8	303	372	69
	A	187	193	6	225	356	131
7th Grade	J	179	204	25	200	349	149
	A	197	220	23	266	539	273
	D	170	181	11	152	268	116
	A	211	206	-5	584	563	-21
	G	203	212	9	457	376	-81
	D	188	197	9	212	235	23
	C	200	211	11	405	500	95
8th Grade	S	202	215	13	434	405	-29
	A	207	206	-1	277	265	-12
	B	200	217	17	374	403	29
	N	195	209	14	269	284	15
	K	204	204	0	348	515	167

MMSA also has Title I services for math for students in 5th-8th grade. Students receive 45 minutes of interventions weekly. The 3rd and 4th grade students receive extra math support during after-school tutoring on Mondays and Thursdays and the K5-2nd grade students receive extra math support during center time with the TAs. The focus for math interventions in 5th-8th grade include basic skills in the areas of whole numbers, decimals, and fractions.

In Table 3 you will find NWEA and STAR data for the students that have received Title I math services during the 1st semester of the 2017-18 school year. Because there is only one math intervention teacher, there is only time for one group per grade level so the groups are a little larger for that teacher. Again, there are many students that made growth on their NWEA math test from fall to winter. The struggles that were identified with the time limit on the STAR reading test were similar to the struggles that we saw with the math test. Our students are used



to untimed tests and so we will have to help them adjust to this timed assessment as they prepare themselves for the ACT/SAT in high school.

Table 3									
5th-8th Grade Students Receiving Title I Services									
NWEA and STAR MATH Results									
Grade	Student	Fall Score	RIT	Winter Score	RIT	Growth	Fall STAR	Winter STAR	Growth
5	K	187		184		-3	500	576	76
	O	190		193		3	NA	NA	NA
	M	161		177		16	323	358	35
	M	191		192		1	494	526	32
	N	186		NA		NA	560	511	-49
	J	200		203		3	498	581	83
	J	176		183		7	417	444	27
6	M	184		196		12	512	509	-3
	C	186		205		19	573	632	59
	S	188		199		11	534	610	76
	D	188		200		12	554	613	59
	D	184		190		6	NA	NA	NA
7	D	205		207		2	624	696	72
	J	205		210		5	696	738	42
	J	203		211		8	626	694	68
	D	171		160		-11	359	441	82
	D	197		202		5	578	559	-19
8	T	201		209		8	628	628	0
	G	212		211		-1	717	629	-88
	B	192		207		15	532	580	48
	N	202		207		5	NA	NA	NA
	A	210		215		5	609	619	10
	A	197		192		-5	503	517	14
	K	203		208		5	517	622	105



In the 2017-2018 school year, MMSA has added an extra reading class for all students in grades K5-8th grade (K5-2nd grade in past years). This class provides our students with an extra 90 minutes of reading instruction beyond the regular classroom instruction. The focus for this class with 3rd-8th grade students include: read alouds and independent reading time to promote a habit of lifelong reading, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary acquisition, spelling strategies, and responding to reading through conversation and writing.

In past years, 3rd-8th grade students have utilized online training tools offered via the Wisconsin DPI-Forward Exam website and DRC. Although this training tool gave students practice with the testing interface, including tools like: masking, highlighting, scrolling, turning pages, clicking and dragging, etc, this training tool did not give students individual practice with test questions similar to what they will experience on the actual Forward Exam. This year, DPI and DRC have developed a practice test that includes item samplers with stimuli and test items similar to those on the Forward Exam. Along with the practice test questions, a summary of the alignment for each grade level, answer key, depth of knowledge and annotations for each test item. (Link to DPI's Forward Exam Practice Test and Sample Items- <https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward/sample-items>) Teachers have a more clear understanding of the test items and can use that knowledge to focus their test preparation sessions. 3rd-8th grade students have begun using these practice items during their computer lab time each week. (Specifically goals 6, 7 and 8)

DPI and DRC have also uploaded a text dependent analysis question for each grade level that includes student responses. This allows students to read a text passage or several text passages and then respond in writing to a prompt. Like on the Forward Exam, students will be asked to identify and explain a theme or central idea by using textual evidence to support their claim or analyze the development of an event, character, central idea or theme using textual evidence to support their analysis. Teachers ask students to read and then respond to this question, as they would on the Forward Exam. Once students complete their writing response, the teacher will share the student responses that are included from DPI and DRC. Students will analyze those student responses and then use them to score their own response. The teacher will then ask the students to rewrite their original response based on the analysis of the included student responses. (Specifically goals 6, 7 and 8)

Because this is the first year that DPI and DRC have offered a practice test similar to the actual Forward Exam, we had already sought out other resources for test preparation in our reading and math classes. Our reading and math teachers have taken advantage of released test items from the PARCC ( Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers), which is the Illinois state test. That assessment is based on the Common Core Standards, just like Wisconsin's Forward Exam so test stimuli and content are pretty similar. Teachers have used these test prep questions for bell work at the beginning of each class. They give students a chance to solve the problems or respond to the text questions and then go through the answers



as a whole class. Not only do students get independent practice at reading the question, identifying key words in the question stem, finding the answer in the text or solving the problem, they also get to learn alternate strategies from their classmates. One thing that is common to hear in MMSA math classes is the teacher asking if anyone used a different strategy or found the answer in a different way. And you will always hear the reading teachers asking students to defend their responses with textual evidence.

Other test-taking strategies that have been taught in 3rd-8th grade is the process of elimination. Students are taught to eliminate answers that are obviously wrong or do not answer the question that was asked before choosing from the remaining responses. Teachers also draw attention to words like: always, all, never, every, sometimes, most often, few, etc. Students practice reading graphs by understanding how to read titles, headings, labels, and other helpful information. Reading the question and responses before reading a text passage is key to setting a purpose for reading. Teachers give clues about where to locate information regarding a text passage, for example in a nonfiction text, the main idea will likely come toward the beginning of the passage, while supporting details are in the middle followed by the conclusion. For a fiction story, the setting and characters are often developed near the beginning, the problem will arise toward the middle of the story, and the resolution near the end. Lastly, all content teachers have been teaching the following words within their daily assignments/classwork so students understand what the word is asking: explain, persuade, support, describe, evaluate, infer, analyze, summarize, predict, compare/contrast, sequence, etc.

The curriculum directors for each content area have been to Milwaukee several times during the 2017-2018 school year. Prior to the start of the year, each director met with their respective teachers to walk through curriculum maps, the scope and sequence, assessments and resources available that are embedded in our student information system. Since then, the directors have also visited each teacher to observe classroom instruction and follow-up with the teachers after the observations to share insights, ideas, and constructive feedback. The directors' focus is on depth of knowledge and helping teachers to deepen the student's understanding of the content along with knowing how to use that information or skill to extend their learning. (Also supports goals 1 and 2)

MMSA administration recently worked with a leadership team from Concept Schools to create strategies for school improvement in the area of differentiating instruction to improve student understanding and growth. Our milestone for this goal is: *Teachers know how to assess where student skills are and create student groups based on that data, so the expectations in the group are challenging, but not overwhelming.* Based on that milestone, different levels of differentiation were established, with our goal to move all teachers toward a level 4 through data meetings, professional development opportunities, coaching, peer observation/feedback, modeling, and sharing ideas via team/department/staff meetings.



- Level 1 - Teachers know what standards they are expected to teach and can identify the level of thinking students should be doing to demonstrate mastery.
- Level 2 - Teachers match their assignments and assessments to the appropriate thinking level required for mastery of a standard. They use student groups in class and provide support to students who need remediation or enrichment through small group teaching or individual help.
- Level 3 - Teachers use more small group and think-pair-share rather than teacher led instruction. Teachers know how to read and interpret assessment data (classroom pretests and progress monitoring data) to group students, and then they create assignments and activities that are within the zone of proximal development to help scaffold learning. All students are not doing the same thing.
- Level 4 - Teachers employ various student-centered activities such as simulations, PBL, experiments, inquiry, etc... at least 3 out 5 days

MMSA provides its teachers with additional resources to increase the quality of teaching and learning. MMSA reading and math teachers use Compass Learning (Odyssey) with their students twice per week during regularly scheduled time in the media center. This program allows students to work at their own pace on the material and concepts that were assigned to them after taking the NWEA test. This program also allows teachers to assign work to students based on concepts that are being taught in class.

3rd-8th grade reading, math, science and social studies teachers offer tutoring twice per week on Mondays and Thursdays. Because there are so many teachers available, we are able to spread the students out among them so groups for tutoring are small and more work can get accomplished. Some teachers also work with students during their recess time to get caught up on work or make up quizzes/tests from being absent.

Dr. Bob Darnell, an internationally known speaker provided a professional development session for all MMSA staff members that focused on increasing student achievement through a variety of practical teaching strategies. Dr. Darnell modeled each of the strategies and differentiated his sessions based on elementary and middle school ideas. Dr. Darnell will also return to MMSA on Friday, February 23rd to meet with grade level teams to follow-up on his previous session, along with addressing any of the following learning needs: curriculum and unit design, assessments, academic interventions, instruction, explicit vocabulary instruction, explicit reading/writing/thinking instruction, learning environment, data analysis/goal setting/planning, or technology integration. (Also supports goals 1 and 2)

The instructional coordinator meets with individual teachers after testing sessions to go over data. A variety of data reports are used from NWEA, STAR and PALS. We are able to pinpoint specific skills that students are struggling with overall, but also individual struggles. Data



conversations are also shared with teams of teachers if they share students. Not only is it the responsibility of our reading and math teachers to help our students gain skills and show growth, but other content areas can help as well. During social studies and science, the teachers often use maps, charts, graphs and graphic organizers to practice reading those type of tools. Technical writing is also expected in those content areas. (Also supports goals 1 and 2)

NWEA has recently added a new student profile that has been shared with parents during Parent/Teacher conferences. Teachers are able to display the student profile on the STARBoards in the classroom to walk parents through the data for reading and math. The profile also offers a goal-setting function so teachers, parents and students can have a conversation based on the data and the skills that are recommended for growth. The growth chart is particularly interesting for parents because they are able to see the results for each time the student took the test and can see if the student's scores are going up, down or staying the same across many semesters. This also leads to a discussion about the Forward Exam because NWEA has found the correlation between the 2 assessments and is able to offer a prediction on how the student will score on the state assessment. (Also supports goals 1 and 2)

Although we continue to try to build intrinsic motivation for our student's success, we also understand the need for extrinsic motivation during our test sessions to keep our students focused and trying their best. NWEA incentives are easier to reward to students because we are able to see immediately whether they have met their goals or not. Teachers spend time goal-setting with their students after each testing session and remind students of those goals and strategies that will help them to meet their goals. Students go into the testing room with their NWEA goals in their sights and write down their own scores after they complete the test.

- NWEA winter incentives include a bag of chips for students that met one of their MAP goals and a bag of chips and pizza for meeting both of their goals.
- NWEA spring incentives include a pizza party for students that meet one of their goals. K5-4th grade students that meet both of their goals are rewarded with a field trip to Stone Fire, while 5th-8th grade students earn a trip to Action Territory.
- In the spring, students that meet both of their NWEA RIT goals and meet the national average also earn a trip to Bay Beach.

The Forward Exam is not as easy for students to set goals or understand their results because they don't get scores immediately, which makes it difficult for them to find any purpose in this assessment. Teachers will continue to encourage them and will make students aware of their quartile rank from the previous year, if they were a MMSA student, and also whether they were below basic, basic, proficient or advanced prior to the test session. During testing, students can earn testing incentive tickets for being focused on their test, taking their time, going back over their responses, etc. At the end of all testing sessions, one student from each section will win a \$25 gift card. Prior to the 2018 testing window, we are also considering a field trip for any student that scored proficient or advanced on the 2017 Forward Exam to encourage those



students to continue to achieve their proficiency status and draw attention from those students that were labeled as basic or below basic.

Finally, setting up a testing environment that is calm and quiet is helpful for students. The elementary students (K5-3rd grade) continue to take their NWEA assessments in the computer lab where they go for their regular computer class. There are usually 2-3 adults in the room to supervise students. Students are allowed to take breaks for water or the bathroom when they are losing their focus so they don't just click through questions. The 4th-8th grade students have begun taking their NWEA tests on the chromebooks in the classroom. Again, students are able to take breaks, when needed. The test proctor pauses the tests during passing time so students can take a stretch break, do some mindfulness or just relax for a few minutes before resuming their test.

In Table 4 you will see the comparative data for the NWEA Reading test. In most grade levels our teachers are closing the gaps between the fall and winter assessment between our students' scores and the norm. Unfortunately, the gap is widening in the kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade. There have been individual meetings with the teachers of those classrooms and the instructional coordinator to continue to look at data for individual students and the overall class growth or lack of growth. Professional development opportunities have also been recommended for several teachers to continue to build their knowledge and skills with teaching foundational reading skills to our young students.

**Table 4**  
**2017-2018 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress Fall to Winter RIT Comparison-Reading**

	Fall 2017			Winter 2018		
Grade Level	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference
Kindergarten	141.6	141	+.6	147.5	151.3	-3.8
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	152.9	160.7	-7.8	158.4	171.5	-13.1
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	165.3	174.7	-9.4	171.6	184.2	-12.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	170.9	188.3	-17.4	180	195.6	-15.6
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	183.4	198.2	-14.8	194.2	203.6	-9.4
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	193.2	205.7	-12.5	201.2	209.8	-8.6



8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	207.9	217.2	-9.3	212.9	219.1	-6.2
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In Table 5 you will find data regarding the number of students that met their NWEA winter RIT growth for reading. Each student's growth projection or goal is based on the student's grade level, starting RIT score (fall score) and the subject matter (reading or math). NWEA says on average, 50% of students will show more growth than the projected growth score and 50% of students will show less growth than the projected score. Taking that into account, many of the grade levels are performing better than the projection by NWEA, with a few exceptions. Our overall total of 61.3% is above the norm of 50%.

**Table 5  
NWEA MAP Reading  
K5-8th Grade  
Based on Target RIT Scores**

Grade	N	Met Target RIT Growth in Winter 2018	
		N	%
<b>K5</b>	24	14	58.3%
<b>1st</b>	29	8	27.6%
<b>2nd</b>	31	13	41.9%
<b>3rd</b>	40	24	60%
<b>4th</b>	36	27	75%
<b>5th</b>	34	27	79.4%
<b>6th</b>	28	20	71.4%
<b>7th</b>	20	14	70%
<b>8th</b>	27	18	66.7%
<b>Total</b>	269	165	61.3%

In Table 6 you will see the comparative data for the NWEA Math test.



**Table 6**

**2017-2018 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress Fall to Winter RIT Comparison-Math**

	Fall 2017			Winter 2018		
Grade Level	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference
Kindergarten	135	140	-5	147.1	151.5	-4.4
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	153	162.4	-9.4	165.3	173.8	-8.5
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	169.4	176.9	-7.5	179	186.4	-7.4
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	177.9	190.4	-12.5	185	198.2	-13.2
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	189.7	201.9	-12.2	195.7	208.7	-13
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	198.1	211.4	-13.3	205.3	217.2	-11.9
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	200.6	217.6	-17	209.1	222.1	-13
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	206.7	222.6	-15.9	210.4	226.1	-15.7
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	211.8	226.3	-14.5	218.1	229.1	-11

In Table 7 you will find data regarding the number of students that met their NWEA winter RIT growth for math. Again, you will see that MMSA's overall percentage of 60.7 is above the typical growth that NWEA has established.



**Table 7  
NWEA MAP Math  
K5-8th Grade  
Based on Target RIT Scores**

Grade	N	Met Target RIT Score in Winter 2018	
		N	%
<b>K5</b>	27	19	70.4%
<b>1st</b>	29	20	70%
<b>2nd</b>	31	14	45.2%
<b>3rd</b>	40	19	47.5%
<b>4th</b>	36	19	52.8%
<b>5th</b>	33	22	66.7%
<b>6th</b>	27	21	77.8%
<b>7th</b>	20	10	50%
<b>8th</b>	27	20	74.1%
<b>Total</b>	270	164	60.7%

## **Strategies to Address the student and teacher return rates (Goal 5)**

### **Student Retention and Student Return Strategies**

Since the beginning of the academic year, MMSA has had various activities, academic and extracurricular trips, and events our students like and may not have the chance to participate in other schools. For most of these events we ask very minimal fees and cover the students who cannot afford to pay. Some of the many trips that our students have participated in are: several movies days at local theaters, roller skating, ice skating at Petit National Ice Center, Apple Holler, a local farm, Milwaukee County Zoo, Milwaukee Public Museum, Stone Fire, Peace Learning Center of Milwaukee and a musical called, "We Are the Drum" at Milwaukee Marshall High School.



Many in-school events have been taking place or are planned throughout the remainder of the school year that would involve parents, grandparents or other family members such as Harvest Fest, Feasting and Reading Night, Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms, Grandparents Day, Valentine Day Dance, Honor Roll Dinners, etc.

Many of the incentives for academic success/improvements are being offered and they keep the students connected with their school. Class Dojo and Facebook are other ways to keep the families engaged with their children's education and help teachers work together with the families. These kinds of measures help us keep our students for longer terms and drop the mobility rate, unless it is unavoidable.

MMSA students are able to participate in CYSP (Concept Young Scholars Program) which is a program that will focus on academic challenges, healthy lifestyle, building confidence, volunteerism, exploration, and many fun activities related to the four goal areas: personal development, voluntary public service, physical fitness, and expedition/exploration. Each scholar has a chance to earn a Gold, Silver, or Bronze medal. Scholars who earn a medal will be rewarded at the end of the school year in an award ceremony. The medals and certificates are important for scholars to keep in their academic portfolio because they can ultimately help strengthen their resume and college applications. Currently, there are 43 5th-8th grade students in CYSP.

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy 5th-8th grade students have the opportunity to participate in the MMSA science fair and hopefully qualify for the CONSEF Science Fair in Cleveland, OH. Last year approximately 20 students traveled to Ohio to participate in the science fair, 7 of those were gold medal winners! Along with competing in the science fair, MMSA also offers robotics for middle school students.

Concept Schools hosts MathCON for those students that excel in math. All of our students have been registered in 5th-8th grade. Students have taken the online test in January and now we wait to hear which of our students qualified for the regional finals which will be held in Indianapolis on March 17th and the National Mathcon Finals will be held at the University of Illinois-Chicago on May 5th. To prepare for MathCon, 12-15 students consistently stay after school to meet with the math teachers each week.

We also believe that we will be able to retain our students and parents by creating a safe, high achieving, and nurturing school environment by having clear behavioral expectations. We are implementing the following strategies:

- Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Commitment to Excellence is required to be signed by parent, student and staff
- Each family receives a MMSA handbook at the beginning of the school year which clearly states behavioral expectations and consequences



- Student/Parent orientation day in the summer
- Monthly assemblies for K5-8th grade. The purpose of these assemblies is to recognize positive student behavior and enforce the school culture and core values.
- The PBIS matrix of expected behaviors hang in each classroom and expectation reminders are hung in the hallway, bathroom, and other common areas.

MMSA feels very strongly about the implementation of the PBIS model. Below is an explanation of how PBIS makes our school stronger and helps with student retention and return.

### **Discipline/ PBIS**

Our intent is to help every student fulfill his or her intellectual, social, physical and emotional potential. Everything in and about the school has been designed to create an orderly and distraction-free environment in which all students can learn positively and effectively. For this to happen, it is imperative that we have a safe environment that is supportive and conducive for growth. By setting clear social and behavioral expectations and directly teaching students about those expectations, it is our goal to create a positive atmosphere for optimal learning.

Our school has a PBIS team that is dedicated to the implementation of PBIS. Those team members are listed below:

Mrs. Henderson -Assistant Principal of School Culture  
Ms. Barlow -Special Ed. Director  
Mrs. W- Reading Specialist/Mindfulness Coach  
Ms. McCain- Teacher Assistant  
Ms. Kelton -PE Teacher  
Ms. Reinhart -Middle School Social Studies Teacher

Three years ago our school began implementing PBIS-Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. As you know PBIS is a nationally recognized and research-based process that supports positive learning environments. This framework/approach has assisted our school in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum through defining, teaching, and acknowledging behavioral expectations. The PBIS framework consist of 3 Tiers, Tier 1 universal instruction and supports, tier 2 targeted interventions and supports, and tier 3 intensive, individual interventions and supports.

It is our belief that we will continue on the same positive path with increase positive behavior behavior due to the fact that we began the year by teaching the school-wide expectations in all areas of the school: bus, playground, hallway, cafeteria, locker area, etc. Teachers also teach the expectations for their individual classrooms - explicitly demonstrating what the behaviors look like, giving students opportunities to practice, and giving the rationale behind the



expectation. We also reset the school year in January using the same method. We will continue to instill the following behavioral expectations to ensure a positive and productive school environment for our students, staff and parents:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe

Our vision was and continues to focus on one tier at a time to ensure that we implement PBIS into our school with fidelity. We spent two years implementing Tier 1 and that was followed by this year Tier 2. In conjunction with PBIS we will be using Class Dojo school-wide. ClassDojo is an online behavior management tool for the classroom. Each student has a profile to which teachers can assign positive and negative points (or 'dojos') throughout the lesson. Also, teachers can use class dojo to post events and display student work/projects. This information is then recorded on students' profiles so that it can be reviewed throughout the year. Parents can use their logins to view their child's achievements, school events and classroom projects instantly. Students also receive positive points for positive behaviors those points are converted into virtual dollars. Students use those virtual dollars at the end of the week at and at the Class Dojo store. In addition, many teachers have incorporated individual classroom dojo incentives such as the 100 points club and the middle school class dojo incentive just to name a couple. Middle school students who receive this incentive are taken to character camp once a month. We also have a school-wide monthly assembly to celebrate students and staff members who have shown and contributed positively to our school community. Likewise, we offer a host of school-wide events like Harvest Night where students can use their virtual dollars for admission and to purchase items.

Moreover, to offer students a safe place to reflect and be comfortable. We transformed our in-school suspension room into a mindfulness/reflection room. Reflection and mindfulness is an important practice which allows our students to learn from and refocus their actions to make personal growth. The Hawk's Nest provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their actions and behaviors independently. After the student has had time to reflect, the student will discuss this with a teacher to identify how their behavior can be changed to ensure they are being safe, respectful and responsible learners.

Recent school data suggest that if our school continues on this path we will continue to see a decrease in negative behaviors, office referrals and out of school suspensions. For instance, compared to this time last year the number of office referrals has decreased by more than 250 referrals and the number of out of school suspensions has decreased by 35. Additionally, thanks to the Hawk's Nest our school no longer has a need for in school suspension. We only have to use out of school suspension for major incident such as physical altercations resulting in bodily injury.



Please note as a continued effort to promote positive behaviors and school culture the PBIS committee will begin training for next year with Mr. Jerry Luckett MPS PBIS trainer. This training will include a review of Tier 2 and a introduction of Tier 3 for the 2018-2019 school year.

MMSA started the 2017-2018 academic year with 291 students who were enrolled prior to September count day including the returning students from the previous school year. Of 291 students, 19 students had left based on various reasons. 21% of them changed school due to relocation, 16% left due to behavior problems they were having, 63% for other reason based on parent choice. Our numbers show that 93% of our students who were at MMSA on the Sep count day continue their education at MMSA. Our SMART goal is 85% on our school improvement plan.

We have started the re-enrollment season in the beginning of February. Due to various family situations some of them would have to relocate but our goal is to have most of our students to return for 2018-2019 academic year.

### **Teacher Retention and Return Strategies**

Each year we look to retain our great teachers. We continue to implement strategies and support our teachers so they are likely to return year after year.

- We are offering a more competitive salary scale to attract quality teachers and keep the ones who are working towards our school's vision
- We begin contract negotiations and discussions with the current staff starting in February so that we know what their expectations are from us for next year before they make other decisions.
- We continue to support our teachers with an administration team that consists of the principal, assistant principal of academics, assistant principal of school culture and a behavioral support staff member.  
instructional coordinator, and 2 deans of students.

By having several staff members dedicated to improving our school culture and student behavior, problems are resolved much more efficiently. These staff members speak with students to address problems but also communicate with the classroom teachers to offer feedback and classroom management suggestions to help those students experience growth academically, socially and behaviorally.

The assistant principal of academics (APA) is in charge of the academics at Milwaukee Math and Science Academy. She oversees and supports teachers with lesson plans, the grading policy, classroom grades, testing data, Title I, scheduling, hiring, and evaluations. She meets with teachers on a regular basis to address curriculum needs, resources, testing data, and other concerns. Walkthroughs and observations are completed by the principal and APA, which are



used as formative assessments to help teachers improve in their delivery and instruction.

The APA also completes formal evaluations in compliance with the Evaluator Effectiveness program through Wisconsin DPI.

MMSA also has a Leadership Team consisting of the principal, assistant principals, special education director, technology coordinator, K-2 grade chairperson, 3-4 grade chairperson, 5-8 grade chairperson, math department head, and ELA department head. Meetings are held once per month so the representatives can share thoughts, ideas, concerns from staff members and actions can be taken to problem solve.

Along with the leadership team, we have several other committees that meet monthly, or more often if needed. These committees allow teachers to get involved in the school community, grow professionally, and take on leadership roles. These committees show the MMSA Administration team's commitment to including teachers in making school decisions and developing teacher leaders.

- **School Improvement Committee:** The committee meets on an ongoing basis to review data, develop plans, interventions, and progress monitor to help the students improve academically and/or behaviorally and also provide support to the teachers. The committee also shares their work with other MMSA stakeholders including: parents, community, school board members, etc.
- **Special Events Committee:** The committee coordinates special events for the school, including but not limited to: honor roll dinner, winter/spring concerts, Black History Month program, and K5/8th grade promotion. Responsibilities would include: ordering food, setting date in calendar, decorations, create event programs, certificates, set-up for event, communication with teachers and administrators. The proposal for each event would need to be presented to the director.
- **Resource Development Team:** This team will focus on coordinating fundraisers throughout the school year. Any money raised will help to offset field trip costs and to purchase school-related services/products. This team will promote all fundraisers to the school community via posters, flyers, announcements, emails, etc and coordinate the logistics and execution of each fundraiser. This team will also seek donors/sponsors/partnerships within our community to provide resources/opportunities for our students. Collaboration with MMSA's Student Government is crucial because they also hold a few fundraisers to raise money for their sponsored events. Some fundraising activities could include: bake sales, items related to special events, like: Red Ribbon Week or Breast Cancer Awareness Week, Box Tops, holiday items, Penny War, Karaoke Night, etc. All ideas should be approved by the admin team.
- **PBIS Committee:** A description and purpose of this committee was mentioned above.

Teachers are recognized during staff meetings for accomplishments, like: student test scores, number of home visits, number of logs in Student Information System (phone calls, conferences, meetings, etc.), success with individual students, obtaining donations of



money/supplies/ books/etc., bringing volunteer readers from the community into their classroom, attendance.

Supporting our teachers with curriculum help, classroom management, organization, and instructional strategies are an important component to building a positive work environment. Each member of the administration team has an 'open door policy'. We make time to listen to our teachers about their concerns, answer their questions, or just lend a listening ear. The administration team also feels very strongly about creating and encouraging the continued growth of teacher leaders at our school. When teachers feel supported and that their thoughts and opinions matter, they have more buy-in in the school and want to stay longer. This is a benefit for all members of the school community.

MMSA Board recently discussed the possibility of adding 401K to our teachers benefit package. All of the board members are in favor of it. We've started working on this and in the next meeting Board will vote and make it official. We think it's an important factor to keep our teachers longer years.

As MMSA administration, we would like to close the training gap to support our teachers before school year begins and throughout the year. Returning teachers will share their expertise and experience with the newcomers to close this gap and have them start their year more prepared.

MMSA started the academic year with 27 teaching staff; classroom teachers, teachers of special classes, special education teachers, a reading specialist and ELL teacher. Physical Education and Music teachers had resigned. One of the classroom teachers also resigned right before the end of the 2nd quarter, which as MMSA administration, we were about to terminate his contract due to lack of adequate performance in terms of classroom management as well as lack of satisfactory delivery of the academic materials. These numbers show that 89% of our teachers continue at MMSA.

### **Attendance**

MMSA has been reinforcing student attendance and monitoring the attendance rates on a monthly basis. Students who maintain our SMART goal of 92% or more receive individual, class and school wide rewards. Students who have 92% or more attendance rate for a particular month earn various incentives, while if we meet our goal as a school, all students earn jean day. We monitor the rates every two weeks and share with the teachers and students. In monthly assemblies importance of attendance is reinforced and the prizes are reminded to the students. As of today, MMSA students have maintained 91.49%. Harsh winter conditions are drastically affecting the attendance of the students. The attendance rate for the same term last year was 91.4%.

Months	Avg #Student	#Days	Rate	#Attendance Records	#Absence
Aug 2017	293	8	92.10%	2344	185

**Milwaukee  
Math & Science  
Academy**



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Sep 2017	306	19	93.70%	5832	368
Oct 2017	303	21	93.20%	6369	432
Nov 2017	296	17	91.50%	5046	431
Dec 2017	293	15	91.50%	4400	373
Jan 2018	305	18	89.70%	5493	568
Feb 2018	308	6	83.30%	1849	308
<b>To date</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>91.49%</b>	<b>31333</b>	<b>2665</b>

School secretary, social worker and assistant principal continue monitoring the individual attendance of our students and contact the parents whose students are having excessive absences and reach out to the parents to provide support.

The administration team and staff members of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy were very disappointed with the academic results of our 2016-2017 school year. We know that we can do better and we have been working hard this year to implement strategies and plans to make the 2017-2018 school year a success. As always, we appreciate the feedback we receive from the Children's Research Center and the Charter School Review Committee as we continue to develop the future leaders of our Milwaukee community.

We look forward to our meeting when we are able to share our progress thus far in the 2017-2018 school year and what we are still working to achieve with the remainder of year.

MMSA Administration Team