



April 8, 2020

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 2018–19 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, MAESTRO Education, our staff, as a team, put 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 2019-2020 school year for MMSA. These goals will continue to 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, while also focusing on the recommendations included in the 2019-2020 MMSA Programmatic Profile. The following narrative also explains the changes/strategies that are being used to address each of these goals.

**MMSA Report Card Goals for the 2018-2019 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 2019 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 2019.
3. At least 60% 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 60% 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 2018-19 scorecard. The total points include attendance and the student and teacher return and retention rates.



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 2018 will maintain proficiency in the spring of 2019.
9. At least 35% of students who were below proficient in reading and/or math on the Forward Exam in the spring of 2018 will improve by at least a quartile within their level or move up to the next level.

**Recommendations from the CRC based on MMSA's 2018-2019 report card:**

- A. Implement professional learning communities (PLCs) with all staff to focus on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and build a more positive culture in the school.
- B. Revise and strengthen policies and procedures for accountability of teachers, students and parents.
- C. Focus on first grade reading skills to bring students up to the benchmark at the end of first grade on the PALS assessment.
- D. Continue the efforts to close the gap in reading, writing, and math by individualizing instruction based on data analysis.
- E. Continue the effort to engage students in meaningful writing across subject areas.
- F. Continue the development of Response to Intervention (RtI)
- G. Continue to work with parents to improve the student return rate.
- H. Work with students on the skills related to taking the Forward Exam.

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

During the 2019-2020 school year, MMSA has elementary class sizes between 20-25 for our K5-2nd grade classrooms. With those class sizes, the classroom teachers have focused more on personalized learning through guided reading groups, personalized independent work in class, and individualized homework for students. Teachers use data from PALS, STAR-Early Literacy, and NWEA to create learning groups, focus the work students do while in learning centers and provide individual support. Teachers have an even better understanding of their student's needs and how to best support their learning.



The 1st and 2nd grade classrooms each have support from a full-time teaching assistant. The teaching assistants (TAs) help students in the classroom during work time. The TAs also work with small groups or individual students on foundational skills the student hasn't mastered yet. Together, the classroom teacher, TA and assistant principal identify students in need of specialized attention and create learning opportunities based on those missing skills. The TA provides feedback to the classroom teacher. Fountas and Pinell reading assessments, running records, flashcards, PALS quick checks, short reading passages, classwork and center work are resources that the TAs use to assist our students. The running records, Fountas and Pinnel assessments and PALS quick checks are all used to track student progress. (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. Although MMSA has a new management company, we continue to have access to the curriculum resources available from Concept Schools. (Also supports goal 3)

Through their daily reading lessons, students are introduced to high frequency words in their big books, guided reading books and other stories they are given. However, the more they practice those words, the better readers they will become. This year, our 1st graders have had 6th and 7th grade PALS. For 20 minutes each Friday, the 1st graders have been matched up with a buddy from 7th grade (1st semester) and 6th grade (2nd semester) to practice their sight words or those high frequency words. Not only does this help to build relationships between our older and younger students, but it helps those 1st graders to learn those words to help them become better readers. And it helps those middle schoolers to build their sense of autonomy, leadership, self-esteem and confidence. Both groups look forward to their Friday meetings. (Also supports recommendation A, B and G)



We all know that education starts in the home. Unfortunately, when our students are coming to school still unable to identify their colors, say their ABCs or count to 10, we know it just isn't happening with many of our families. This puts our students and our school at a disadvantage because now we have to play catch up. We have challenged our parents, especially in 1st grade, with a Sight Word Challenge. A letter was sent home challenging our families to work with their child on their sight words. When they felt their child was ready to be tested on that word list, they needed to send a message to the teacher to let her know the child was ready. The teacher would test the child on 3 separate occasions and if that child passed, the parents and student would earn a reward. The student would earn a dress down pass, popcorn or candy, while the parents could earn: cereal, granola bars, coffee/creamers, chips and salsa. There has to be a connection between home and school and this is one way to encourage the families to continue to stay involved with their child's learning. In the future, we hope to extend this to all of the K5-2nd grade classrooms and put more pressure on parents to stay involved in their child's education. (Also supports recommendations B, C and G)

Although we are no longer with Concept Schools, we still have access to all of the resources provided in the Student Information System and their websites. The K-2 Concept Schools Curriculum Director has continued to make 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, reading and math center, 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). This year, IXL has also been added to our online supports for students in ELA, previously we had just been using it for math. Based on data collected, teachers are able to assign students individual skills to practice or students can complete the diagnostic and the program will assign the skills they need to work on based



on that diagnosis. 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. Like last year, our teachers have given the PALS winter assessment to check their students' growth. 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 2019 in the areas of: pre-primer word list, 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 2019. The data includes: an overall spelling score, identification of 1st grade sight words, identification of 2nd grade sight words, reading level, words read per minute, fluency, and comprehension scores.



**Table 1 PALS 1st Grade Students Below the Benchmark in Fall 2019**

Student ID #	Fall Pre-primer word list (10)	Winter Pre-primer word list (19)	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	4	14	5	6	16	19	2	3	3	2	0	0	0	1
Student 2	2	14	6	20	17	26	3	4	1	4	1	0	0	3
Student 3*	5	12	7	19	20	26	4	4	3	4	0	1	0	2
Student 4	6	20	3	19	24	26	3	4	0	4	0	1	0	1
Student 5	10	11	8	11	18	26	3	3	1	3	2	0	1	1
Student 6	3	12	5	12	16	25	2	4	3	3	0	0	0	1
Student 7	10	14	7	12	23	26	1	4	1	4	1	2	2	0
Student 8	8	17	10	14	21	26	3	4	4	4	0	0	1	0
*Denotes student that receives ESL services														



# Milwaukee Math & Science Academy



110 W Burleigh St, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Phone: (414) 263 6400

Fax: (414) 263 6403

<http://www.mmsacademy.org>

Table 2 PALS 2nd Grade Students Above the Benchmark in Fall 2019

Student ID Number	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	Winter-2nd grade word list (12-20)	Fall Reading Level	Winter Reading Level	Fall Words Per Minute	Winter Words Per Minute	Fall Fluency (Max-3)	Winter-Fluency (Max-3)	Fall-Comprehension (Max-6)	Winter-Comprehension Max-6)
Student 1*	21	47	15	19	13	15	1st	2nd	49	54	2	2	3	4
Student 2*	18	35	20	20	18	20	3rd	3rd	64	73	2	3	2	3
Student 3	29	48	19	17	20	16	btw 2/3	3rd	58	62	2	2	3	4
Student 4	26	40	20	19	19	17	btw 2/3	3rd	46	71	2	2	4	5
Student 5	40	48	20	20	20	20	btw 3/4	4th	79	82	2	2	4	4
Student 6	28	41	20	20	20	18	3rd	3rd	61	76	2	3	3	3
Student 7	23	30	16	17	11	15	1st	2nd	48	60	2	3	2	3
Student 8*	30	40	19	16	10	12	btw 1/2	2nd	42	65	2	3	2	2
Student 9	21	37	19	18	15	18	2nd	3rd	47	66	2	2	3	2
Student 10	31	46	20	18	15	16	2nd	3rd	45	51	2	2	2	4
Student 11	34	45	16	15	11	15	1st	2nd	25	41	1	1	2	2
Student 12	46	54	20	20	19	20	btw 3/4	4th	63	80	2	2	4	5
*Denotes student that receives ESL services														



## **Strategies to Address the NWEA Goals, Forward Exam Goals and Writing Goals (Goals 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8, Recommendation D, E and H)**

In the 2019-2020 school year, MMSA has pull-out Title I services for students in K5-8th 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 20-30 minutes of interventions a day 3-4 times per week. The focus during these small group interventions vary depending on the grade level of the student. Younger students are working on phonemic awareness, decoding, reading comprehension, and fluency. The older students are working on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and fluency. Each reading RTI group consists of 2-4 students.

It is important to continue to improve our response to intervention (RTI) so this year we invested in the *Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System*. These resources provide our RTI, special education and ESL teachers with systematically designed lessons that supplement the classroom instruction to provide our struggling readers with engaging leveled books, take home books, writing books, and folders to track their own data. Teachers have access to prompting guides for oral reading, thinking, talking and writing; online resources, including the online data management system. ELA teachers can also borrow resources for small group interventions (Tier 2 interventions) within their classroom. All of these materials have been organized in the RTI classroom and there is a systematic check-out system for the materials.

Fountas and Pinnell running records, comprehension and word list intervention checks using online CBMs, STAR, and NWEA scores are used to track the progress of each student. The progress monitoring data is shared with the grade level team teachers and the assistant principal at the end of each quarter to determine whether the student will continue in RTI pull-outs or end their RTI sessions. (Recommendation F)

The 3rd-8th grade students continue to utilize online training tools offered via the Wisconsin DPI-Forward Exam website and DRC. This training tool gives students practice with the testing interface, including tools like: masking, highlighting, scrolling, turning pages, clicking and dragging, etc. This is the third year that our students have been able to take a practice test with 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 several text dependent analysis questions 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)

The assistant principal has met with each of the ELA teachers to discuss the best use of those TDA samples in the regular classroom. The expectation is that all teachers use the 'I Do, We Do, You Do' approach for these TDAs. When teachers use the "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach with students, it gives students time to understand the process of what is being asked of them. First, they can see how the teacher tackles an example, how the teacher thinks through the 'problem'. Then, as the teacher explains their thinking, the students are listening to the strategies that are being used. During the 'We Do' approach, the teacher is still there to guide students as they all work on the page together, but this time elicits responses or answers from the students to help one another. Because DPI and the DRC have given 3 and sometimes 4 TDA examples at each grade level, the 'You Do' approach could even be two students paired together to complete the TDA, especially at the younger grades (3rd and 4th grade). By 5th-8th grade, students should be ready to tackle the TDA on their own. By breaking the TDA down in a step by step process, teaching students strategies like reading the question first, highlighting information that will help to answer the question, creating a graphic organizer or an outline to organize your thoughts before you begin writing, our students will have a more clear roadmap on how to be successful in completing these difficult TDA writing prompts. (Recommendation B)

Along with the Forward Exam resources offered by DPI, MMSA teachers continue to use other resources for test preparation in our reading and math classes. Our reading and math teachers have taken advantage of released test items from other states that are also using the Common Core Standards 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.

Along with using released items from other state tests, teachers at MMSA have been asked to use question stems that are similar to the Forward Exam when writing their own worksheets, quizzes or tests. Resources have been shared with teachers during team meetings or individual teacher meetings that include increasing the depth of knowledge of the questions or tasks that students are being asked to complete. With the blueprints of the Forward Exam and the results from last year's test, an analysis is done to see where our students are having the most difficulty. Teachers become more aware of the types of questions their students are getting wrong on the test, and then understand how to increase the difficulty of the questions they are asking in class. (Recommendation B)

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.

Another strategy that has been utilized for the past couple of months is some last minute Forward Exam prep for students that were proficient last year on the Forward Exam or were on the bubble between basic and proficient. A group at each level, 4th-8th grade, were identified by the assistant principal, an academic advisor from Maestro Management Company and classroom teachers to begin meeting for extra tutoring in math and writing instruction. These students meet for 45 minutes per day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week,



alternating between math and writing. Math instruction has been focused on areas that our students continue to struggle with: measurement, statistics, probability and geometry. Writing instruction has been focused on creating outlines to organize thoughts, transition sentences, building a thesis, and using textual evidence to support the thesis.

Prior to the start of the year, each new MMSA teacher traveled to Chicago to meet with the curriculum director for their respective content area. The curriculum directors were able to meet with teachers to walk through the curriculum maps, the scope and sequence, assessments and resources available that are embedded in our student information system. During the first semester, several of the directors had also visited MMSA to observe teachers in their classrooms during 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)

Grade level teams continue to use their meeting time to share ideas they have about including writing in the curriculum. The ELA teacher has shared the writing rubrics used in their classrooms and then teachers have worked together to tweak that rubric so it includes content-related information that should be included in the writing task for science, social studies, art, etc.

To engage students in the writing process, current events and topics that impact our students' lives are often used as writing topics. Sometimes the teacher will start with an introduction to the topic before asking students to write about their opinion and then use those responses for the basis of further discussion. Other times, students will read about a topic, annotate that text, write a response to that text, and then use those annotations and their written response for a Socratic Seminar, debate or other class discussion. Math class is filled with times when students are asked to explain how they got their answers. In art or music class, students are responding to how a piece of art makes them feel or the mood of a piece. All classes are including more writing opportunities for students.

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.



MMSA has also utilized IXL for math and reading practice during the 2019-2020 school year, previously just math practice. IXL offers students the ability to work on recommended skills based on the diagnostic tool in IXL. Teachers can also assign practice items based on the skills that are currently being taught in math or reading class or based on a student's individual needs. Students seem to be more engaged with IXL than Compass Learning because it is a new program that encourages them to work toward proficiency in skill areas to earn certificates and badges. This year, IXL has also created an NWEA test prep plan where students or teachers can choose their RIT band score for one of the math or reading topics and then work on those specific skills within that RIT band. IXL also has skill plans based on many K5-8th grade textbooks, including the Journeys (K5-5th grade), HMH Collections (6th-8th grade) MMSA students use for reading instruction and MyMath (K-8) that our students use in their math classes. As IXL expands their programming, our teachers and students can take advantage of new skill paths to get the differentiated instruction that is needed to make individual growth in the classroom.

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.

The Assistant Principal 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 types of tools. Technical writing is also expected in those content areas. (Also supports goals 1 and 2)

Our teachers continue to use NWEA reports, especially the student profile, to have discussions with parents and students about their progress. Although many of our students meet their personal RIT goals, it is very eye-opening for parents when their child is compared to the norm. Many of our students fall well below that norm so parents become very concerned and want to know what they can do to help their child. The profile 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 for 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 nachos for students that met one of their MAP goals and nachos 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 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, two students from each section will win an invitation to a pizza and cookie party. Prior to the 2020 testing window, we also hosted a Forward Exam assembly. During this assembly, all students that made growth (moved from one level to the next level or grew at least one quartile within that level) had their name announced and were invited up onto the stage to receive recognition from their peers. Then, all students that were proficient on last year's exam were announced and invited to the stage to receive their recognition. Each time, reading and math were announced separately. So, some students were able to come to the stage twice to receive recognition for their accomplishments in both reading and math. Once we were finished announcing all of the names, the names were then put into a container and 28 names were pulled. Eight of our students went on a trip to Wisconsin Dells for a night to enjoy the Wilderness water parks, ten of our students received \$50 gift cards and 10 students were able to leave





school for a couple of hours to go out for lunch. We are hopeful that these incentives, along with continuing to build confident readers and mathematicians in the classroom will motivate our students to work hard on a test that doesn't give them immediate feedback like the NWEA does for them.

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. 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 3 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 slightly in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade and more so in 4th and 5th grade. There have been individual meetings with the teachers of those classrooms and the assistant principal to continue to look at data for individual students and the overall class growth or lack of growth. Recommendations, observations and post observational feedback have been provided to those teachers on ways to strengthen their reading instruction in the classroom.



**Table 3**  
**2018-2019 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress**  
**Fall to Winter RIT Comparison- Reading**

	Fall 2018			Winter 2019		
Grade Level	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference
Kindergarten	141.1	141	.1	151.3	151.3	0
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	155.5	160.7	-5.2	165.8	171.5	-5.7
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	168.8	174.7	-5.9	177.0	184.2	-7.2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	175.7	188.3	-12.6	184.0	195.6	-11.6
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	190.1	198.2	-8.1	192.2	203.6	-11.4
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	195.6	205.7	-10.1	198.5	209.8	-11.3
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	204.1	211	-6.9	208.3	214.2	-5.9
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	207.3	214.4	-7.1	212.6	216.9	-4.3
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	211.7	217.2	-5.5	214.8	219.1	-4.3

In Table 4 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). Students that enrolled at MMSA after the fall NWEA testing window were given a goal of the national norm for their grade level. For this mid-year report, those new students that met the national norm were



considered having met their goal, while students that didn't meet that goal were considered not meeting their goal. 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 couple of exceptions. Our overall total of 59.4% is above the norm of 50%.

<b>Table 4 NWEA MAP Reading K5-8th Grade Based on Target RIT Scores</b>			
Grade	N	Met Target RIT Growth in Winter 2019	
		N	%
<b>K5</b>	20	14	70.0%
<b>1st</b>	23	14	60.9%
<b>2nd</b>	26	16	61.5%
<b>3rd</b>	21	14	66.7%
<b>4th</b>	18	8	44.4%
<b>5th</b>	25	11	44.0%
<b>6th</b>	26	16	61.5%
<b>7th</b>	25	14	56.0%
<b>8th</b>	18	13	72.2%
<b>Total</b>	202	120	59.4%

In Table 5 you will see the comparative data for the NWEA Math test. MMSA teachers have had a difficult time trying to close the achievement gap in math. Although they are using a variety of strategies to teach new concepts, our students struggle with remembering basic math facts. New textbooks do a great job at introducing strategies and asking students to be more strategic



thinkers but those new textbooks don't spend a lot of time on practicing those basic math skills that will be the fundamental building block of all of those higher level thinking problems. MMSA math teachers continue to struggle with wanting to create those conceptual thinkers while also getting them to be procedural thinkers, as well. This is our last year of a 5 year subscription to MyMath from McGraw-Hill. Many teachers have said that the textbooks our students use are filled with too much 'stuff' on the page that distracts the student from concentrating on the examples provided. So, we are currently exploring other math resources to find the right balance for our students and teachers.

**Table 5**  
**2018-2019 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress**  
**Fall to Winter RIT Comparison-Math**

	Fall 2018			Winter 2019		
Grade Level	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference	Mean RIT score	Norm RIT score	Difference
Kindergarten	136.9	140	-3.1	150.5	151.5	-1
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	157.9	162.4	-4.5	167.9	173.8	-5.9
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	174.3	176.9	-2.6	185.8	186.4	-0.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	182.9	190.4	-7.5	187.3	198.2	-10.9
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	191.1	201.9	-10.8	197.3	208.7	-11.4
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	198.4	211.4	-13	201.5	217.2	-15.7
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	205.3	217.6	-12.3	208.4	222.1	-13.7
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	212.1	222.6	-10.5	217.4	226.1	-8.7
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	216.6	226.3	-9.7	217.8	229.1	-11.3



In Table 6 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 55.3% is above the typical growth that NWEA has established.

<b>Table 6 NWEA MAP Math K5-8th Grade Based on Target RIT Scores</b>			
Grade	N	Met Target RIT Score in Winter 2019	
		N	%
<b>K5</b>	20	12	60.0%
<b>1st</b>	23	12	52.2%
<b>2nd</b>	26	19	73.1%
<b>3rd</b>	21	9	42.9%
<b>4th</b>	18	11	61.1%
<b>5th</b>	25	12	48.0%
<b>6th</b>	26	12	46.2%
<b>7th</b>	25	14	56.0%
<b>8th</b>	18	9	50.0%
<b>Total</b>	202	110	54.5%

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

### **Student Retention and Student Return Strategies (Recommendation B and G)**

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, the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells (unfortunately cancelled due to school closing) and soon a camping trip at the Mackenzie Center in Columbia County for our CSYP students (hopefully).

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, Donuts with Dudes, Muffins with Moms, Grandparents Day, Honor Roll Assemblies, a staff vs student basketball game, Black History Program, the winter concert, a student/staff talent show, 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.

As mentioned above, Class Dojo is one form of communication that is used to stay connected with parents. Currently, there are 182 MMSA parents connected via Class Dojo. This allows us to post important school-wide messages, like school closures, reminders about upcoming events or last minute changes. It also allows teachers to post individual classroom news or pictures, called 'classroom stories'. This is a fun way for parents to see what is happening in their child's classroom on a daily/weekly basis. Teachers also use this tool to quickly contact parents about a child. Parents are sometimes more likely to respond via Class Dojo than to answer a phone call, especially if they are at work during the day. This is just like a quick text message. Each week, Class Dojo also sends a summary of the services that were used. Within the last two weeks, MMSA staff members sent almost 200 messages to parents, posted 15 photos or videos and rewarded 92% positive Dojo points to students for meeting expectations.

Class Dojo is used to reward students with positive points when they meet MMSA expectations (Being safe, Being Responsible, Being Respectful). Every other week, those points can be redeemed for prizes at the Class Dojo Store. Although the store does have some novelty items, like squishy balls, puffy stickers, slap bracelets, the majority of the physical items are school supplies, including: cap erasers, pencils, mechanical pencils, pencil cases, and pencil lead. This year, we also considered ways to improve the positive culture at MMSA by figuring out more opportunities for building relationships. We added passes to the Class Dojo store for



students to use their points to buy, like: time with my teacher, study with a buddy, being the teacher's assistant, read with a buddy, lunch with a special adult, movement time with the PE teacher, computer time with the computer teacher. These passes have been very popular with our students and it is great to see students choosing to spend time with the teachers they have had in the past to stay connected with them!

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 45 5th-8th grade students in CYSP. Our CYSP scholars have already volunteered this school year at the Milwaukee Zoo for the Lung Force Walk and the US BankCenter for the Fight For Air Climb. About 30 of our scholars spent a night at Youth in Motion (YIM), a family-friendly recreational facility on Friday, January 17th. During the evening, students were able to have full access to their facilities, including: dance studio, swimming pool, fitness room, basketball courts, boxing area, cycling studio, movie area, etc. Our last CYSP field trip will be to the Mackenzie Center for a weekend camping trip in Poynette, Wisconsin, unless more mandated school cancellations are given by Governor Evers.

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy offers robotics for 5th-8th grade students. Students compete across the area as part of FIRST Lego League. This year our team was called, The Boxcar Children. They are presented with a challenge and then must research, find solutions, code, and engineer their solution to that challenge. Our students wanted to use empty cargo containers, refurbish them into homes and place them into abandoned lots to help solve the problem of homelessness in Milwaukee. Although the team didn't make it to round 2 at the Marquette High School Robotics Competition, their presentation of their solution and their robot performance won them the "Against All Odds" Award, which is given to a team that did very well and should be recognized for their work but did not place high enough in any individual area to win an award. We hope their success with being recognized with an award will encourage other students to join robotics next year.

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.
- Parent/Teacher Conference expectations are made clear to parents-parents must attend one per semester, phone calls are made to remind parents letting them know of their mandatory attendance.
- 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. Parents of students receiving these awards are invited to attend.
- Quarterly Honor Roll Assemblies to honor our STAR Students (K4-2nd grade) and Honor Roll students (3rd-8th grade). The purpose is to honor the students that are achieving academic standards in the classroom. These students are mastering the standards (K4-2nd grade) and are earning a GPA above a 3.5 (3rd-8th grade). Parents are invited to attend. Each student receives a goody bag of treats for their hard work!
- The PBIS matrix of expected behaviors hang in each classroom and expectation reminders are hung in the hallway, bathroom, and other common areas.
- The PBIS committee has sponsored monthly challenges to encourage teamwork and good behavior since returning from winter break. Usually classes would spend the week doing a 'reset' with classroom and hallway expectations but we decided to try something different. Each month, individual classes choose a behavior they need to work on (ex. Quiet transitions, raising a quiet hand to speak, using school appropriate language, etc). When the class meets the expectation for the behavior they are working on, a certificate is earned. At the end of the month, a reward is given based on how many certificates have been earned. Here are the challenges that have taken place so far:
  - January: Hot Chocolate Challenge (students could earn whipped cream, sprinkles, extra toppings, colored hot chocolate and cookies-depending on how many certificates they earned during the month).
  - February: Cupcake Challenge (students could earn a cupcake with frosting, sprinkles, extra toppings, filled cupcakes or extra large cupcakes-depending on how many certificates they earned).
  - March: Attendance March Madness- each class is competing to see who will have the highest attendance percentage each week. The winners will go to the finals, the 2nd place finishers will go to the semi-finals. At the end of the month, the class with the highest attendance will win a party of their choosing! We hope this will encourage students to be in attendance as we begin our Forward Exam testing on March 23rd!



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**

In the past, MMSA's schoolwide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. However, research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. In 2015, our school began introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior as we knew it was an important step of our student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of schoolwide PBIS movement was to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

For the past few years our school witnessed a decrease in the number of out of school suspensions. In 2017-2018, MMSA incorporated a mindfulness/behavior modification room which was named Hawk's Nest to help support our PBIS mission. This collaboration effort resulted in a decline in the number of out of school and in school suspensions.

If we compare the number of out of school suspensions so far this year with that of last year for the same time period (August 19 - March 6), we notice a 29% decrease. It dropped from 197 days to 139. For the 3rd grade through 8th grade students we implemented a progressive discipline policy that limits the number of referrals they can receive in a year. It has been observed that the students have been more mindful about how they conduct themselves especially after reaching a level 4 or 5. Another reason for the number of suspensions dropping is that alternative consequences have been given to the students such as: after school detention, Saturday detention and community service. Teaching assistants and behavior support personnel work have also been working with the students prior to the escalation of the misbehavior so it doesn't lead to a suspension level behavior. All available support staff and administration have been more visible through unstructured times, transitions, recess and lunch to make sure we are proactive and eliminate potential discipline problems. It is also observed that the number of physical altercations among the older students (4th through 8th grade) has remarkably decreased, from 44 to 26, 18%.

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



Each year we look to retain our great teachers. The challenges in the classroom, however, are still an important factor in regards to teacher retention along with the teacher shortage in our area and some positions even statewide. But, we continue to implement strategies and support our teachers so they are likely to return year after year.

- The MMSA administration and school board were able to start offering retirement benefits as of October 2018 as an effort to improve the benefits that we have available for our teachers. This continues to benefit our teachers.
- 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 continue to support our teachers with an administration team that consists of the principal, assistant principal and a behavioral support staff member.

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 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 assistant principal, which are used as formative assessments to help teachers improve in their delivery and instruction.

The assistant principal 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 principal, special education director, technology coordinator, K4-K5 grade chairperson, 2-3 grade chairperson, 4-5 grade chairperson, 6-8 grade chairperson, math department head, ELA department head and a representative from the Specials team. 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 assemblies, winter program, Black History program, Muffins with Moms, Donuts with Dudes, and K5/8th grade promotion. Responsibilities would include: ordering food, setting date in calendar, decorations, create event programs, certificates, set-up for events, communication with teachers and administrators. The proposal for each event would need to be presented to the director.
- **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.

As MMSA administration, we would like to close the training gap to support our teachers before the school year begins and throughout the year. New teachers come for Summer Institute earlier than returning teachers so they can get information regarding some of the online systems we use and get some background information regarding our charter school sponsor and our management company. New teachers also traveled to Chicago to meet their curriculum directors along with other new teachers from the network. Returning teachers join us a couple of days later for many professional development sessions. Returning teachers will share their expertise and experience with the newcomers to close this gap and have them start their year



more prepared. Each new teacher is paired with a returning mentor teacher. These pairs meet during our Summer Institute in August to talk about expectations for a new year, student behaviors, setting up procedures, classroom management strategies, academic strategies, grading procedures, emergency plan, etc. Throughout the year, the mentors/mentees also meet to talk about parent/teacher conferences, protocol for field trips, and any issues that may arise.

We started the school year with only 2 new teachers in the building, middle school Science/Social Studies teacher and ELL teacher. ELL teacher is the one who we offered a contract but she decided to move on, therefore, out of 19 teachers possible, 18 returned for 2019-2020 academic year, our teacher return rate is 94.7%. So far, the entire teaching staff is still on board, however before the end of the year, we will lose our Science teacher as she has given her notice to leave at the end of the 3rd quarter, March 27th. This is a 95% teacher retention rate if no other teacher leaves.

#### **Student retention:**

MMSA started the 2019-2020 academic year with 226 students. 17 of them left due to various reasons, family issues, moving, discipline problems, etc. This gives us 92.4% of student retention rate so far.

#### **Student return:**

MMSA finished the 2018-2019 academic year with 252 students 19 of which were 8th graders who graduated. 176 of our students re-enrolled and started the 2019-2020 academic year at MMSA. Therefore, our student return rate is 75.5%. This is 3.7% more than the previous year.

#### **Attendance**

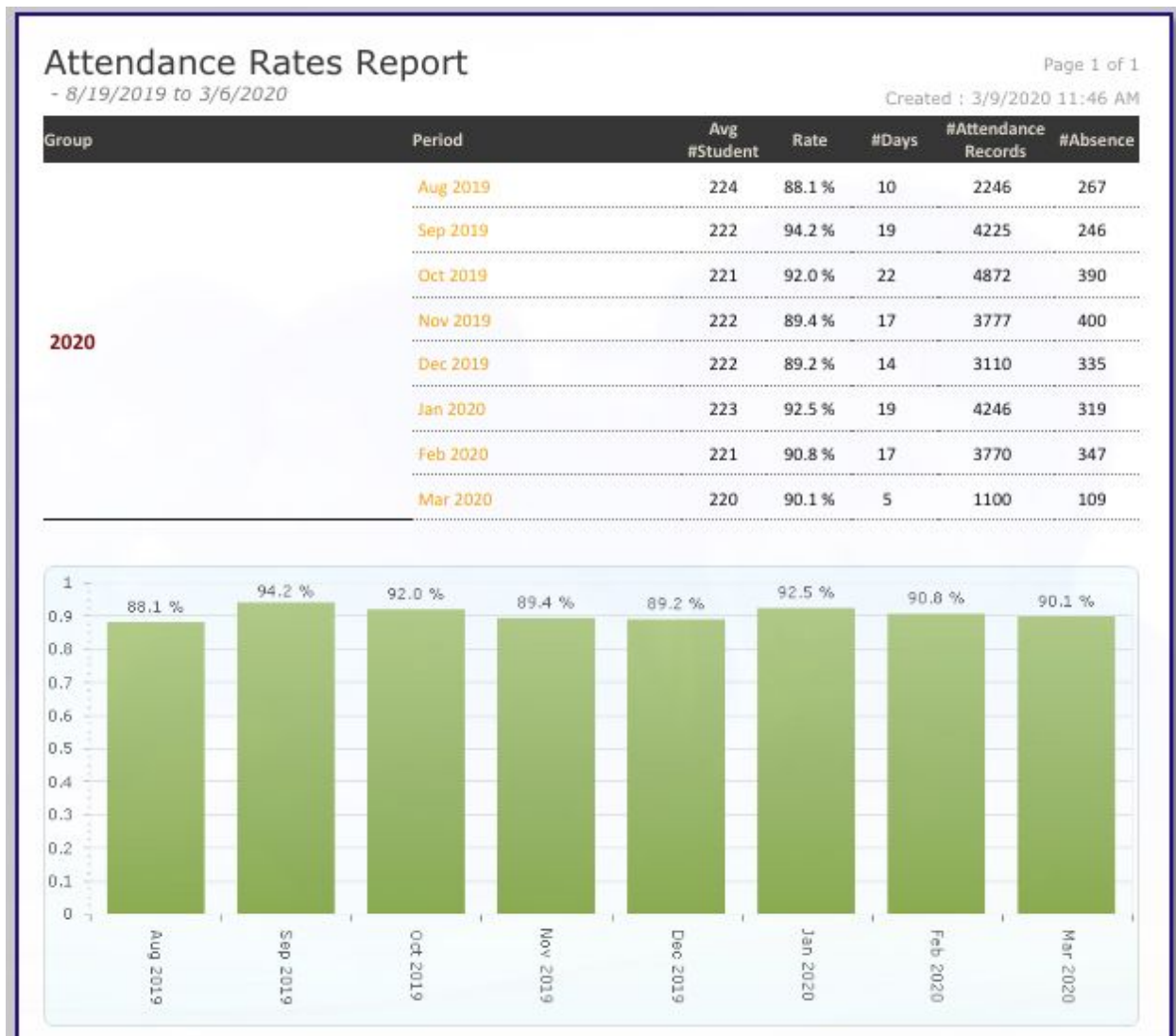
The school secretary, social worker and principal continue monitoring the individual attendance of our students and contact the parents whose students are having excessive absences and reach out to the parents to provide support.

Our social worker has attempted to set up many meetings with parents regarding their child's attendance concerns. During those meetings, the social worker, parents and an administrator speak to identify the underlying issue for low attendance and then try to find solutions to the problem. Although some of our parents do show up for those attendance meetings, many parents do not, which often leads the problem unsolved. We will continue to set these meetings up and work with our parents to ensure their child is at school each and everyday.



As of March 6th, 2020 our student attendance rate is 91.2%, which is 0.5% higher than the same period of time last year. Since the winter conditions have not been terrible this year, we have not had any school closures and in January and February, our attendance rates were higher than last year. However, around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, it dropped lower than 90%. We hope now that our attendance rates will improve over spring months.

The attendance data from our Student Information System (SIS) is below:



The administration team and staff members of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy have been working very hard during the 2019-2020 school year to improve our report card scores and



our assessment data. Our students work hard at school and they deserve to continue to have Milwaukee Math and Science Academy as their second home. We love our students, their families, our staff and our community and we would like to continue to offer a quality education to our students. 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 2019-2020 school year and what we are still working to achieve with the remainder of the year.

-MMSA Administration Team