

2019–2020 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

September 2020



Milwaukee Math and Science Academy

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This report includes text from Milwaukee Math and Science Academy's student/parent handbook and/or staff handbook. CRC obtained permission from the school to use this text for the purposes of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MILWAUKEE MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY 2019–20

This is the ninth annual report on the operation of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (MMSA), one of seven schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee during the 2019–20 school year. It is the result of intensive work by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), MMSA staff, and the NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC).

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in Wisconsin school closures from March 13, 2020, through the end of the school year, data available for this report are more limited than usual. Therefore, the overall academic achievements described throughout the report should not be compared with the outcomes of previous years. Detailed descriptions about differences from previous years will be reported in each of the affected sections of the report.

CRC has determined the following, based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report.

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

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

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

II. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

A. Local Measures of Educational Progress

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

The CSRC requires the school to track student progress in reading, writing, math, and special education throughout the year to identify students in need of additional help and to assist teachers in developing strategies to improve the academic performance of all students.

This year, MMSA’s progress on local measures could be calculated only for individualized education program (IEP) goals since end-of-year goals for reading, writing, and math could not be uniformly administered due to school closure. Fall data on other local measures can be found in the report. The outcome for IEP goals follows:

Special education. Most (19, or 90.5%) of the 21 students met or made progress on at least 75.0% of their goals at the time of their annual IEP review. The school fell just short of its goal that 100.0% of the students would meet at least 75% of their goals.

2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, MMSA identified measurable education-related outcomes in attendance, parent involvement, and special education records. The results follow.

- Average student attendance was 90.8%, falling short of the school's goal of 92.0%.
- The school set a goal that 75.0% of parents would attend at least two of four parent-teacher conferences. Because of school closure, only three conferences were held. For the 235 students who were enrolled from the beginning of the school year through March 13, 2020, parents of 50 (21.3%) students attended one conference, 64 (27.2%) attended two conferences, and 102 (43.4%) attended three conferences.
- MMSA developed and maintained essential records for all special education students.

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

Because of school closures, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction withdrew the requirement for schools to administer any standardized tests. MMSA was unable to administer standardized tests required in its contract with the City of Milwaukee.

C. School Scorecard

Because of limited data available to examine student progress, the CSRC scorecard contains partial outcome data this year. The CSRC has determined that it will not use the scorecard to guide its decision about MMSA's status for the next school year, and the school's score should not be compared with the score for any previous year. MMSA scored 89.6% of 31.25 possible scorecard points.

III. SURVEY/INTERVIEW RESULTS

Every other year, CRC collects feedback from parents, students, board members, and teachers to assess their perceptions of the school. Because of school closure, teacher interviews and student surveys were not conducted. Parent surveys and board interviews were conducted, and the results are summarized in this report, including the following highlights.

Parent surveys representing 93 (71.0%) of 131 families were completed.

- Most (83.9%) parents rated the school's overall performance in contributing to their child's learning as "excellent" or "good."
- Most (88.2%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Parents' favorite characteristics included the teachers and staff; the academic programming, resources, and extracurricular activities; and the strong communication between teachers and parents.
- The least favorite characteristics were handling of bullying and discipline; busing and transportation; quality of food offered; and lack of extracurricular activities.

Interviews were conducted with three of the five board members.

- All (100.0%) reported that the board received a presentation of the school's annual academic performance report, reviewed the school's annual financial audit, and received and approved the school's annual budget.
- The main suggestions for school improvement were to improve community involvement in the school, develop more outreach programs, hire staff to support teachers with discipline, and improve the building.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

MMSA addressed all recommendations for school improvement in its 2018–19 programmatic profile and educational performance report. On the basis of the results in this report and in consultation with school staff, CRC recommends the school continue a focused school improvement plan with the following activities for 2020–21.

- Continue the transition to MAESTRO, the school's current educational management organization, to:

- » Support teachers in the classroom by improving instructional strategies that would engage students and improve their ability to think at a higher level; and
- » Help teachers with methods to increase appropriate behavior as well as improve reading and math performance.
- The MMSA board and school leadership, with the help of MAESTRO, will research a new location for the school and make plans to move for the 2021–22 academic year if a feasible location is identified.
- Continue to build a more positive culture of the school through improved integration of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports into all the activities of the school.
- Continue using staff committees to enhance the school’s professional learning communities.
- Identify and implement a daily school-wide reading program.

IV. PROBATION STATUS

The CSRC placed MMSA on probation in the fall of 2017. At that time, the CSRC set expectations for the 2017–18 school year. The expectations were that the school would achieve at least 66.8% on the 2017–18 scorecard (an increase of at least 15 percentage points from the 2016–17 scorecard results) *and* that the school would meet at least five of nine specified goals. Because the school did not meet the expectations in 2017–18, the CSRC extended the probation to the 2018–19 school year with the same expectations.

The school achieved 59.5% on the scorecard for the 2018–19 school year, again falling short of the 66.8% expectation. The school did achieve a majority (five) of the nine specified goals during the 2018–19 school year. Therefore, in the fall of 2019, the CSRC extended the school’s probationary status with the expectation that the school’s scorecard results for 2019–20 would be at least 4 percentage points higher and that the school would present a midyear report to the CSRC in February or March of 2020.

Because of the lack of end-of-year local measure data as well as Wisconsin Forward Exam data, this year’s scorecard cannot be compared with the 2018–19 scorecard. MMSA leadership did present a midyear report to the CSRC.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

MMSA has met all the requirements of its contract with the City of Milwaukee. CRC recommends that the CSRC consider extending MMSA's probation for the 2020–21 school year, with the expectation that the school will provide a midyear report to the CSRC in February 2021.

Since 2020–21 is the final year of MMSA's contract with the city, CRC also recommends that the CSRC consider extending MMSA's charter contract for another five years.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee and the NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC). It is one component of the program that the Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) uses to monitor performance of all city-chartered schools.

To produce this report, CRC:

- Conducted an initial school visit to collect information related to contract requirements and to draft a learning memo for the new school year;
- Conducted a year-end interview to review progress on recommendations and changes that occurred during the year;
- Visited the school throughout the year to observe classrooms and overall school operations.
- Attended a school board of directors meeting, along with CSRC representatives, to provide an update regarding compliance with the City of Milwaukee's academic expectations and contract requirements;
- Surveyed parents and interviewed board members to gather feedback about the school (teacher interviews and student surveys could not be conducted due to school closure); and
- Collected and analyzed data submitted by the school to complete an annual report.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy
110 W. Burleigh St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Phone: (414) 263-6400

Website: www.mmsacademy.org

Principal: Alper Akyurek¹

¹ Akyurek was the principal the first year MMSA was chartered by the city. He returned as school leader in 2017–18.

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (MMSA) is on the north side of the City of Milwaukee. The school was initially affiliated with Concept Schools, a nonprofit educational management organization based in Chicago. However, in early 2020, the school separated from Concept Schools and currently is partnered with MAESTRO Education, an educational management organization in Mount Prospect, Illinois. According to its website (maestroed.com), MAESTRO has over 50 years of combined experience in managing and providing services to successful schools. Its educational team consists of former school principals, district administrators, school board members, and teachers. MAESTRO helps schools with all aspects of school operation while guaranteeing that the school board and administration have complete control over the school's personnel and academic programs.

A. Description and Philosophy of Educational Methodology

1. Mission²

MMSA's mission is to prepare students for college by creating an effective learning community of high standards and expectations with a rigorous curriculum focusing on math, science, and technology.

2. Instructional Design

Beginning in the very early grades, MMSA prepares students for college by creating a learning environment of high expectations and standards. All students are exposed to a rigorous curriculum in subjects such as language arts, physical education, and social studies. MMSA

² From the school's 2019–20 *Parent/Student Handbook*.

provides an extra emphasis on math, science, and technology to prepare students to be globally competitive. Graduation requirements, discipline, promotion policies, and homework policies all reflect high standards.³ The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which are essential to future success in school and at work. The Common Core standards are reinforced and reviewed to prepare students for standardized tests. Both in-class preparation and afterschool instruction are provided to ensure a higher level of achievement for each student.⁴

Students receive four report cards every year. At the end of each quarter, report cards are mailed home. Students in K4 through second grade are assessed by their classroom teachers and by the teachers of special classes. Third- through eighth-grade students are assigned a letter grade following a standard numerical scale associated with each letter. Student progress for kindergarten through second grade is monitored with report cards on which student skills are rated from “below basic” to “advanced” in the following subjects: independent learning and social behavior, math, reading, science, social studies, and writing. These students also are assessed on the level of effort put forth in each subject on a scale ranging from “no evidence of effort” to “consistently focuses on learning.” The school has a stated grade promotion policy as well as attendance and dress code policies. Transportation is provided by MMSA for students who live within 10 miles of the school.⁵

³ www.mmsacademy.org

⁴ From the 2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook.

⁵ From the 2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook.

B. School Structure

1. School Management and Board of Directors

MMSA is governed locally by a volunteer board of directors. The board—along with Concept Schools and, more recently, MAESTRO Education—has ultimate responsibility for the school's success and is accountable directly to the City of Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to ensure that all terms of the school's charter are met. The board meets on a regular basis. This year, the board again consisted of five members: a president, a vice president/treasurer, a secretary, and two other members.

The school's management team consists of the principal, assistant principal, secretary, and student mentor/Hawk's Nest supervisor.

2. Areas of Instruction

In the 2019–20 school year, MMSA's curriculum included instruction in English/reading/literacy, math, social studies, science, art, music, physical education/health, and computer science. All parts of the curriculum are aligned with Common Core standards. The school also implements a STEM curriculum when possible. Students were exposed to core subjects daily and participated weekly in four other subjects: art, music, physical education, and computer science. The school also employed a reading teacher. Special education programming was provided to students identified as needing an individualized education program (IEP). Students who met the criteria for special education services were monitored and reviewed so

that appropriate adjustments could be made to their plans. All students received four report cards mailed to their homes during the year.⁶

3. Classrooms

The school began the year with 10 classrooms: one each for K4 through eighth grades. The school also had three special education rooms, one room each for art and music, a library, two computer technology rooms, a gym, and a science lab used by all teachers.

Breakfast and lunch were served in a cafeteria adjacent to the kitchen. Other smaller rooms were available for use by school personnel working with students individually or in small groups.

4. Teacher Information

During the school year, a total of 10 classroom teachers and 13 additional instructional staff were employed.⁷ The school year began with 10 classroom teachers, including one who was new to the school. There was one teacher per class from K4 through third grade. The fourth and fifth grades had an English language arts (ELA)/social studies teacher and a math/science teacher. The middle school (sixth through eighth grades) had three subject-area teachers: one for math, one for ELA, and one for social studies/science. In addition to the principal and vice principal, the other 13 instructional staff at the beginning of the year consisted of an art teacher, a music teacher, a computer teacher who also provided ESL support, a reading paraprofessional,

⁶ Information from the fall interview and the *2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook*.

⁷ This year, the school reduced the number of classrooms per grade, rather than two cohorts at each grade level, resulting in a reduction in the number of classroom teachers.

a physical education teacher, a social worker, three special education teachers, and a psychologist. The school contracted for the services of a speech language pathologist. The school also employed five teacher assistants and a behavior specialist who supervised the Hawk's Nest. All these staff worked under the direction of the classroom teachers or other instructional staff.

Of the 10 classroom teachers who began the year, all were eligible to remain all year. Nine (90.0%) of the eligible teachers remained at the school all year. The middle school social studies/science teacher resigned March 27, 2020, after school closure. All (100.0%) of the 13 other instructional staff who began the year remained at the school all year. The total retention rate for all eligible instructional staff, including classroom teachers, was 95.7% (22 of 23).

At the end of the 2018–19 school year, nine classroom teachers and 10 other instructional staff were eligible to return in the fall of 2019. All (100.0%) of the classroom teachers returned, and nine of the 10 (90.0%) other instructional staff returned. Overall, 18 of 19 (94.7%) of the eligible staff returned.

License information on the DPI website indicated that all instructional staff employed throughout the year held valid DPI licenses or permits.

Teachers were again evaluated using the Concept Schools rubric, which assigns points in the areas of planning and preparation (10.0%), instruction (50.0%), classroom management (35.0%), and professional attributes (5.0%). The school was unable to complete DPI's Educator Effectiveness Cycle this year because of school closure. Teachers will remain in the same cycle for next year.

Regarding professional development activities, school leadership reported the following information. Concept Schools continued to provide MMSA with professional development. The administration team attended a two-day leadership conference in Itasca, Illinois, followed by a one-day workshop for all assistant principals of academics. All new teachers also attended a two-day workshop in Schaumburg, Illinois, at the beginning of August. Once school started, curriculum directors visited MMSA to observe teachers in the classroom, provide feedback, and address any problems, concerns, or gaps in the curriculum.

During teacher in-service prior to the beginning of the school year, the school continued to focus on building positive relationships with students through Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiatives and using mindfulness strategies in the classroom. The school also invited a special guest, Amy Johnston, to lead a workshop on Social Emotional Learning. Johnston has been in the education field for over 32 years and is now an educational consultant, training school staff in the 11 principles of character education.

Throughout the rest of the year, and especially during the school closure, staff members worked individually on expanding their knowledge and skills through professional development. Increasing student achievement is always the end goal, so each staff member needed to determine what areas of need to focus on to help meet that goal. Staff members used previous conversations with administrators, feedback from observations, and recommendations from colleagues to guide decisions for professional development opportunities.

Parents were asked about the school's staff. Most (94.6%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am comfortable talking with the staff," and 81.7% agreed or strongly agreed

that they are satisfied with overall staff performance. Just over three fourths (77.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that people in this school treat each other with respect.

5. School Hours and Calendar

The regular school day for all students was 8:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Breakfast was served from 7:30 to 7:55 a.m. On Mondays and Thursdays, tutoring was available from 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. from October 1 to mid-May. Clubs occurred during the same time on Tuesdays. Occasionally during the year, teacher in-service days were planned without student attendance. Prior to the school closure, these occurred on October 28 and November 18, 2019. The first day of school was August 19, 2019, and the last day of school was planned for June 11, 2020. The actual last day of student attendance was March 13, 2020. The school published the calendar in the parent/student handbook and on its website. MMSA met the City of Milwaukee's requirement to publish an annual calendar.

6. Parent Involvement

MMSA's *2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook* states that parental involvement in a child's educational life is critical to a child's success. The school values the development of a strong, positive partnership between parents and MMSA.

The school provided a parent/student orientation, called Meet Your Teacher Night, before school began. All teachers used Concept Schools' student information system, a grade book that lets teachers securely publish grades and class activities online for students and parents. Parents received their passwords in the mail or upon request. Parents could log in and

see what was published daily by the teachers. All families were provided login information and passwords for the online grading system. Parents seeking a more involved role in the school were invited to join the MMSA parent-teacher organization.

According to the *2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook*, parents are expected to attend at least two parent-teacher conferences per year (one each semester) and as requested by the classroom teacher, principal, or assistant principal. Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer in (or, with an appointment, observe) daily activities in their child’s classroom. Many family-centered activities were planned throughout the year, including the following events.

- Harvest Fest
- Student versus staff basketball game
- Muffins with Mom
- Donuts with Dudes
- Grandparents Day
- Black history program
- Winter concert
- Honor roll assemblies
- High School Night (for eighth graders)
- Spirit Week
- Eighth-grade graduation in June
- K5 graduation

Unfortunately, some events were not held due to the school closure in mid-March.

In the parent survey, most (88.1%) parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff keep them informed about their child’s academic performance, and 80.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the staff respond to their worries and concerns.

7. Discipline Policy

MMSA's goal is to help every student meet their 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 effectively and pleasantly.

This year, the school continued to implement a program based on PBIS. The school also continued using the Hawk's Nest, an area of the school that 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. The school's behavioral expectations are to be safe, respectful, and responsible. The school's *2019–20 Parent/Student Handbook* explains the policy and procedures regarding student conduct and discipline. The handbook covers expectations, unacceptable student behaviors, formal disciplinary policies and procedures, and the schoolwide discipline system. The discipline system includes defined rules, expectations, and consequences.

The parent survey included questions on the school's disciplinary process. Just over two thirds (69.9%) of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they feel comfortable with how the staff handle discipline, 16.1% were neutral when presented with that statement, and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

8. Graduation and High School Information

The school held a high school information night during which representatives from several high schools came to present information. Additional high schools came during the

school day. MMSA posted acceptance letters on the school's walls to encourage all students to apply to high school and celebrate their acceptance.

In May, the school reported that 18 eighth-grade students would graduate this year. At that time, 14 of the students planned to attend one the following high schools: Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy (eight), Golder Meier (two), and one each at Milwaukee Lutheran, Bradley Technical, St. Joan Antida, and Mesmer.

The school's leadership plans to reach out to DPI to obtain data regarding the number of former MMSA graduates who graduated from high school.

C. Student Population

At the beginning of the year⁸ (September 20, 2019), 221 students were enrolled at MMSA. An additional 14 students enrolled after the school year started, and 16 students withdrew prior to the end of the year.⁹ Of those 16, eight (50.0%) withdrew due to a parent's decision; four (25.0%) moved out of state; three (18.8%) relocated within the state; and one (6.3%) enrolled but never attended. Of the 221 students who started the year at the school, 209 remained enrolled at the end of the year, representing an 94.6% retention rate.

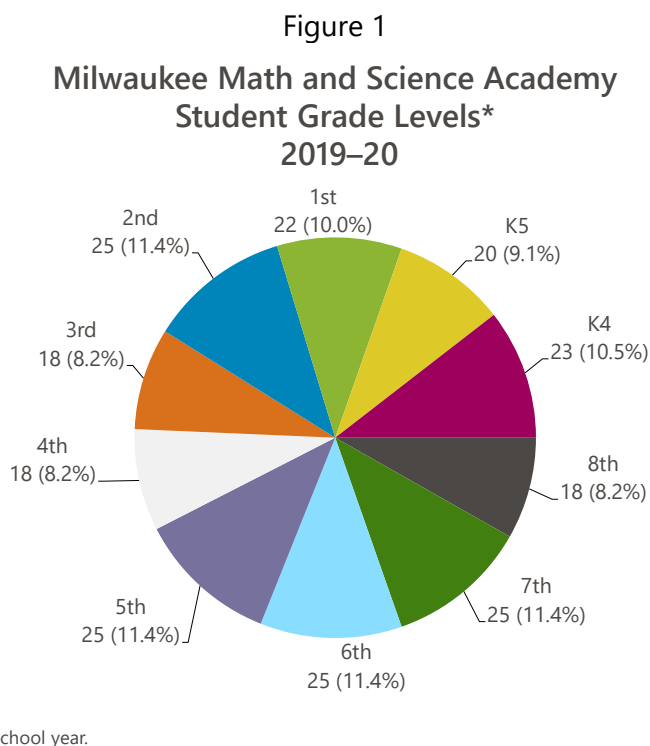
At the end of the year, 219 students were enrolled at MMSA.

- Most (210, or 95.9%) of the students were Black or African American, six (2.7%) were multiracial, and three (1.4%) were Hispanic/Latino.
- There were 117 (53.4%) girls and 102 (46.6%) boys.

⁸ CRC uses the third Friday of September as a cutoff for including students in the analysis. Students who withdraw before this date are not included in any part of the analysis. This does not necessarily correspond to the start of the school year.

⁹ Four of these students enrolled after the school year started.

- Special education needs were reported for 31 (14.2%) students, of whom nine had other health impairments, eight had a speech/language impairment, seven had emotional/behavioral disabilities, two had had specific learning disabilities, two had a significant developmental delay, two had autism, and one had an intellectual disability.
- All 219 students were eligible for free lunch.
- Grade sizes in the elementary school ranged from 18 to 25 students (Figure 1).



On the last day of the 2018–19 academic year, 247 students were eligible for continued enrollment in the 2019–20 academic year. Of those, 176 were enrolled on the third Friday in September 2019, representing a return rate of 71.3%, which compares with 71.8% the prior year.

D. Activities for Continuous School Improvement

The following describes MMSA's responses to the recommendations in the school's 2018–19 programmatic profile and education performance report.¹⁰

- Recommendation: Implement professional learning communities (PLCs) with all staff to focus on PBIS and build a more positive culture in the school.

Response: This year, PLCs took the form of various committees composed of MMSA staff. The leadership team consisted of the principal; assistant principal; special education director; technology coordinator; chairpersons for K4 and K5, second and third grade, fourth and fifth grade, and sixth to eighth grade; math department head; ELA department head; and a representative from the Specials team. This team met once per month to share thoughts, ideas, concerns from staff members, and actions that can be taken to problem-solve.

Along with the leadership team, several other committees met monthly or more often if needed. These committees allowed teachers to get involved in the school community, grow professionally, and take on leadership roles. These committees demonstrated the MMSA administration team's commitment to including teachers in making school decisions and developing teacher leaders.

- » *School Improvement Committee*: The committee met on an ongoing basis to review data, develop plans and interventions, and monitor progress to help the students improve academically and/or behaviorally. The committee also provided support to other teachers. The committee also shared work with other MMSA stakeholders, including parents, community, and school board members.
- » *Special Events Committee*: The committee coordinated special events for the school, including honor roll assemblies, winter program, Black history program, Muffins with Moms, Donuts with Dudes, and K5/eighth-grade promotion.

¹⁰ This includes information from the end-of-year interview and from the April 8, 2020, Mid-Year Report by the school to the CSRC. The Mid-Year Report is available with the materials posted online for the meeting held April 16, 2020, at <https://milwaukee.legistar.com>.

» *PBIS Committee:* The committee sponsored monthly challenges to encourage teamwork and good behavior since returning from winter break. Usually, classes spent the week doing a “reset” with classroom and hallway expectations, but the school decided to try something different. Each month, individual classes chose a behavior they needed to work on (e.g., quiet transitions, raising a quiet hand to speak, using school-appropriate language). When the class met the expectation for the behavior they were working on, a certificate was earned. At the end of the month, a reward was given based on how many certificates were earned.

- Recommendation: Revise and strengthen policies and procedures for accountability of teachers, students, and parents.

Response: Regarding parent, student, and teacher accountability, the school required all three to sign the MMSA Commitment to Excellence. In addition, at the beginning of the school year, each family received an MMSA handbook that clearly states behavioral expectations and consequences. Parent-teacher conference expectations were made clear to parents. Parents must attend one conference per semester. Phone calls were made to remind parents letting them know of the mandatory attendance.

In addition, the school planned monthly assemblies for K5 through eighth grades to recognize positive student behavior and reinforce the school culture and core values. Parents of students receiving these awards are invited to attend.

Quarterly honor roll assemblies recognize STAR Students (K4 to second grade) and honor roll students (third to eighth grade). The purpose is to honor students who achieved academic standards in the classroom. These students are mastering the standards (K4 to second grade) and are earning a grade-point average above a 3.5 (third to eighth grade). Parents are invited to attend. Each student received a goodie bag of treats for their hard work.

The PBIS matrix of expected behaviors hangs in each classroom, and expectation reminders are hung in the hallway, bathrooms, and other common areas.

This year, each new teacher was paired with a returning mentor teacher. They initially met in the summer to discuss expectations, student behavior, setting up procedures, classroom management, academic strategies, etc. The pair met throughout the year to discuss events and issues.

- Recommendation: Focus on first-grade reading skills to bring students up to the benchmark at the end of first grade on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment.

Response: The school reduced its class size to 20 to 25 students in K5 to second grade. The classroom teachers focused more on personalized learning through guided reading groups, personalized independent work in class, and individualized homework for students. Teachers used data from PALS, STAR Early Literacy, and NWEA to create learning groups and focus the work students do while in learning centers and provide individual support.

The first- and second-grade classrooms each had support from a full-time teaching assistant (TA). The TAs helped students in small groups or individually in the classroom on foundational skills the student has not mastered yet. Together, the classroom teacher, TA, and assistant principal identified students who need specialized attention and created learning opportunities based on those missing skills. To assist students, staff used resources such as Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, running records, flashcards, PALS quick checks, short reading passages, classwork, and learning center work. The running records, Fountas and Pinnell assessments, and PALS quick checks were all used to track student progress.

Each teacher used the Journeys resources to guide instruction in reading. The Journeys resources provide lessons in the concept of print, phonemic awareness/phonics, reading fluency, reading comprehension, letters and sound, vocabulary, spelling, language, writing, and high-frequency words. Teachers used the leveled readers during guided reading. The leveled readers consist of below-level, on-grade-level and above-grade-level texts. All teachers have access to Think Central, the online resource that accompanies other Journeys resources. Teachers can upload their student roster and assign work to their students for independent work time.

Through their daily reading lessons, students were introduced to high-frequency words in their big books, guided reading books, and other stories they are given. For 20 minutes each Friday, first graders were matched up with a buddy from seventh grade (first semester) and sixth grade (second semester) to practice sight words or those high-frequency words.

- Recommendation: Continue the effort to close the gap in reading, writing, and math by individualizing instruction based on data analysis and work with students on skills related to taking the Wisconsin Forward Exam.

Response: In addition to the tasks described earlier for K5 to second graders, students in K5 to eighth grade were identified for pull-out 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 to 30 minutes of interventions a day, three to four times per week. The interventions varied depending on the student's grade level. Younger students are working on phonemic awareness, decoding, reading comprehension, and fluency. Older students are working on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and fluency.

Fountas and Pinnell running records, comprehension and word list intervention checks using online computer-based modules, and reading and math scores from STAR and NWEA were used to track the progress of each student.

Third- through eighth-grade students continued to use online training tools offered via the Wisconsin Forward Exam website and DRC INSIGHT, a web-based platform that delivers educational assessments. These training tools give students practice with the testing interface, including tools like masking, highlighting, scrolling, turning pages, clicking and dragging, etc. 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 were available to teachers. Teachers developed a clearer understanding of the test items and can use that knowledge to focus their test preparation sessions. Third- through eighth-grade students began using these practice items during their computer lab time each week.

DPI and DRC have uploaded several text-dependent analysis (TDA) questions, including student responses, for each grade level. This allows students to read a text passage or several passages and then respond in writing to a prompt. Teachers asked students to read and then respond to these questions as they would on the Forward Exam. Once students completed their writing response, the teacher could share the student responses that are included from DPI and DRC. Students can then analyze those responses and use them to score their own responses. Then, the teacher could ask the students to rewrite their original responses based on the analysis of the included student responses.

The assistant principal met with each ELA teacher 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 to give students time to understand the process of what is being asked of them. First, students see how the teacher tackles an example—how the teacher thinks through the “problem.” Then, as the teacher explains their thinking, the students listen to the strategies that are being used. During the “We Do” approach, the teacher guides students as they all work on the page together, but this time the teacher elicits responses or answers from the students to help one another. Because DPI and the DRC have given three and sometimes four 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 (third and fourth grade). By fifth through eighth grade, students should be ready to tackle the TDA on their own. By breaking down the TDA into a step-by-step process—using strategies such as reading the question first, highlighting information that will help to answer the question, creating a graphic organizer or an outline to organize thoughts before writing—MMSA students will have a clearer roadmap on how to succeed in completing these difficult TDA writing prompts.

Along with the Forward Exam resources offered by DPI, MMSA teachers continued to use other resources for test preparation in reading and math classes. Reading and math teachers have taken advantage of released test items from other states that also use the Common Core standards, so test stimuli and content are 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, and finding the answer in the text or solving the problem, they also get to learn alternative 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.

- Recommendation: Continue the effort to engage students in meaningful writing across subject areas.

Response: Grade level teams continued to use their meeting time to share ideas about including writing in the curriculum. The ELA teacher has shared the writing rubrics used in the 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 students' lives were often used as writing topics. Sometimes the teacher would start with an introduction to the topic before asking students to write about their opinion and then use those responses as the basis of further discussion. Other times, students would read about a topic, annotate the text, write a response to the 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.

- Recommendation: Continue the development of Response to Intervention (RTI).

To continue to improve RTI this year, the school invested in the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System. These resources provide RTI, special education, and ESL teachers with systematically designed lessons that supplement classroom instruction to provide 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; and 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 checkout system for the materials.

The progress monitoring data was 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: Continue to work with parents to improve the student return rate.

Response: Many in-school events took place prior to school closure; others were planned throughout the remainder of the school year that would have involved parents, grandparents, or other family members. These events were described earlier.

In addition to parent-teacher conferences, many of the incentives for academic success/improvements were being offered to keep the students connected with their school. ClassDojo 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 helped to keep students for longer terms and lower the mobility rate, unless it is unavoidable.

ClassDojo is one form of communication that is used to stay connected with parents. At the time of school closure, 182 MMSA parents were connected via ClassDojo. This allows the school to post important schoolwide messages such as school closures, event reminders, 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 or weekly basis. Teachers also use this tool to quickly contact parents about a child. Parents sometimes are more likely to respond via ClassDojo (like a quick text message) than a phone call, especially if they are at work during the day. Each week, ClassDojo sends a summary of the services that were used.

On the basis of the results in this report and in consultation with school staff, CRC recommends that the school continue a focused school improvement plan by doing the following.

- Continue the transition to MAESTRO, the school's current educational management organization, to:
 - » Support teachers in the classroom by improving instructional strategies that would engage students and improve their ability to think at a higher level; and
 - » Help teachers with methods to increase appropriate behavior as well as improve reading and math performance.
- The MMSA board and school leadership, with the help of MAESTRO, will research a new location for the school and make plans to move for the 2021–22 academic year if a feasible location is identified.
- Continue to build a more positive culture of the school by improved integration of PBIS into all the activities of the school.

- Continue using staff committees to enhance the school's professional learning communities.
- Identify and implement a daily schoolwide reading program.

E. Probation Expectations

The CSRC placed the school on probation in the fall of 2017. At that time, the CSRC set expectations for the 2017–18 school year. The expectations were that the school would achieve at least 66.8% on the 2017–18 scorecard (an increase of at least 15 percentage points from the 2016–17 scorecard results) *and* that the school would meet at least five of nine specified goals. Because the school did not meet the expectations in 2017–18, the CSRC extended the probation to the 2018–19 school year with the same expectations.

The school achieved 59.5% on the scorecard for the 2018–19 school year, again falling short of the 66.8% expectation. The school did achieve a majority (five) of the nine specified goals during the 2018–19 school year. Therefore, in the fall of 2019, the CSRC extended the school's probationary status with the expectation that the school's scorecard results for 2019–20 would be at least 4 percentage points higher and that the school would present a midyear report to the CSRC in February or March of 2020.

Because of the lack of end-of-year local measure data as well as Wisconsin Forward exam data, the scorecard this year cannot be compared with the 2018–19 scorecard. MMSA leadership did present a midyear report to the CSRC.

III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

To monitor MMSA's performance related to the CSRC contract, a variety of qualitative and quantitative information was collected at specified intervals during the past several academic years. This year, MMSA established goals related to attendance, parent participation, and special education student records. In addition, the school identified local and standardized measures of academic performance to monitor student progress.

This year, the local assessment measures covered student progress in reading, math, writing skills, and IEP progress. The standardized assessment measures used were the PALS assessment and the Wisconsin Forward Exam.

A. Attendance

CRC examined student attendance two ways: the average time students attended school and attendance that includes excused absences. Both rates include all students enrolled at any time during the school year up until the last day of in-person attendance (March 13, 2020).

MMSA established a goal to maintain an average daily attendance rate of 92.0%. The school considered a student present if the student 1) arrived at school no later than 10:00 a.m. and remained in class for the rest of the school day; or 2) arrived at school by 8:00 a.m. and remained in class until at least 1:00 p.m. Attendance data were available for 330 students enrolled during the year. On average, students attended 90.8% of the time, just shy of the school's goal.¹¹ When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 91.9%.

¹¹ Individual student attendance rate was calculated by dividing the total number of days present by the total number of days that the student was enrolled. Individual rates were then averaged across all students.

CRC also examined the time students spent, on average, in suspension (in school or out of school). Throughout the school year, 77 students from K4 through eighth grade were suspended at least once. Of those, 70 spent, on average, 1.7 days in out-of-school suspension, and 23 students spent an average of 1.0 day in in-school suspension. Note that some students were given both in- and out-of-school suspensions during the year.

B. Parent-Teacher Conferences

At the beginning of the academic year, the school set a goal that parents of 75.0% of students enrolled all year would attend a minimum of two of the four parent-teacher conferences. Home visits and alternative face-to-face visits at school were acceptable alternatives for parents who were unable to attend conferences. Because of early school closure, the school held only three conferences. Of 235 students were enrolled from the beginning of the year through March 13, 2020, parents of 50 (21.3%) students attended one conference, 64 (27.2%) attended two conferences, and 102 (43.4%) attended three conferences.

C. Special Education Student Records

This year, the school set a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students. During the school year, 32 students received special education services.¹² The school maintained records for all (100.0%) students.

¹² MMSA planned on giving three additional students an initial evaluation but were unable to due to school closures or refusal of parental consent.

CRC typically conducts a review of the special education files; however, this was not completed this year due to school closure.

D. Local Measures of Educational Performance

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula that reflect each school's individual philosophy, mission, and goals. In addition to administering standardized tests, each charter school is responsible for describing goals and expectations for its students in the context of that school's unique approach to education. These goals and expectations are established by each City of Milwaukee-chartered school at the beginning of the academic year to measure the educational performance of its students. These local measures are useful for monitoring and reporting progress, guiding and improving instruction, clearly expressing the expected quality of student work, and providing evidence that students are meeting local benchmarks. The CSRC expectation is that schools establish local measures in reading, writing, math, and special education.

MMSA used NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments as a local measure of math and reading progress. MAP is a series of tests that measure student skills in reading, math, and language use. The test yields a Rasch Unit (RIT) score that shows student understanding, regardless of grade level, which allows easy comparison of student progress from the beginning to the end of the year and/or from one year to the next. Results provide educators with the information necessary to build curricula to meet their students' needs. Students who complete the MAP tests in reading and math in the fall receive an overall score as

well as a unique target score based on grade level and the fall test score (target RIT) that the student should strive to meet on the spring test.¹³

MMSA planned to measure student progress in reading and math by examining the percentage of students who met their target RIT scores on the spring tests. Specifically, the school's local-measure goal for MAP reading and math results was that at least 60.0% of students who completed the fall and spring reading assessments would meet their target RIT score on the spring assessment.

Normally, the school would provide fall and spring scores as well as the target growth points, which then can be used to determine the extent that the school's goals were met. However, due to school closure, spring scores and target growth were not available this year. In order to provide some information on the status of students in the fall, CRC used the normative mean scores developed by NWEA as a point of reference. The NWEA calculated the normative mean scores, or average RIT scores for each grade level at the time of each MAP administration (fall, winter, and spring).¹⁴ Because CRC cannot assess growth from fall to spring this year, the percentage of students who scored the same or greater than the normative mean for their grade level in the fall assessment is reported instead to provide information on the status of students in the fall.

The fall MAP reading tests were completed by 202 students in K5 through eighth grade. Of these students, 58 (28.7%) tested at or above the fall normative mean for their grade level (Table 1).

¹³ For more information, visit <https://www.nwea.org>.

¹⁴ Based on results of a 2015 NWEA normative study: <https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2015/11/Normative-Data-2015.pdf>

Table 1 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy MAP Reading Assessment for K5 – 8th Grade Students Fall 2019			
Grade	Students	Students at or Above Normative Mean	% at or Above Normative Mean
K5	20	9	45.0%
1st	22	6	27.3%
2nd	24	6	25.0%
3rd	22	4	18.2%
4th	17	3	17.6%
5th	25	6	24.0%
6th	26	9	34.6%
7th	27	9	33.3%
8th	19	6	31.6%
Total	202	58	28.7%

The fall MAP math tests were completed by 202 students in K5 through eighth grade. Of these students, 54 (26.7%) tested at or above the fall normative mean for their grade level (Table 2).

Table 2 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy MAP Math Assessment for K5 – 8th Grade Students Fall 2019			
Grade	Students	Students at or Above Normative Mean	% at or Above Normative Mean
K5	20	9	45.0%
1st	22	9	40.9%
2nd	24	10	41.7%
3rd	22	4	18.2%
4th	17	1	5.9%
5th	25	5	20.0%
6th	26	3	11.5%
7th	27	7	25.9%

Table 2 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy MAP Math Assessment for K5 – 8th Grade Students Fall 2019			
Grade	Students	Students at or Above Normative Mean	% at or Above Normative Mean
8th	19	6	31.6%
Total	202	54	26.7%

To assess student writing skills, MMSA used the Six Traits of Writing rubric. Students completed writing samples in October and May. Writing prompts were the same for both samples and were based on grade-level topics. K5 through second graders focused on the narrative genre, third through fifth graders focused on expository writing, and sixth through eighth graders focused on persuasive writing. The rubric is graded on a six-point scale for each of the six traits for a maximum score of 36 points. MMSA's writing goal was that 1) at least 60.0% of all students with fall and spring scores who scored less than 30 points in the fall would increase their total score by at least five points; or 2) all students with both writing samples who scored 30 or higher on the fall assessment would maintain or increase their overall score in the spring. Because of school closure, spring writing samples were not assessed, and progress could not be measured. Results of fall writing assessments are presented below.

Of the 202 students with fall writing samples, three (1.5%) scored a 30 or higher on the fall assessment (Table 3).

Table 3 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Six Traits of Writing Rubric for K5 Through 8th Grade Fall 2019			
Grade	Students	Students Who Scored 30 or Higher	% Scored 30 or Higher
K5	20	0	0.0%
1st	22	0	0.0%
2nd	24	0	0.0%
3rd	22	0	0.0%
4th	17	0	0.0%
5th	25	0	0.0%
6th	26	1	3.8%
7th	27	1	3.7%
8th	19	1	5.3%
Total	202	3	1.5%

The CSRC expects students in special education services to make routine progress yearly. This year, MMSA set the goal that all special education students who had a calendar year of IEP implementation at MMSA would meet or make progress on 75.0% of their goals by the time of their annual review. Progress is defined as meeting at least 80.0% of the subgoals under each goal. During 2019–20, IEPs for 21 students were implemented for a full year. Of these students, 19 (90.5%) made progress or met at least 75.0% of their goals.¹⁵

E. External Standardized Measures of Educational Performance

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

¹⁵ Excludes one student who withdrew before the IEP review date and one student whose IEP was not reviewed at the parent's request due to school closure.

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

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

1. PALS¹⁶

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

a. *PALS-PreK*

The PALS-PreK consists of five required tasks (name writing, uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and rhyme awareness). Two additional tasks (lowercase alphabet recognition and letter sounds) are completed only by students who reach a high enough score on the uppercase alphabet task. There is no summed score benchmark for the PALS-PreK. Although the spring developmental ranges relate to expected development by the time of the spring semester, CRC typically applies the spring ranges to both test administrations to see whether more students were at or above the range for each test by the spring administration.

¹⁶ Information about the PALS assessments taken from <https://palsresource.info/wisconsin> and <https://pals.virginia.edu>; for more information, visit these sites.

Because of school closure, spring scores were not available. This year, the spring developmental range was applied to the fall scores simply as a benchmark, but it is important to note that these are meant to be used only on the spring assessment, and it is not the expectation that K4 students are to be at this range in the fall. A total of 21 K4 students completed the fall PALS assessment; these results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy PALS-PreK for K4 Students Fall Scores at or Above the Spring Developmental Range N = 21		
Task	Fall Scores at or Above the Spring Developmental Range	
	n	%
Name writing	6	28.6%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	8	38.1%
Lowercase alphabet recognition	Cannot report due to n size*	
Letter sounds		
Beginning sound awareness	10	47.6%
Print and word awareness	6	28.6%
Rhyme awareness	11	52.4%

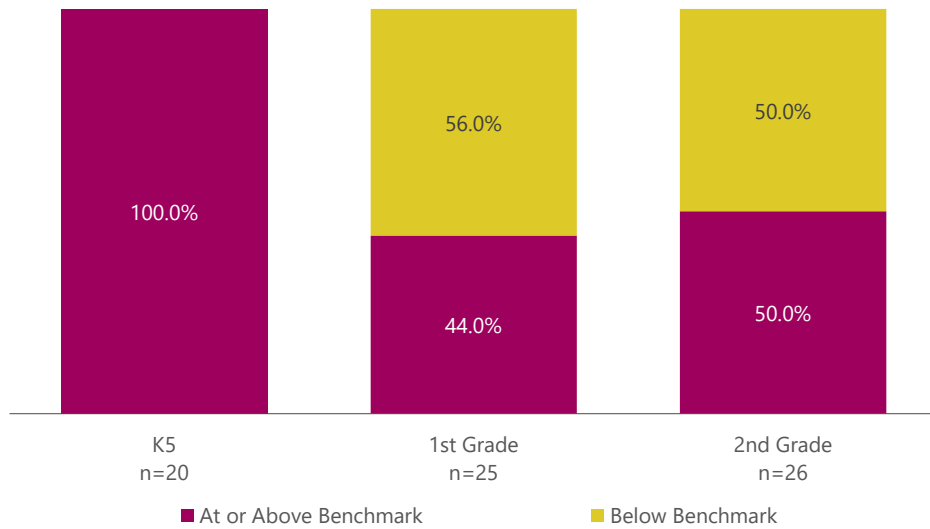
*Eight students qualified to complete these tasks; results can only be reported for cohorts of 10 or more.

b. PALS-K and PALS Plus

The PALS-K and PALS Plus are administered in the fall and spring semester. Because of school closure, the spring assessments were not completed this year. Of 71 K5 through second-grade students, 44 (62.0%) were at their fall benchmark on the PALS assessment (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy
Fall 2019 Reading Readiness
Students With Fall PALS Scores



2. Wisconsin Forward Exam for Third Through Eighth Graders¹⁷

The Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state's standardized test for ELA and math for third through eighth graders; for science for fourth and eighth graders; and for social studies for fourth, eighth, and tenth graders. Scores for each test are translated into one of four levels: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. The Forward Exam is administered in the spring of each school year. Schools were not required to administer the Forward exam in 2019–20 due to school closure.

¹⁷ Information taken from the DPI website (<http://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward>) and Wisconsin Forward Exam family brochure (https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/assessment/pdf/Forward_brochure_for_families.pdf).

F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. Year-to-year progress expectations apply to all students with scores in consecutive years. Students in K4 through second grade take the PALS reading assessment. The PALS summed score benchmark indicates when a student requires additional reading assistance, not that the student is reading at grade level. In addition, there are three versions of the test, with different formats, sections, and scoring. Because only students who are in first and second grade during two consecutive years complete the same version of the test, CRC typically only examines year-to-year results for a cohort of students who were in first grade in the spring of one year and second grade in the spring of the following year. The CSRC's performance expectation is at least 75.0% of students who were at or above the summed score benchmark in first grade would remain at or above the summed score benchmark as second graders in the subsequent school year.

Students in third through eighth grade take the Forward Exam in the spring of the school year. The CSRC expectations are that at least 60% of the fourth through eighth graders who were proficient in ELA the prior year would maintain proficiency, and that at least 50% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year would maintain proficiency. For students below proficiency in ELA the prior year, at least 35% would demonstrate progress, and 35% of the students below proficiency in math the prior year also were expected to demonstrate progress. Because of school closure this year, spring results were not available, and year-to-year progress could not be assessed.

G. CSRC School Scorecard

In the fall of 2012, after a three-year pilot, the CSRC adopted its first school scorecard. The scorecard included multiple measures of student academic progress, including performance on standardized test and local measures and point-in-time academic achievement and engagement elements, such as attendance and student and teacher retention and return rates. Due to significant testing changes, the scorecard was revised, and a second pilot was initiated in 2014–15.

In February 2020, when three years of comparable data on all elements in the second pilot scorecard were available, the CSRC reviewed data trends and made minor modifications to the scoring rubric. The changes place more emphasis on year-to-year student progress and less on point-in-time measures in order to capture a more realistic picture of the school's impact on student growth over time.¹⁸ Like the previous versions, the updated scorecard was designed to monitor school improvement from year-to-year and will be used to guide decisions about a school's status as a city-chartered school for subsequent school years. See Appendix D for detailed information on the revised scorecard.

Because of the early school closure this year, several of the progress measures on the revised scorecard were unavailable for 2019–20. Knowing this in advance of compiling reports for this year, the CSRC decided that the abbreviated scorecard will not be the primary source for making decisions about a school's status for the 2020–21 school year.

¹⁸ The CSRC continues to focus on the schools' impact on student achievement over time. Therefore, the changes assigned more points to the progress indicators rather than point in time assessments. For the elementary scorecard, the year-to-year progress for students below proficiency in ELA and math was increased by 2.5 points, and the point-in-time ELA and math proficiencies were decreased by 2.5 points. For the high school scorecard, the first two items related to ACT Aspire were merged, two items related to grade promotion were given 2.5 additional points, and point-in-time measures on Aspire in English and math were decreased by 2.5 points each.

On the significantly abbreviated scorecard, the school scored 89.6% of 31.25 possible points. These results should not be compared with scores in previous or subsequent school years.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the ninth year of MMSA's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. The school adopted strategies to address the improvement recommendations in the 2018–19 report.

MMSA has met all the requirements of its contract with the City of Milwaukee. CRC recommends that the CSRC consider extending MMSA's probation for the 2020–21 school year, with the expectation that the school provide a midyear report to the CSRC in February 2021.

In addition, since 2020–21 is the final year of MMSA's contract with the city, CRC recommends that the CSRC consider extending MMSA's charter contract for another five years.

Appendix A

Contract Compliance Chart

Table A Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Compliance Overview for Education-Related Contract Provisions 2019–20			
Contract Section	Contract Provision	Report Reference Pages	Provision Met
Section B	Description of educational program.	pp. 2–3	Met
Section B	Annual school calendar provided.	p. 8	Met
Section C	Educational methods.	pp. 2–3	Met
Section D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 27–31	Met
Section D	<u>Academic criterion #1</u> : Maintain local measures in reading, math, writing, and IEP goals, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals.	pp. 23–27	Met
Section D and subsequent CSRC memos	<u>Academic criterion #2</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures. a. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 60% will maintain proficiency b. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in Math the prior year: 50% will maintain proficiency. c. 2nd grade students at or above summed score benchmark in reading (PALS): At least 75.0% will remain at or above.	a. pp. 30 b. p. 31 c. p. 29	a. Not available (N/A) b. N/A c. N/A
Section D and subsequent CSRC memos	<u>Academic criterion #3</u> : Year-to-year achievement measures. Progress for students below proficient on the Forward Exam. a. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress. b. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in Math the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.	a. p. 31 b. p. 31	a. N/A b. N/A
Section E	Parental involvement.	pp. 8–9	Met
Section F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	pp. 5–8	Met
Section I	Maintain pupil database information for each pupil.	pp. 11–12	Met
Section K	Disciplinary procedures.	p. 10	Met

Appendix B

Student Learning Memorandum

Student Learning Memorandum for Milwaukee Math and Science Academy

To: NCCD Children's Research Center and Charter School Review Committee
From: Milwaukee Math and Science Academy
Re: Learning Memo for the 2019–20 Academic Year
Date: September 23, 2019

This memorandum of understanding includes the *minimum* measurable outcomes required by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) to monitor and report students' academic progress. These outcomes have been defined by the leadership and/or staff at Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (MMSA) in consultation with staff from the NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC) and the CSRC. The school will record student data in the Concept School Student Information System (SIS) database and/or MS Excel spreadsheets and provide the data to CRC, the educational monitoring agent contracted by the CSRC. Additionally, paper test printouts or data directly from the test publisher will be provided to CRC for all standardized tests unless CRC has direct access to the results from the test publisher. All required elements related to the outcomes below are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section. CRC requests electronic submission of year-end data on the fifth day following the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 18, 2020.

Enrollment

MMSA will record enrollment dates for every student. Upon admission, individual student information and actual enrollment date will be added to the school's database. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Termination/Withdrawal

The exit date and reason for every student leaving the school will be determined and recorded in the school's database. Specific reasons for each expulsion are required for each student. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Attendance

The school will maintain appropriate attendance records and maintain an average daily attendance rate of 92%. A student is considered present for the day if they arrive at school no later than 10:00 a.m. and stays the rest of the day or arrives on time in the morning (8:00 a.m.) and stays at least until 1:00 p.m. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Parent Participation

Parents of at least 75% of the students who attend all year will participate in at least two of the four parent-teacher conferences. Home visits and alternative face-to-face visits at school will be acceptable alternatives for parents who are unable to attend scheduled conferences. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Special Education Needs Students

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

Academic Achievement: Local Measures¹⁹

Mathematics and Reading for K5 Through Eighth-Grade Students

Students will complete Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading and math tests in the fall and spring of the school year.

- At least 60% of the students who completed the fall MAP reading test will meet their target Rasch unit (RIT) scores in the spring.
- At least 60% of the students who completed the fall MAP math test will meet their target RIT scores in the spring.

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

Writing for K5 Through Eighth-Grade Students

Writing progress will be measured using the Six Traits of Writing.²⁰ The rubric for K5–8th grade will have a six-point scale for each of the six traits. All students will complete a writing sample no later than October 4, 2019, and another between April 20 and May 15, 2020. The grade-level prompt for both writing samples will be the same, with a focus on a narrative genre for K5 through second grade, expository writing for third through fifth grades, and persuasive writing for sixth through eighth grades.

¹⁹ Local measures of academic achievement are classroom- or school-level measures that monitor student progress throughout the year (formative assessment) and can be summarized at the end of the year (summative assessment) to demonstrate academic growth. They are reflective of each school's unique philosophy and curriculum. The CSRC requires local measures of academic achievement in the areas of literacy, mathematics, writing, and IEP goals.

²⁰ The six traits are ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions.

Of the students with both fall and spring writing samples that score less than 30 points in the fall, 60% will increase their total score by at least five points.²¹ All (100%) students with both writing samples that score 30 or higher on the fall assessment will maintain or increase their overall score in the spring.

Special Education

All (100%) students with individualized education programs (IEP) who have been enrolled at MMSA for the full year of IEP implementation will meet or make progress on 75% of their goals. Progress is defined by meeting at least 80% of the subgoals under each goal at their annual review or reevaluation. Progress on IEPs will be monitored through special education progress reports attached to the regular education progress reports. Required data elements related to these outcomes are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures

DPI requires that schools assess reading readiness for all students in K4 through second grade.

PALS for K4 Through Second Grade Students

The CSRC requires the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) for first- and second-grade students. MMSA has chosen the PALS for K4 and K5 students as well. PALS will be administered to all K4 through second-grade students in the fall and spring of each school year. The required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

DPI-Required Assessment for Third- Through Eighth-Grade Students

DPI requires the Wisconsin Forward Exam to be administered on an annual basis in the timeframe identified by DPI (i.e., spring of 2020). This standardized assessment will produce an English/language arts score and a math score for all third through eighth graders. Additionally, fourth- and eighth-grade students will complete the science and social studies tests. Data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

²¹ Writing genres include expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.

Year-to-Year Achievement²²

1. CRC will report results from the 2019–20 Wisconsin Forward Exams. In addition, progress will be reported for students who completed the Forward Exam for two consecutive years at the same school. When sufficient year-to-year data are available, the CSRC will set its expectations for student progress and these expectations may be effective in subsequent years.
2. The CSRC's expectation for students maintaining reading readiness on the PALS is that at least 75% of students who were in first grade in the 2018–19 school year and met the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2019 will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2020.

²² The CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 and K5.

Appendix C

Trend Information

Table C1					
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Student Enrollment and Retention					
School Year	Enrolled at Start of School Year	Enrolled During Year	Withdrew	Number at End of School Year	Number and Rate Enrolled for Entire School Year (Retention)
2015–16	337	27	60	304	285 (84.6%)
2016–17	378	31	75	334	307 (81.2%)
2017–18	310	20	48	282	266 (85.8%)
2018–19	298	16	48	266	251 (84.2%)
2019–20	221	14	16	219	209 (94.6%)

Table C2	
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Student Return Rate	
School Year	Return Rate
2015–16	67.1%
2016–17	72.5%
2017–18	65.6%
2018–19	71.8%
2019–20	71.3%

Table C3	
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Student Attendance	
School Year	Attendance Rate
2015–16	91.0%
2016–17	89.8%
2017–18	90.2%
2018–19	90.1%
2019–20	90.8%

Table C4	
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Parent Participation Rate*	
School Year	Participation Rate
2015–16	67.4%
2016–17	77.2%
2017–18	60.5%
2018–19	86.9%
2019–20	N/A*

*All four parent conferences were not held due to school closure. Therefore, a participation rate could not be calculated.

Table C5	
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Teacher/Instructional Staff Retention*	
School Year	Retention Rate: Employed Entire School Year
2015–16	95.8%
2016–17	90.0%
2017–18	93.3%
2018–19	86.2%
2019–20	95.7%

*Includes only teachers who were eligible to stay the entire year.

Table C6			
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Teacher Return Rate*			
Teacher Type	Number at End of Prior School Year	Returned First Day of Current School Year	Return Rate
2015–16			
Classroom teachers only	12	10	83.3%
All instructional staff	18	14	77.8%
2016–17			
Classroom teachers only	13	10	76.9%
All instructional staff	20	14	70.0%
2017–18			
Classroom teachers only	15	11	73.3%
All instructional staff	23	18	78.3%

Table C6			
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Teacher Return Rate*			
Teacher Type	Number at End of Prior School Year	Returned First Day of Current School Year	Return Rate
2018–19			
Classroom teachers only	11	10	90.9%
All instructional staff	22	19	86.4%
2019–20			
Classroom teachers only	9	9	100.0%
All instructional staff	19	18	94.7%

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

Appendix D

CSRC 2019–20 School Scorecard

City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee School Scorecard

r: 06/20

K-8TH GRADE

HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT READING READINESS: GRADES 1-2

• PALS—% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0	
• PALS—% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0	
		10.0%

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3-8

• Forward Exam reading—% maintained proficient	5.0	
• Forward Exam math—% maintained proficient	5.0	
• Forward Exam reading—% below proficient who progressed	12.5	
• Forward Exam math—% below proficient who progressed	12.5	
		35.0%

LOCAL MEASURES

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3-8

• Forward Exam reading—% proficient or advanced	2.5	
• Forward Exam math—% proficient or advanced	2.5	
		5.0%

ENGAGEMENT

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

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 9, 10, AND 12

• ACT Aspire—% 10th graders who maintained benchmark on composite score or progressed at least one point	15.0	
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	7.5	
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	7.5	35.0%
• DPI graduation rate	5.0	

POSTSECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 AND 12

• Postsecondary acceptance for graduates (college, university, technical school, military)	10.0	
• % of 11th/12th graders tested	2.5	
• % of graduates with ACT composite score of 19.6 or higher	2.5	
		15.0%

LOCAL MEASURES

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 9 AND 10

• ACT Aspire English—% students at or above spring benchmark	2.5	
• ACT Aspire math—% students at or above spring benchmark	2.5	
		5.0%

ENGAGEMENT

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

*Teachers not offered continuing contracts or who moved farther than 25 miles from any Milwaukee County border due to a transfer of a family member are excluded when calculating this rate.

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

Table D1
Milwaukee Math and Science Academy
CSRC Elementary School (K Through 8th Grade) Scorecard
REVISED FOR 2019–20

Area	Measure	Maximum Points	% Total Score	Performance		Points Earned
Student Reading Readiness: PALS, 1st – 2nd Grades	% 1st graders at or above spring summed score benchmark this year	4.0	10.0%	Not available		
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0				
Student Academic Progress: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam English/language arts: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	35.0%	Not available		
	Forward Exam math: % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0				
	Forward Exam English/language arts: % below proficient who progressed	12.5				
	Forward Exam math: % below proficient who progressed	12.5				
Local Measures*	% met reading	6.25	25.0%	Not available		
	% met math	6.25				
	% met writing	6.25				
	% met special education	6.25		90.5%	5.7	
Student Academic Achievement: 3rd – 8th Grades	Forward Exam English/ language arts: % at/above proficient	2.5	5.0%	Not Available		
	Forward Exam math: % at/above proficient	2.5				
Engagement	Student attendance rate	5.0	25.0%	90.8%	4.5	
	Student return rate	5.0		71.3%	3.6	
	Student retention	5.0		94.6%	4.7	
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		95.7%	4.8	
	Teacher return rate	5.0		94.7%	4.7	
TOTAL		31.25				28.0
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCORECARD PERCENTAGE						89.6%

Appendix E

Board Interview Results

Board member opinions are qualitative and provide valuable, although subjective, insight regarding school performance and organizational competency. MMSA's board of directors consists of five members. CRC conducted phone interviews using a prepared interview guide with three (60.0%) board members who agreed to participate.

The participating board members have served on the board for an average of just over five years. The backgrounds of the board members included finance, education, engineering, and community stakeholders.

All three of the board members said they participated in strategic planning for the school, received a presentation on the school's annual academic performance report, reviewed the school's annual financial audit, and received and approved the school's annual budget.

Asked to rate on a scale of excellent to poor, two of the board members rated the school as good, and one rated the school as fair. Two-thirds of the board members agreed that the school is making progress toward becoming a high-performing school. All agreed that board members took their responsibilities seriously.

Table 1 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Board Member Interview Results 2019–20 (N = 3)					
Performance Measure	Response				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teacher-student ratio/class size at this school is appropriate.	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Program of instruction (includes curriculum, equipment, and building) is consistent with the school's mission.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Students make significant academic progress at this school.	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
The administrator's financial management is transparent and efficient.	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
This school is making progress toward becoming a high-performing school.	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
This school has strong linkages to the community, including businesses.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%
The administrative staff's performance meets the board's expectations.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The majority of the board of directors take their varied responsibilities seriously.	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
This school has the financial resources to fulfill its mission.	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%

Table 1 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Board Member Interview Results 2019–20 (N = 3)					
Performance Measure	Response				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The environment of this school ensures the safety of its students and staff.	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%

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

- The school's mission;
- Dedication and perseverance of the administration;
- Dedication of the teachers and staff toward the mission; and
- Emphasis on science and math.

Regarding things they like least, the board members mentioned:

- Financial struggles;
- Lack of parent engagement; and
- The building.

When asked for one suggestion for improving the school, board members said:

- Improve the community involvement in the school;
- Develop more outreach programs;
- Hire staff to support teachers with discipline; and
- Improve the building.

Appendix F

Parent/Guardian Survey Results

Parent/guardian opinions are qualitative and provide a valuable measure of school performance. To determine satisfaction with the school, parental involvement with the school, and an overall evaluation of the school, each school distributed paper surveys during spring parent-teacher conferences and made the survey available online. CRC made at least two follow-up phone calls to parents/guardians who had not completed a survey. If these parents/guardians were available and willing, CRC completed the survey over the telephone. Ninety-three (71.0%) surveys of 131 MMSA's families were completed and submitted to CRC.

Most parents either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome at their child's school (95.7%), they are comfortable talking with the staff (94.6%), and that they clearly understand the school's academic expectations (93.6%; Table F1).

Table F1 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Parent Satisfaction with School 2019–20 (N = 93)						
Statement	Response					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
I am comfortable talking with the staff.	60.2%	34.4%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
The staff keep me informed about my child's academic performance.	50.5%	37.6%	3.2%	6.5%	1.1%	1.1%
I am comfortable with how the staff handle discipline.	38.7%	31.2%	16.1%	9.7%	4.3%	0.0%
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the staff.	41.9%	39.8%	7.5%	9.7%	1.1%	0.0%
The staff recognize my child's strengths and weaknesses.	50.5%	35.5%	6.5%	6.5%	1.1%	0.0%
I feel welcome at my child's school	63.4%	32.3%	1.1%	1.1%	2.2%	0.0%
The staff respond to my worries and concerns.	54.8%	25.8%	10.8%	6.5%	1.1%	1.1%
My child and I clearly understand the school's academic expectations.	49.5%	44.1%	4.3%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%
My child is learning what is needed to succeed in life.	49.5%	36.6%	8.6%	3.2%	2.2%	0.0%
My child is safe in school.	48.4%	37.6%	9.7%	2.2%	2.2%	0.0%
People in this school treat each other with respect.	40.9%	36.6%	11.8%	6.5%	3.2%	1.1%

Table F1 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Parent Satisfaction with School 2019–20 (N = 93)						
Statement	Response					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
The school offers a variety of courses and afterschool activities to keep my child interested.	38.7%	37.6%	17.2%	5.4%	1.1%	0.0%

The second measure examined the extent to which parents engaged in educational activities while at home. During a typical week, most of the parents of younger children (K4 through fifth grades) work on homework with their children (95.9%), read to or with their children (90.3%), work on arithmetic or math (90.3%), and participate together in activities outside of school (80.6%; Table F2).

Table F2 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Parent Participant in Activities K4 – 5th Grade 2019–20 (N = 72)					
Activity	Response				
	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	No Response
Read with or to your child(ren)	2.8%	6.9%	29.2%	61.1%	0.0%
Work on arithmetic or math	1.4%	2.8%	27.8%	62.5%	5.6%
Work on homework	2.8%	0.0%	16.7%	79.2%	1.4%
Participate together in activities outside of school	6.9%	11.1%	30.6%	50.0%	1.4%

Parents of older children (sixth through eighth grades) engaged in similar activities during the week. For example, 96.0% of 50 parents monitored homework completion, and 82.0% discuss their children's progress toward graduation at least weekly (Table F3).

Table F3 Milwaukee Math and Science Academy Parent Participant in Activities 6th – 8th Grade 2019–20 (N = 50)					
Activity	Response				
	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	No Response
Monitor homework completion	0.0%	4.0%	18.0%	78.0%	0.0%
Participate together in activities outside of school	4.0%	16.0%	32.0%	48.0%	0.0%
Discuss with your child his/her progress toward graduation	6.0%	10.0%	28.0%	54.0%	2.0%
Discuss plans for education after graduation	4.0%	14.0%	28.0%	52.0%	2.0%

Parental satisfaction was also evident in the following results.

- Most (88.2%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
- Nearly three fourths (73.1%) of parents will send their child to the school next year. Eleven (11.8%) parents said they will not send their child to the school next year, and 14 (15.1%) were not sure. Of the students not returning, most reasons provided were that the student graduated (36.4%) or the school did not meet the parent's expectations (36.4%).
- When asked to rate the school's overall contribution to their child's learning, most (83.9%) parents rated the school's overall contribution to their child's learning as excellent or good.

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

- Teachers and staff, including their care and concern for children, and dedication toward students' education;
- Academic programing and resources and extracurricular activities;
- Strong communication from teachers to parents about children's academic progress; and

- The safe, welcoming, family environment of the school.

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

- How the school handles bullying and lack of appropriate discipline;
- Quality of lunch and food offered at the school; lunch should also be accommodating to different religions;
- Bussing/transportation to and from the school; and
- Academics and activities: Lack of afterschool and extracurricular activities, mental wellness is not addressed, and desire for more varied teaching styles toward students' skills and needs.