



February 25, 2021

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 during the 2020-2021 school year based on the recommendations for school improvement listed in the 2019-2020 Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance.

Recommendations from the CRC based on MMSA's 2019-2020 report card:

- A. Continue the transition to MAESTRO, the school's current educational management organization, to:
 - a. Support teachers in the classroom by improving instructional strategies that would engage students and improve their ability to think at a higher level; and
 - b. Help teachers with methods to increase appropriate behavior as well as improve reading and math performance.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. Continue using staff committees to enhance the school's professional learning communities.
- E. Identify and implement a daily school-wide reading program.

Due to the nature of the 2020-2021 school year being virtual up to this point, how these recommendations have been implemented and addressed has certainly looked different than they would have if it had been a typical school year. Because transitioning to distance learning was our first priority this year, the report will be broken down into the main components of our distance learning school year with the recommendations included throughout the different components.



Preparation for the 2020-2021 School Year

During the summer of 2020, it became clear that, at the very least, MMSA would be starting the school year in a distance learning model for our students. We had decided to use Moodle as our Learning Management System because it allowed our teachers to live stream lessons, video conference with students and parents, upload pre-recorded lessons/videos, create assessments and activities, and encourage participation through public and private chats with the teacher.

Each teacher received one-on-one Moodle training with Mr. Austria or Ms. Austria, another member of the Maestro Education team during the summer. During the training, teachers were taught how to use the 'Big Blue Button', which is Moodle's live video tool. They were also shown how to upload assignments, embed videos, create a calendar, organize their work, create assessments, etc. Both trainers were also available for follow-up questions or more training.

During our mandatory family/student orientation in August/September, 100% of our students received a 45-minute training session on how to utilize the Moodle platform. Each of our students was also assigned a school chromebook with a school email address and login information for all school-related educational websites. Our teachers signed up to provide support during these orientation sessions that took place over 3 weeks. Sessions were offered twice per day with a limit of 30 students per session so we were able to follow all CDC safety guidelines.

The 2020-2021 school year would be the first full year with Maestro Education. Our literacy and math initiatives had to be changed slightly to adapt to our distance learning environment but we still moved forward with professional development for our teachers through the use of an online platform.

With all of our teachers, we wanted to focus our professional development time on best practices in literacy. Each of our reading teachers met with Ms. Bielmeier and Dr. Hicks, an adjunct professor and student teacher mentor at Loyola University in Chicago, who is also a member of the Maestro Education team. They met with teachers in grades K4-3rd grade and 4th-8th grade several times. The focus for the first 90-meeting was on unit planning and writing effective assessments. The follow-up meeting focused on learning strategies to increase student engagement, rigor and higher level thinking. Due to having less time in the virtual classroom than in the regular classroom, Dr. Hicks also shared ideas for using power standards of ELA to help students make the most growth during the limited time. These power standards would help teachers concentrate their attention on the most essential standards for their grade level. Developing student vocabulary, using context clues, inferencing/drawing conclusions, identifying main idea and supporting details, comparing/contrasting and including oral/choral



reading time in class to increase reading fluency are some of the main areas of emphasis for reading teachers. A final meeting with Dr. Hicks with the reading teachers and the content teachers included strategies for seamlessly tying reading strategies and content standards together in other core areas.

Along with that professional development during the teacher in-service, we were going to set up literacy teams for follow-up meetings throughout the 2020-2021 school year to share data, discuss progress and reflect on our literacy initiative. We were also going to introduce the components of Success for All (SFA) reading program. However, introducing these new ideas as our teachers were having to prepare for virtual instruction was no longer our first priority. These initiatives have been postponed until the summer of 2021. Instead, we used the other time during our teacher inservice time to provide best practices for teaching literacy virtually.

Our math initiative for this school year was to integrate Eureka Math as a supplemental resource to support our current math program. Because our students were not familiar with this new resource, instead of introducing it to them via the virtual classroom, we have also delayed this initiative until the 2021-2022 school year. So, for this year we continued to use our same resources for math instruction, the McGraw Hill workbooks and IXL. To accommodate a student's need to work out their math problems with paper and pencil, teachers provided each student with a copy of their grade-level physical math workbook during student orientation but students also have online access to those workbooks, as well. Teachers continue to utilize IXL to provide targeted/differentiated practice for individual students as homework in addition to homework assigned from their math workbooks.

Along with Moodle training sessions, the literacy-focused professional development, and distance learning strategies, Mr. Austria also hosted a 60-minute curriculum workshop with each teacher. During this time together, they discussed the curriculum focus for the class, highlighted the power standards and discussed strategies to maximize student learning during distance learning. For example, he shared ideas for the type of content a teacher should include during their live lesson vs. content to provide for students to review prior to or following a lesson to maximize learning time.

Prior to the pandemic, MMSA had chosen a new student information system, JMC. In previous years we have used ConceptSIS but beginning in the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year, the administrators and office staff started working with the JMC staff to transition to the new SIS. We would use the summer of 2020 to train our teachers. All teachers received several hours of virtual training from a representative from JMC for finding student information, setting up a gradebook, entering grades, taking attendance, using the message center, and other JMC



features. Prior to the first grading period, follow-up training was provided by Ms. Bielmeier to remind teachers about posting grades and beginning the next grading period.

New location of MMSA

As previously communicated with CSRC, MMSA Board has decided to make the building at 2703 N Sherman Blvd its new home for the school. Chair Ingram and Ms. Gayle Peay toured the new school site and found the building and its location appropriate for the charter school's operation. Since MMSA does not have the required financial strength to purchase the building, Maestro has decided to acquire the building and rent it to MMSA. Due to various reasons such as state of the commercial real estate market in the middle of an ongoing pandemic and MMSA's declining revenues and student enrollment over the last 3 years, the process of securing the required financing for Maestro to purchase the building has been prolonged, and eventually, all financing options have failed. As a result, Maestro had to postpone the closing from February 3rd to March 3rd and will purchase the building without any financing- all cash- to ensure that MMSA has a physical location and experience a smooth transition from its current location to the new one.

St. Marcus schools (new owner of the Burleigh building) and MMSA board had agreed to mutually terminate the lease agreement as of February 1, 2021 and being allowed to gradually transition to its new home during the month of February. This arrangement will allow MMSA to move to its new location right after the closing date- which is currently scheduled on February 26, 2021.

Our reopening safety plan has already been submitted to the City of Milwaukee Health Department for our new location. Once it is approved, we will be ready to begin our in-person instruction when MPS decides to return to in-person instruction/learning. We are confident that our students and teachers will safely return to in-person schooling abiding by all new health and safety regulations in response to Covid-19.

Professional Learning Community

The MMSA administration team and the teachers have developed an effective and productive professional learning community over the past few years. Each year our teacher leaders have taken on a larger role in our school community and it has greatly enhanced our overall school culture.



Never have MMSA staff meetings been so important to our staff. On the first and third Tuesday of each month, our whole staff gathers in a Google Meeting. We start with a quick greeting followed by sharing positive news, but then teachers are given a chance to share how things are going or request support for any issue they are having. Following the open forum for staff members, Mr. Alper and Ms. Bielmeier go over their agenda. Mr. Alper often offers updates regarding our move to a new building, budget and technology items, school board updates, COVID mandates, and other MMSA news. Ms. Bielmeier often focuses her time on local assessments, student grades/reporting, DPI updates, attendance, learning strategies, family support and upcoming events. If there are any issues or concerns that are brought up during these meetings, Mr. Alper or Ms. Bielmeier follow-up with the teacher(s) to make sure the problem is addressed.

During one of our staff meetings, teachers had expressed a need to talk with members of their grade level bands to share ideas so we added grade level meetings every second Tuesday of the month. Our K4-3rd grade team and our 4th-8th grade team meet to share learning strategies, classroom management strategies, engagement strategies, troubleshoot issues or just discuss students they have had in the past. It is more difficult to connect with students during distance learning so teachers are relying on the previous teachers to share tidbits of information about those students that help to break the ice and learn more about the student's academic, emotional and social learning. In previous years, teachers were able to pop into a classroom during their planning period to observe another teacher to learn new strategies but our teacher schedules are all alike during distance learning so those peer observations aren't possible, making these grade level meetings even more meaningful.

Teachers are true lifelong learners so they are constantly looking for new ideas to bring into the classroom, virtually or in person. The amount of professional development they can do from their computers has become endless, especially when most workshops are being canceled and offered virtually. Our staff takes advantage of a variety of PD opportunities and they are always willing to share new insight with other staff members during their grade level meetings, our staff meetings or just sending out an email to anyone they think would benefit from the new information. As would be expected, many teachers have focused their attention this year on finding ways to engage students during distance learning, adapting lessons to fit the virtual classroom, exploring new online resources, social justice, equity in the classroom, and finding a balance between work and home.

In the table below, you can see the variety of professional development opportunities that our staff members took advantage of recently.



Professional Development Opportunities of MMSA Staff During the 2020-2021 School Year		
Professional Development Format	# of teachers	Percentage of teachers
Webinar	17	85%
Read a Professional Book	9	45%
Online Conference/Workshop	6	30%
Book Study w/ Other Professionals	3	15%
Data Analysis	20	100%
Online PD program	9	45%
Professional Journaling	5	25%
Video Conferencing	20	100%
Watched/shared TEDTalk Videos	12	100%
Listened to Educational Podcasts	4	60%
Other Professional Reading	20	100%
Other Educational Videos	20	100%
Graduate Class/Credits	2	10%
Curriculum Mapping	10	50%
Collegial Conversations	20	100%

Our fourth Tuesday of each month is a committee meeting. This year we have only two committees: the PBIS committee and the STARS committee. We recognized how difficult it would be for our students and staff to begin our school year with distance learning so we wanted our emphasis to be on how we could support both students and staff.

MMSA has implemented so many PBIS principles in the past few years. Our teachers have used the first few days of each school year to teach students positive classroom expectations, practice routines, intervene early to redirect unwanted behavior, etc. but now teachers had to adapt those same principles to the virtual classroom. Guidance was provided during one of our first staff meetings prior to the start of the school year and some basic guidelines were also given in the MMSA Staff Handbook. But just setting the expectations to start the school year wasn't enough, teachers also posted their classroom expectations on their Moodle page and referred back to them if students weren't meeting the expectations, just as they would in the regular classroom. Teachers used positive language with their students and asked students to practice that skill, as well. Although there are definitely a lot less behavioral issues while online,



the number of distractions while the students sit in their bedrooms, living rooms or kitchens is tremendous. So, teachers are constantly needing ideas to regain the attention of their students. The PBIS committee recommended the use of Class Dojo again. Class Dojo allows teachers to reward points to students that are doing the right thing with hopes that students that are distracted will be motivated to correct their behavior so they can also earn points for doing the right thing. While we were in the school, students would get to use those points to 'shop' for tangible items, like: pencils, stickers, bouncy balls, little notebooks, sunglasses, etc. They also liked to shop for other items like: lunch with their favorite school adult, a free homework pass, read with a buddy, teacher helper, etc. Once our students started earning Dojo points our committee had to figure out a way to make those points meaningful to students again. Even though students don't get to go 'shopping' as often as they did before, at the end of each month, students still use their points to 'shop' and their items are mailed home to them by our MMSA secretary. What kid doesn't love receiving a package in the mail?!

The PBIS Committee members have also found a way to honor positive student behavior with two new awards. Each month, teachers nominate two students from their class to be honored in a video that is shared with our whole MMSA community. Not only is the student that is already a leader recognized but the student that is making growth can also be recognized.

Virtual Learning Leader

- The student is making consistent positive effort in virtual sessions
- The student is making consistent positive effort to complete the work given to them
- The student is showing positive growth in skills in reading, writing, or math
- The student is making positive behavior choices during virtual sessions.

Virtual Rising Leader

- The student is improving in their effort in virtual sessions
- The student is improving in their effort to complete the work given to them
- The student is improving in reading, writing, or math
- The student is improving their behavior choices during virtual sessions

Each Friday, our teachers host their grade level homeroom. This is the only time they meet with their entire class at the same time. During this time, the PBIS Committee has provided a variety of activities and topics for teachers to use/teach that include: social/emotional learning, depression, sleep habits, eating healthy, hygiene/self-care, social justice, family struggles, etc. This homeroom is also a time where teachers and students can just relax and have fun together. They like to play games, laugh, listen to music and just be goofy to pretend like everything is normal again.

The STARS (Shows Thankfulness, Appreciation, Respect & Support) for Students and Staff Committee is new this year. It is pretty similar to our Glee Club from last year with more of a



focus on how we can support and honor our students' efforts while they are at home. The committee prints certificates for students that have perfect attendance for each quarter and mail them home along with a coupon for a free pizza to celebrate attendance. Members also print certificates for STAR, honor roll and merit roll students to recognize academic achievement. With those certificates, students also receive a coupon for a free pizza, stickers and a pencil in their mailed package. The recognition for perfect attendance and academic achievement are shared with the MMSA community via video or a Google Presentation. In September and January, the committee planned two Appreciation Fridays. During those two Fridays, Mr. Alper and Ms. Bielmeier attended each virtual homeroom to raffle off prizes for 4 lucky winners in each homeroom to show appreciation for our students. Even if students didn't win a raffle prize, they still won a treat bag. They could all stop up at the MMSA main office to pick up their treat bag from 9-3 on Monday-Friday. One of the most important tasks for this committee is sharing ideas for how teachers can recognize and honor the students in their own classes. If teachers wanted to mail items home, those things could be dropped off at the MMSA main office and the secretary would take care of the mailing. Recognition for students continues to be shared via Class Dojo, text messages and phone calls.

During this school year, we have continued our data meetings with the ELA, math, special education, ESL and RTI teachers. The data meetings are broken down into K4-3rd grade and 4th-8th grade meetings. Teachers are asked to analyze their assessment data and make observations related to their students. Powerpoint, Excel, and Google spreadsheets were used to prepare data to share with the groups, depending on the preference of the teacher. The more data meetings we have held, the more teachers have had a chance to improve their analytical skills. Their graphic representations, analysis of data, collegial conversations and questions for others have greatly improved since our first meeting until now. In turn, the knowledge they gain from the analysis of the student data helps to make informed decisions about grouping students, scaffolding lessons, targeted instruction or differentiated homework leading to increased student growth.

The administration team, including leaders from Maestro Education also meet via Google Meet biweekly. During these meetings, a focus is placed on reviewing the school's assessment learning data, contacts made with families, and addressing any issues or concerns regarding school-related business. Our return to school is constantly on the agenda. We continue to monitor COVID-19 updates and whether our return to school is possible. This time is also used to plan for the future. A professional development plan is currently being discussed for the upcoming summer months as we had to revise our initiatives for the 2020-2021 school year.

A professional development committee made up of 5 teachers and the administration team will also begin meeting at the beginning of March. During the meetings, the teachers will share their ideas about professional development needed for staff growth but will also begin to research



and review available resources and PD opportunities. They will also be a part of planning and presenting during teacher inservices in the summer.

Teacher Support

All of our MMSA teachers were provided many hours of professional development during our 2020-2021 teacher inservice weeks to improve their instructional strategies for engaging students and increasing rigor and higher level thinking to improve academic performance. But, just to provide PD doesn't mean teachers put those strategies into practice. As an administration team, we decided that classroom observations would be crucial to ensuring our teachers used what they learned to ultimately improve the academic performance of our students. Beginning in October, after giving teachers a month to work out the kinks of distance learning, Mr. Austria, Mr. Alper and Ms. Bielmeier began observing teachers in their virtual classrooms. Each teacher was observed bi-weekly by one member of the administration team. As this report is written, each teacher has already been observed in their classroom at least seven or eight times. Prior to each observation, the teachers and the administrator would either set up a virtual meeting or communicate via email to discuss the lesson's objectives, learning outcomes, the teacher's expectations for the students and anything the teacher wanted the administrator to pay particular attention to or provide specific feedback on after the lesson. During the lesson, the administrator took notes about the lesson. The teachers usually gave their students a heads up about the observations just so the students weren't distracted or nervous about the extra visitor in the classroom. Following the observations, the administrators either met with the teacher or provided feedback via email. The feedback consisted of the positive things happening in the classroom but also some strategies that could be used to increase participation, motivation, attention, or achievement. Each time we revisited a classroom we were able to see how the teachers had effectively utilized the feedback provided to improve their instruction. Although teachers are always nervous to be observed, even though they know it is a harmless observation, they have appreciated the feedback and support.

As was mentioned previously, one of the professional development sessions prior to the school year was all about unit planning. Many of our teachers had already been using unit plans in previous years so this was not new to them, they were used to long-range planning, but some teachers were only used to planning one week at a time. By encouraging teachers to develop units and unit plans, we wanted them to think about the unit assessment and then work backwards so they can achieve those specific learning goals. Teachers turned in their first unit plans two weeks prior to the start of the school year so Mr. Austria was able to review them and share his feedback with the teacher. Then, one week prior to the end of each unit, teachers share their next unit plan for review. After the first few weeks of the school year, teachers were



commenting they were less stressed on the weekends because they weren't spending hours and hours on lesson planning for the next week due to already knowing what comes next in their unit. These unit plans have been successful at helping teachers to write quality assessments, focus on what they want their students to learn, the activities and lessons they will use to help students learn and to reflect on the most productive use of their time during the limited live lessons each week.

Instead of using NWEA MAP as the assessment tool for our local measures this school year, we changed to using STAR sponsored by Renaissance. Although we have been using STAR for progress monitoring for many years, many teachers didn't truly understand the data as well as they understood data from NWEA MAP. A training session was offered by Ms. Bielmeier to go over many of the reports that are offered by STAR. A Google doc summarizing the information that can be gathered from each report was also sent to the teachers. Along with understanding the data included on the reports, teachers also needed to understand how the test was created. A student account was set up at each grade level so teachers were able to log in and take the STAR test so they could understand the types of questions that students would see as they took the test. Teachers were encouraged to take the test multiple times, once as a student that got many of the questions correct, once when a student got some questions correct and some questions wrong and then as a student that struggled to answer any of the questions correctly. STAR is similar to the NWEA MAP because it adjusts to the individual student. As the student gets answers correct, the questions will get more difficult. As the student gets answers incorrect, the questions will get slightly easier. Each question has a level of difficulty and in the end, the test calculates a score based on the number of questions answered correctly at each level. It was crucial for teachers to understand the assessment that was being given and what the scores meant because they would have to explain the scores to help the students understand. More information about STAR testing will come in the assessment section.

Our teachers participate in the Educator Effectiveness program through Wisconsin DPI. Ms. Bielmeier works closely with each teacher to review and provide feedback for the Student Learning Objective (SLO) and Professional Practice Goal (PPG). Our K4-2nd grade teachers are always encouraged to use their PALS data to write their SLO goals while our 3rd-8th grade teachers are encouraged to use MAP, STAR or writing data for their SLO goals. Using the Charlotte Danielson Framework for observations helps to provide teachers with specific descriptors of what the observer is looking for and ways to improve their instruction, classroom management, culture and professional responsibilities. The conversations with teachers are meaningful and driven toward improvement.



Teaching in a virtual classroom is hard! Teaching is hard! Teachers don't get enough credit for the difficult work they do each day. After the many observations the administration team has done, we constantly send shout-outs to our teachers for the work they do. They have made teaching in the virtual classroom look easy. They have adapted and some of them are really enjoying it (nope, not all of them!!!!). When there is a strategy that one teacher used that was successful, we give a shout out to that teacher. During staff meetings, we try to share something from the different classrooms we visited so after a few meetings, we have mentioned each teacher. If a class is recognized on Class Dojo for something positive, the teacher or teacher's name(s) are mentioned also because the class definitely didn't do it alone!!! Our administration team is proud of our teachers and we can't say that enough!!

Student Support

We have always been very fortunate at MMSA to be able to keep our class sizes relatively small in comparison to many other schools. This has given our teachers the opportunity to build better relationships with each individual student while having the time to help all students. During distance learning, we wanted to make the class sizes even smaller so learning could be even more personalized. Each class is divided into two sections, an A and B group. Instead of the teacher having to work with 20-26 students at one time, the most students any teacher sees at one time is 13. This gives students more opportunities to interact with their teacher and classmates during their live lessons and gives the teacher more time to ensure each student is on track, participating, learning and making growth. This is also helping teachers to closely monitor students' mental wellbeing while they are away from school.

Each of our teachers also has scheduled small group time or office hours so they can meet one on one with students for tutoring sessions. The elementary teachers use their small group time for guided reading. They also may use that time to administer the PALS or STAR test to their students, depending on the grade level. The middle school teachers use their time to meet individually with students that have questions about their homework or with students that are struggling in the regular virtual classroom. They may also schedule extra time to administer the STAR test for students that missed class.

Not only are a teacher's office hours used to support a student's academic needs but teachers are finding that sometimes students need some emotional support, too. And to be quite honest, this doesn't just occur during office hours. Our students reach out at all hours, day and night. Mostly this occurs with our older students that have built a bond with an adult in our building and they feel comfortable reaching out to that adult. All members of the MMSA staff have made themselves available to our students. Sometimes a student just wants to say hi and talk about



how things used to be when we were in school, sometimes they want to know if we are ever going to return to school, other times they just need a listening ear about things going on at home and other times there is trouble and they need help. It is unfortunate to be away from our students for so long but to know that so many feel comfortable reaching out for support is a credit to the caring adults in our MMSA community.

Just like at school, our students that require extra support still receive their time with our special education teachers, ESL teacher or RTI teacher. Our specialists continue to use similar resources they used in the classroom but have adapted them for the virtual classroom. Although some of our younger students that receive these services are struggling with learning online, some of our older students are less distracted by the school environment and are making a lot of growth in the virtual classroom.

When we planned our 2020-2021 orientation, it was mandatory for all MMSA students to attend because we were going to be training students on how to use the Moodle platform. If the student was going to be responsible for using Moodle, we wanted the student to practice with us so we could support them during the training. We hoped the parent would observe so they could help the child at home if there were questions but during the training, we wanted the parent to be more hands-off. This is the year that we would truly encourage our students to become independent learners and advocates for themselves. We did what we could do by providing them with a chromebook, login information, the basics for using Moodle and then sending them back home. From there we just hoped magic would happen and it did. Students logged into their classes on the first day of school. From there, teachers taught them how to use other tools in Moodle, how to use pieces of Google Classroom, how to access our online curriculum resources, how to check their grades in JMC, how to use their new email, how to log into Moodle if their chromebook wasn't working, alternative ways to turn in homework, who to contact if they were having technical issues with their chromebook, and the list goes on and on. We are asking a lot of our students but they are rising to the challenge with support and guidance from their teachers and their families. In many cases, our teachers have learned right along with our students and in some cases, our students have had to teach the teachers a thing or two!!! In any case, students know the MMSA staff are just an email, a phone call, a text message or a Snapchat away.

The virtual classroom doesn't allow teachers to walk around the classroom to provide feedback to students as they are working but the Moodle platform does have a great feature to support private feedback for students. Teachers can use the public chat to get responses from all students for a discussion question or teachers can also ask students to respond to a question in the private chat. This allows the teacher to provide individual feedback to a student on whether



they answered a question correctly or why they may have gotten the answer wrong. Even if students are answering questions orally in class, a teacher can still use the private message feature to correct a student's response instead of having to do it in front of the whole class. In the Moodle platform, assignments can also be returned to students to be redone if there were problems, not enough time was spent on the assignment or the teacher knows a student can do better. Some teachers use Google Docs for writing assignments so leaving comments for students allows them an opportunity to go back to edit and revise their assignments. Although providing written feedback takes more time than being able to provide in-the-moment feedback while at school, teachers are finding how effective that individualized attention is for students and students are spending the time to improve their work.

At the beginning of the school year, the administration team and teacher leaders discussed which assessment we would use for our local measures. Although our students were very familiar with the NWEA MAP test, eventually the decision was made to use STAR. The reasons for that decision will be discussed in the Assessment section of this document. One reason that will be discussed in this section, though, is how best to support our students. We wanted to be able to track our students' progress and we wanted to be able to share their progress with them. We ask our students to take the STAR test every fifth week. After the first test, students were given their baseline score and their winter and spring goals were set based on that score. Prior to each test, teachers remind students of their previous score and their winter or spring goal (depending on when they are taking the test). Some students have a home life that is anything but conducive to learning and test-taking so teachers try to remind students to find a 'quiet' place to take the test. After the test, teachers share the student's results, discuss their growth (or loss) and give the student a chance to reflect on their results. Again, because of distance learning, having these conversations with all of our students individually is very time consuming but our teachers and our students find them to be very meaningful.

Teachers use the results from the progress monitoring STAR tests to inform their whole group lessons and their small group instruction. They are able to see the big picture of what skills the class is struggling with along with each student's individual deficiencies. The teacher can use those results to assign differentiated independent work for each student through regular class resources or through the use of IXL.

As everyone knows, teachers hold many different roles, they are educators, nurses, librarians, counselors, detectives, custodians, photographers, party planners, travel agents, tour guides, bankers, dieticians, moms/dads, but lately, and most importantly, they have been cheerleaders! They have been finding so many ways to keep our students' energy high, to keep building their spirits when they are tired of logging in and staring at a screen each day! Our teachers



encourage our students by giving out Class Dojo points for those students doing the right thing and meeting expectations! Our teachers recognize the Virtual Learning Leaders and Virtual Rising Leaders. They make videos to congratulate the STAR Students in K4-2nd grade and the Honor Roll Students in 3rd-8th grade. STAR growth is recognized in classes in many different ways. In one class, 'snaps' are given for students that made growth, while in other classes, the roller coaster or just a simple round of applause are forms of appreciation used. Positive phone calls, text and Dojo messages are sent to parents to share great news about a student's progress, improvement or achievement. Teachers have posted 467 stories to the MMSA School Story or their own classroom story page on Class Dojo already this year to celebrate good news! Teachers have sent postcards, small gifts, coupons and supplies to their students just to encourage them to keep up the good work or to keep trying. Students love being chosen to share a virtual lunch with their teacher. It is a great time to listen to music, talk and maybe even dance to burn off the lunch calories. Virtual game time is a favorite, as well. This time away from our students has been difficult but we continue to celebrate our students and their many efforts!

Family Support

This year, more than any other, MMSA staff and our families would need to work together to have a successful year. We wanted to ensure that we provided them with as much support as possible so they felt comfortable helping their students at home. During the orientation session, although we asked our students to use the chromebook during the Moodle training, our parents were provided a chair next to their student's desk so they could watch and follow along with the steps for logging into the chromebook and going to the 'Big Blue Button' for live lessons. Workbooks for reading, math and handwriting (grades K-3rd) were handed out during the orientation session. One staff member talked to each family about the most important sections in the Student/Parent Handbook, including: attendance, grades, promotion/retention and a quick review of caring for the chromebook. The chromebook usage policy had already been sent home to all families prior to orientation for review and the signature page needed to be turned in during orientation in order for students to get their chromebook. Another teacher was able to explain the daily schedule to each student and the parent. Each student received their page of usernames and passwords, including their new MMSA email address. All students received an MMSA cloth facemask and their parents received one, also. Students and parents were part of our orientation this year because we all had to work as a team!

MMSA has an Admin Support Hotline. Ms. Bielmeier is in possession of this cell phone. Families are able to call this phone for any questions or concerns they have related to classes, teachers, attendance/absences, grades, assessments, technology, returning to school, family concerns, etc. Parents and students are able to use this phone number. Ms. Bielmeier uses this phone



number to contact parents in regards to attendance issues or to reach out to families to set up home visits, as well.

Our MMSA main office is open each day from 9am-3pm. If families don't remember the phone numbers for the Tech or Admin Support Hotlines, they can always call the main office and our secretary will take a message. The office is the main hub for students to pick up the raffle prizes and treat bags they won during our Appreciation Days in September and January. Sometimes students misplace a class workbook so they may need to stop by the school to pick up a second copy. We do have school supplies available for families that need to replenish their supply, also.

Our school social worker continues to work part-time this year. She has been a tremendous help during these difficult months. She has been able to provide resources for several of our families that have experienced homelessness due to economic hardship. One of our families is still living with family after an apartment fire many months ago. She has provided emotional support to three of our students that suddenly lost their father in November. More emotional support has been provided for several different students that have had family members recently diagnosed with some form of cancer. Supporting one mother and her son with resources after their home was burglarized was her most recent phone call. She is such a caring woman and we are so lucky to have her as a member of our MMSA family.

Like last year, MMSA has meals available for pick-up each week. Unlike last year's shelf-stable meals, these meal boxes consist of fresh meals for our students. This week's meal box consisted of chicken nuggets (6-2 oz. portions), 4 apples, 3 raisin packs, 10 oz. pasta, 12 oz. of Oats (6-2 oz. portions), shredded cheese, 1 bunch of celery (8 stalks), 1 head of broccoli (4 ½ cup portions), ½ gallon of milk (8-8 oz. portions) 6 cartons of milk, 2 sunflower seed packs. The meal box also comes with directions and recipes for making things like macaroni and cheese, pasta salad and oatmeal. Families can stop by the school to pick them up during the week. Some families that have transportation issues have also requested meal delivery which MMSA staff members have been able to provide on a weekly basis.

During the holiday season, we are fortunate to get generous donations from Hupy and Abraham for our families. They provide us with ten large boxes of food to give to our families, including a large turkey or ham, potatoes, stuffing, canned vegetables, dinner rolls, fresh fruit and dessert. To match their donation, MMSA also purchases items to fill ten boxes, as well. Then, each teacher chooses two students/families from their homeroom to receive these holiday gifts. It is an amazing feeling to deliver this holiday cheer to the families.



Also like last year, our teachers continue to contact our families weekly or bi-weekly just to check in and see how things are going. The families have been divided up among all of the teachers so families are not receiving multiple calls each week so teachers make sure to check in on each student in the family. But, teachers do reach out to parents if they notice a student is missing from class for a couple of days, just to make sure everything is ok. If a teacher isn't able to reach a family for several weeks in a row, they will often contact one of the administrators to try to make contact with the family. The parent will usually respond to the principal or assistant principal if they are calling to check in. So far this school year, MMSA staff members have contacted families over 4,000 times. Staff members document their contacts with families on a Google Spreadsheet. Sometimes a quick phone call or text message isn't added to the spreadsheet so there are probably well over 4,000 contacts with our students and families.

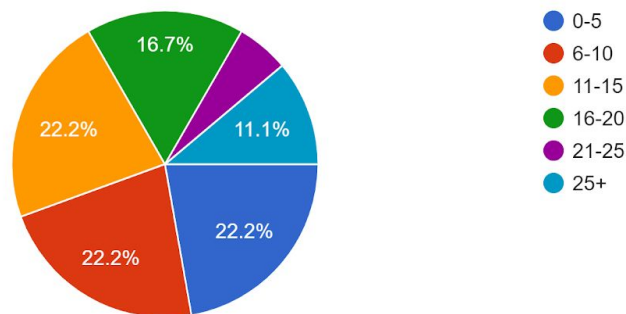
Here are the forms of communication staff members use to communicate with the families of our students.

Forms of Communication Utilized by MMSA Staff Members Percentage of Staff members that Participated									
Phone calls to families	Text Messages	Emails	Home Visits	Meal Drop-Offs	Class Dojo Message	Zoom/ Google Hang-out or other video meeting	Letter sent home	Other social media	Visit students at Daycare
100%	100%	83%	60%	25%	75%	100%	65%	30%	30%



In a typical week, how many phone calls/texts do you make to families/students?

18 responses



At the end of last year, we did not hold our final Parent/Teacher Conferences. This year, we had to find a new way to hold our conferences. Instead of just having conferences on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings, we extended the time to reach as many parents as we could. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held during the school day prior to class, during breaks, during the lunch period, during office hours, after school, in the evening, and the conferences are held for a two-week period. Teachers hold conferences via the Big Blue Button in Moodle, Google Meet, FaceTime, Zoom, phone calls, email correspondence, Class Dojo, or any other method so long as there is back and forth conversation between the teacher and the parent regarding the student's progress. During the 1st quarter, we had 87% participation for conferences. Our 2nd quarter participation was a little less at 79% but still above our goal of 75%. By transitioning to JMC, all student progress reports and report cards are now emailed to students and parents for each grading period. Report cards are also mailed home at the end of each quarter.

We will continue to support our families as much as we can. It is important for them to know that we understand how difficult this year has been, how much we are asking from them, and how much we wish things could be different. We appreciate everything they continue to do to support their children and MMSA.

Technology

During the spring of 2020, MMSA had given out school chromebooks and iPads to families that didn't have any electronic device so students could complete work in IXL or Compass Learning, the two learning programs used during the final quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. As those



items were collected at the end of the year, we knew we would need to upgrade our equipment to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year and the possibility of distance learning.

An order of 250 new chromebooks was placed with an estimated delivery date of the end of July. By the beginning of July, that delivery date had been pushed to August due to delays in shipping because of the pandemic. As the delivery date was pushed further and further away, we needed a backup plan because we couldn't start distance learning without providing our students with a chromebook. A second order for 250 chromebooks was placed with a local business and the chromebooks would be shipped from New Jersey. Due to the late date, we would no longer be able to order brand new chromebooks, so, instead this order was for refurbished chromebooks. We received the tracking number for the chromebooks and everything was on track until the most 2020-like thing happened, the chromebooks disappeared. From what we were able to find out from the shipping company, the driver of the truck probably unloaded them at a warehouse somewhere but never checked them in and they just became unaccounted for. We just didn't have the time to wait for the company to search every warehouse for a pallet of unaccounted for chromebooks so the owner of the local business used his connections in the Milwaukee and Chicago area to purchase small orders of 25-30 refurbished chromebooks at a time until we had enough chromebooks for all of our students. The original order of brand new chromebooks did eventually arrive in October and we will use those chromebooks for ACCESS and Forward Exam testing this year and in the future, we will use them for one-to-one technology at school so students do not have to bring their own chromebooks back and forth to school. They will have a chromebook at school and one at home. Although acquiring these chromebooks for this school year was a frustrating experience, it was necessary so all of our students had the proper equipment to be successful.

Any time you have over 200 children using technology, there are bound to be issues. Because of that, we made the decision to designate one of our staff members as our MMSA Tech Support. Ms. Beckley, MMSA's music teacher turned technology savior, trained our students and parents on the basics of the Moodle platform during orientation. During that time she also shared her Technology Support Hotline phone number. This was a new school cell phone specifically for families to call when they were having technology issues with their chromebooks. The first few days of school, students and parents called because they just needed help logging in because they had forgotten the process. After that, issues with microphones, video cameras, wifi, black screens, log-in issues, etc. never seem to stop. Ms. Beckley travels the city each day, stopping at our students' home to replace chromebooks, troubleshoot issues and reboot wifi hotspots. On average, Ms. Beckley visits 15-20 homes per week. She also has administrative access to the students' accounts so many times she is also able to troubleshoot issues remotely and can save herself a trip to the student's home. It is an exhausting task but she continues to



provide so much support for our families and because of that, we have been able to avoid major attendance issues due to technology problems.

We knew many of our families would not have WiFi access at home so just supplying them with a chromebook would not be helpful. To start the year, we purchased 10 WiFi hotspots to provide to families that had no access to the internet at home. Once we received grant money, we used some of that money to purchase 20 more WiFi hotspots. We have found there has been an ebb and flow with internet access for some families throughout the year thus far. We try to accommodate each family as quickly as possible when we become aware of their lack of internet service.

If we can't get to families that lose internet access or we are currently out of WiFi hotspots, we have supplied our families with a list of local libraries, their addresses, phone numbers and their business hours. We encourage families to take advantage of the free WiFi at the local library until we can make it to their home.

The majority of our teachers had document cameras in their classrooms and they were able to take those home with them to set up their home classrooms. With those document cameras, teachers are able to easily display an object or text onto the screen for students to see. This is especially helpful for the teachers of younger students to model letter and sentence writing. Science teachers have displayed at-home demonstrations and experiments. Manipulatives for math class are also displayed with the use of the document camera.

With the support of grant money, we purchased a pen tablet for each of the MMSA teachers. A pen tablet is a computer input device that enables the teacher to write or draw with a stylus similar to the way they would with a pencil and paper. Although teachers could create a similar image by writing on paper and displaying it with the document camera, the pen tablet allows the teacher to save the images and those 'notes' can be uploaded for students to review at a later time.

Beyond Moodle being used to host live lessons for reading, math, science, social studies, special education sessions, ESL classes, RTI sessions, homeroom and small group time, teachers also use Moodle to post their students' independent work for each day or the week. Moodle can be used as a communication tool between teachers and students, similar to instant messaging, also.

STAR (K-8) and PALS (K4-2nd) are being used as our main assessments and progress monitoring tools, but there are a couple of other progress monitoring programs also being used by our teachers. The Pearson product, aimswebPLUS is used to monitor progress for all of our



students in special education and RTI. This system is based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment using short, accurate measures for reading, math, spelling and writing. Many reading teachers utilize the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems to complete running records to track their students' progress. Although this task is more difficult during distance learning, the valuable gained from this task is crucial to supporting each student's individual reading needs.

To sit in front of a webcam and lecture students for 45 minutes for a lesson is not going to get students to log in day after day so teachers have to find ways to make lessons meaningful and engaging. The use of a variety of resources is the best way to enhance a lesson and catch a student's attention. Here are just a few of the websites or programs that teachers use to strengthen their lessons with the use of models, video clips, tutorials, virtual manipulatives, read-alouds, real-world examples and current events: ConnectEd (McGraw Hill), YouTube, Starfall, Brainpop/Brainpop Jr., Storyline Online, KidsWeatherReport, ToyTheater, Stemscope, National Public Radio, Wardsworld, PBS Science, WIDA (practice for ACCESS testing) and DPI website (practice for Forward Exam).

Using data gathered during progress monitoring to differentiate instruction for groups of students and individual students is crucial to the growth of each student. IXL has been used at MMSA for many years. Teachers can assign skills for students to work on based on their deficiencies discovered during progress monitoring. Teachers can also assign students to practice skills that were just covered during a class lesson as independent practice. Epic reading, Readworks, Reading A-Z, RazKids, and NewELA are all ELA resources teachers use to assign differentiated text levels to students. A couple of our teachers have started using Boom Cards with their students. They are interactive, self-checking, digital activities that are assigned by the teacher. Students are shown one question at a time and get immediate feedback on their answers. Prodigy is a math website and Freckle is a math/ELA website that allows students to play games, answer questions and solve problems based on their pretest scores or based on skills assigned by the teacher. All of these sites or programs are utilized by our teachers to meet the individual needs of our students in the digital classroom.

All of our students (K4-8th grade) are assigned independent work. Some teachers prefer to assign work daily while others prefer to assign work that needs to be completed weekly. Regardless of how it is assigned, there are a variety of resources used for this work. Many of the resources already listed above are used, but teachers also create assessments in Google Docs or assign student writing or work to be submitted through Google Docs, Sheets, Slides or Forms. Flipgrid allows students to share their writing and other work by recording a short video of themselves with their teacher and classmates. Teachers also assign work in the student



workbooks that were given out during orientation. Once the student completes the work, they simply take a picture of the page and upload it to Moodle or their student portfolio in Class Dojo.

So many people are worried about learning loss from the pandemic and students being away from school for so long. Sure, there will be some academic learning loss for most students but, ultimately, they have probably learned more lifelong lessons related to technology, being independent learners and problem solving that hopefully it won't take long to make up that learning loss.

Attendance

Learning happens in the classroom, whether that is a physical classroom or a virtual classroom. We all know that so we have stressed the importance of attendance to our MMSA parents and students all year!

During the weeks leading up to the start of the school year, we reviewed DPI's recommendations regarding attendance policies for distance learning. We wrote our attendance policy based on many of those recommendations. Our students are marked present for a school day if they attend a live lesson, complete independent work or review a lesson they missed with their teacher via phone call or virtual meeting on that same day. Although a student could be counted present toward the overall attendance for the school day and not attend any of their live lessons, we knew that would negatively impact their learning in their classes. To prevent that from happening, we included attendance as part of their grade for each class because when students show up, they will be learning by just being in the virtual classroom. Students are also graded on participation, independent work completion and tests/quizzes.

There are many ways that attendance is celebrated with our students. Any class that has 100% attendance on any given day is acknowledged on Class Dojo and rewarded with a virtual Perfect Attendance Award. At the end of each quarter, students that had perfect attendance for that quarter receive a printed certificate, free pizza coupon and are recognized on Class Dojo. Teachers do shout-outs for the students in their class that attend all of their live lessons each week. Those shout-outs are done in class and also on the teacher's Class Dojo page.

To encourage attendance, we also use incentives for our students. The first incentive that was introduced to our students was the Monthly Attendance Challenge. This challenge is for each class to compete against one another. Updates are provided on Class Dojo each Monday. At the end of each month, the class that has the highest attendance rate is declared the winner. Each student in the winning class can stop by the MMSA main office to pick up a treat bag filled



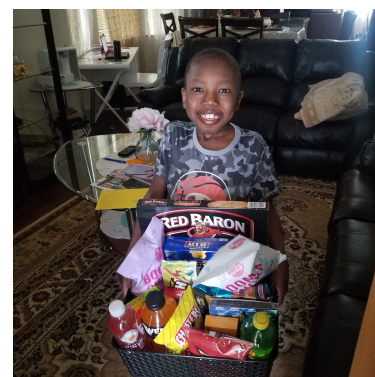
with chips, juice, a granola bar, and candy. Then, each student in the class is entered into a raffle for the grand prize. Each day during the month the student is marked present is the number of times the student is entered into the raffle so the more they are 'in' school, the higher their chances of winning. The grand prize is some type of goodie basket that always seems to put a big smile on the winner's face!



November's Breakfast Basket



December's Hot Cocoa Basket



January's Movie Night Basket

Another incentive we have used to encourage attendance is an individual incentive. Any student that attends each of their live lessons for all 5 days of the week are entered into a raffle drawing. Two raffle drawings take place on Monday morning for the previous week. One raffle is for students in K4-3rd grade and one raffle is for students in 4th-8th grade. Each winner from the raffle wins a \$25 gift card that Ms. Bielmeier delivers to the student's home.

Our biggest struggle with attendance has been Friday's. We have designated our Friday mornings to be for homeroom and the rest of the day is for assessments, small group instruction, tutoring sessions or completing makeup work. Many of our students are not attending their homeroom because it isn't a graded class. This is one reason we hosted two Appreciation Days earlier in the year. We have tried theme days, like: Superhero Day, Backwards Day, Sports Day, Crazy Hair Day but none were successful in boosting Friday attendance. The Monthly Attendance Challenge and the \$25 gift cards have done little to encourage the students that don't usually attend. Recently, we started Secret Word Homerooms. Each week for four weeks, students need to attend their homeroom to collect a secret word. Students need to keep track of those secret words and after the fourth week, they will have collected four words that create a unique sentence. Once they have their sentence, they will email, text, send a Dojo message, Snapchat, etc their secret sentence to Ms. Bielmeier with their name and grade level. If they have indeed collected the correct sentence, they will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift card. Again, it didn't increase attendance as much as we



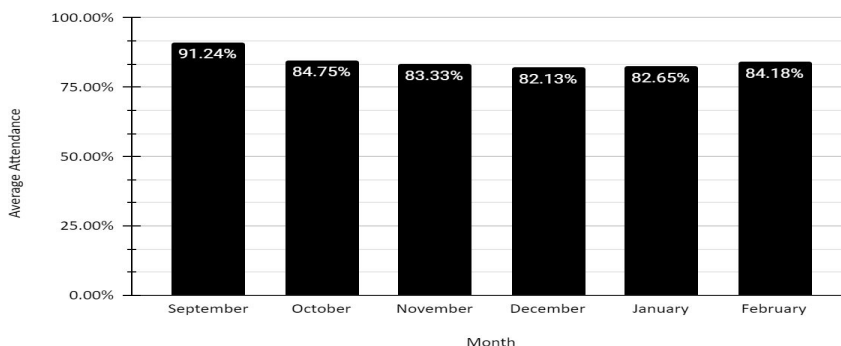
hoped it would, but we will continue to try new ways to draw our students to their homeroom on Fridays.

Dealing with attendance isn't just acknowledging students for attending their classes and offering incentives, there are also a tremendous amount of phone calls and parent contacts being made by teachers, the social worker and administrators. In most cases, parents will respond positively to the phone calls made by the teachers, however, there are some cases where a parent stops responding to the teacher and then an administrator will get involved. Like was mentioned before, the parent will usually respond to Mr. Alper or Ms. Bielmeier to try to rectify the situation. What we find when we call home is there are so many of our students that are home alone or left with older siblings. Unless the student is self-motivated to do well in school, they aren't likely to want to log into their classes each day. If the parent is able to answer the phone while they are at work, they may call home to talk to their child but oftentimes, the parent doesn't talk to their child until they get home and then the child has missed another day of school.

MMSA's attendance is taken on a Google spreadsheet by teachers each day. That spreadsheet can be updated at any time by teachers. The following morning, Ms. Bielmeier transfers that attendance into JMC for DPI reporting. This gives Ms. Bielmeier a chance to review individual student attendance and spend the first hour of each day making parent phone calls regarding attendance issues.

Currently, MMSA's overall attendance is 84.71% for the school year. This falls well short of our goal of 92% but we will continue to work to improve our daily attendance with our students. Setting goals for distance learning, when it was new to all of us, left us throwing darts into the darkness. We weren't sure whether students would log in each day. We achieved an attendance rate of 91% in September so we strive to hit that mark again through many phone calls, news ways of motivating our students and hopefully returning to the classroom.

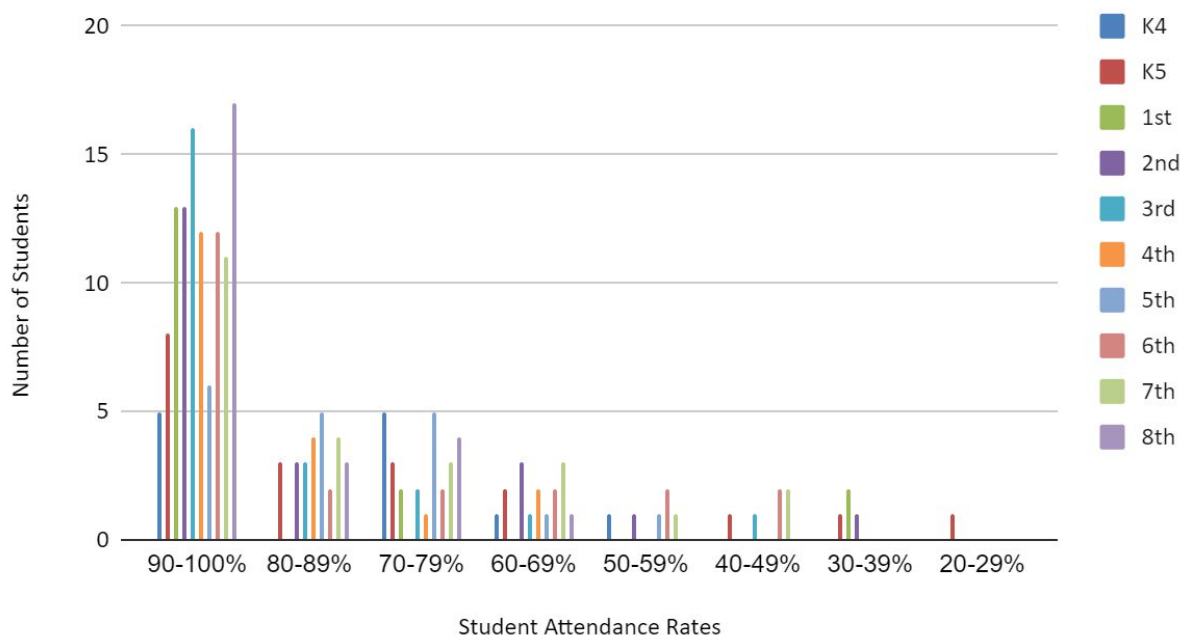
Average Attendance Per Month





Below you will see the student attendance rates by class. The majority (56.5%) of our students have attendance rates of over 90%. Twenty-six students have (100%) perfect attendance. When you look at the chart, you will see that 70% (140) of our students have attendance rates over 80%. Unfortunately, though, there are some students that struggle with attendance. Of the 17 students that have attended less than 60% of the school days, 53% (9) of those students come from only 4 families.

MMSA Student Attendance Rates



MMSA Student Attendance Rates By Grade										
	K4	K5	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
90-100%	5	8	13	13	16	12	6	12	11	17
80-89%	0	3	0	3	3	4	5	2	4	3
70-79%	5	3	2	0	2	1	5	2	3	4
60-69%	1	2	0	3	1	2	1	2	3	1
50-59%	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0
40-49%	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
30-39%	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
20-29%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Students	12	19	17	21	23	19	18	22	24	25



Assessments

When thinking about our local measures for this school year, a lot of thought went into making the decision. Our students have become so familiar with the format, length, schedule and scores of the NWEA MAP test that we would have continued with that test if we were in a regular school year. Starting the school year virtually, though, made us reconsider using that test for several reasons. First, the test is not timed. While our students are in school, they take the test very seriously, many use several class periods (at least 90 minutes) to complete each test (reading and math) and we were afraid that the same time and effort wouldn't be given to the test if it was taken at home with so many distractions. This would negatively impact the scores so many of our students are used to seeing after completing their test and we didn't want them to lose hope. Secondly, while in school, we are able to use the NWEA MAP lockdown browser on the computers while students take the test. This prevents them from any distractions while they complete the test and prevents them from doing any 'research' for possible answers, for example: looking up the meaning of a vocabulary word, checking in with friends, etc. Lastly, it is just a long test. The reading test consists of about 45 questions and the math test is about 52 questions for our 3rd-8th grade students. That is a lot to ask of students while they sit in their homes, even if we attempted to break the test into different test sessions.

The other test we considered was the STAR test. We have used the STAR test for progress monitoring for many years at MMSA so our students are familiar with this test, also. Some teachers used the results more than other teachers so not all students understood the meaning of their results so that was one downfall to using this test compared to NWEA MAP. The test is shorter than the NWEA MAP test, though, with only 30 questions. It is a timed test so it can be taken in one class period for all grade levels. When students open the STAR test, it opens in a new window so they are less likely to browse back and forth between windows or tabs due to the limited time they have for questions. Another feature we liked about STAR is that we could use it for progress monitoring throughout the entire year, not just at the beginning, middle and end of the year.

After considering the pros and cons of each test, we chose to use the STAR test as our local measure for the 2020-2021 school year. Once we chose the STAR test, we had to consider how much growth we would expect our students to make by the end of the school year. We looked at our data from the previous two years and considered how much growth students made from the beginning of the school year until the end of the school year. Then we considered the amount of instructional time students received during a regular school year compared to the instructional time they will receive this year during distance learning. From there, we were able to write our goals for Early Literacy growth, reading growth and math growth for our students. This is the



first time we have used STAR to create goals for our students so we will see if we set attainable goals for our students based on their baseline scores.

Our students took their first STAR test at the end of September/beginning of October. This gave the baseline for the school year. From there, each student's beginning proficiency was recorded and their spring goal was set. Students take the STAR test approximately every fifth week. The assessment calendar for the school year was sent to teachers at the beginning of the school year and follow-up reminders are sent to remind teachers of upcoming assessment dates. From there, teachers choose one of their live lessons during the STAR assessment week to have the students take the test. If students are absent on the day of the test, depending on the grade level of the student, teachers either schedule a makeup time with the teacher or ask students to take the test independently some time that week. Students that take the test with their teacher usually take more time on their test and score higher than when they take it independently so we definitely encourage makeup testing with the teacher as much as possible. Unfortunately, due to absences, there are still some students that fail to complete the test during the assessment window.

Being at school and not being able to eliminate every distraction for our students while they are testing is frustrating because you want them to do their absolute best but not being able to control the environments our students are now testing in at home is beyond words. It is unfortunate to know that most do not have a quiet space in their home for 'school'. Many have siblings that also have class at the same time so there are multiple teachers talking at the same time and many students do not use headphones or earbuds. More than likely, the tv is on, younger siblings are playing, parents are going about their day, and there definitely isn't a lack of distractions. Some days are definitely better than other days for testing and that is why you will see several pieces of data below regarding our student's STAR results for the first semester. Not only have we found that the many distractions at home play a part in how a student does on their STAR test on any given day, we have also discovered that lags in internet service can also negatively impact STAR results. Some of our students have had their tests freeze in the middle of taking a test. When their score is posted, we question why the score is so low. Sometimes it is because the student was distracted and just clicked through the questions so they could be finished but sometimes the student has reported that the test froze and kicked them out. In other cases, students would report that a question wouldn't fully load so they were unable to choose an answer before the time ran out for the question, subsequently the test counts that answer as incorrect, resulting in a lower score.

In Table 1 you will see data for the number of students that met their target goal for the winter. Once the student took their first test in the fall, their baseline score was established. From there



the spring goal was calculated based on the goals given in the MMSA Learning Memo. The target goal for the winter test was to meet half of their overall spring goal.

As a reminder, our K5 and 1st grade students take the STAR Early Literacy/Numeracy test which includes reading and math skills so they do not take the STAR Math test. Without knowing whether an adult would be available to help read sections of the math test to our youngest students, we could not ensure that only their math skills were being tested instead of their ability to read, as well. Because of that, we chose to just administer the STAR Early Literacy/Numeracy Test.

STAR Data Table 1							
STAR READING K5-8th Grade Based on Fall Baseline Scores				STAR MATH K5-8th Grade Based on Fall Baseline Scores			
Grade	N	Met Target STAR Growth in Winter 2021		Grade	N	Met Target STAR Growth in Winter 2021	
		N	%			N	%
K5	16	10	62.5%	K5	NA	NA	NA
1st	15	6	40.0%	1st	NA	NA	NA
2nd	21	10	47.6%	2nd	21	11	52.4%
3rd	23	10	43.5%	3rd	22	9	40.9%
4th	17	9	52.9%	4th	19	14	73.7%
5th	17	8	47.1%	5th	18	9	50.0%
6th	22	13	59.1%	6th	21	9	42.9%
7th	24	13	54.2%	7th	24	10	41.7%
8th	25	10	40.0%	8th	25	13	52.0%
Total	178	89	50%	Total	149	75	50.3%



During our most recent data meeting, many of our teachers were disappointed that more of their students hadn't met their target winter goals. But, when we looked more closely at the data and looked at how many of our students had made growth since the beginning of the school year, teachers were a lot more confident in the strategies they were using and were hopeful that by continuing to provide engaging activities for students, differentiating independent work, meeting with students in small groups, following up with students that miss class and increasing the rigor of their live lessons even more, their students would continue to make progress and meet their goals by the spring.

In table 2 you will see the number of students that have made positive growth toward their spring goal. This helps us to know which students are on the right track. It also helps us to pinpoint the students that are struggling so we continue to reach out to them. These students often have attendance concerns so more contacts with families are being made to ensure the student is in class each day. We are also attempting to make sure students are showing up for small group lessons or one-on-one tutoring support with their teacher. If the student lacks motivation, we have to find an adult that can connect or reconnect with the student to draw them back into the school environment or work out some type of incentive for showing up each day. Attendance matters because learning matters so we will find a way!

STAR Data Table 2							
STAR READING K5-8th Grade Based on Fall Baseline Scores				STAR MATH K5-8th Grade Based on Fall Baseline Scores			
Grade	N	Made Positive Growth Since Fall Testing		Grade	N	Made Positive Growth Since Fall Testing	
		N	%			N	%
K5	16	13	81.3%	K5	NA	NA	NA
1st	15	13	86.7%	1st	NA	NA	NA
2nd	21	19	90.5%	2nd	21	20	95.2%
3rd	23	17	73.9%	3rd	22	16	72.7%



4th	17	14	82.4%	4th	19	18	94.7%
5th	17	13	76.5%	5th	18	15	83.3%
6th	22	14	63.6%	6th	21	17	81.0%
7th	24	18	75.0%	7th	24	19	79.2%
8th	25	18	72.0%	8th	25	24	96.0%
Total	178	136	76.4%	Total	149	126	84.6%

PALS testing is once again being completed by our K4-2nd grade teachers. There were certainly some conversations among the elementary teachers about the logistical details about how this test would be given remotely considering several parts of this test need to be given one-on-one with a student using materials provided in the PALS resource binders. Teachers created online Google docs that could be shared with their students so the teacher and student could both see the screen at the same time. But, other parts of the test were not possible to administer remotely. Representatives from PALS did recognize the need for changes to how the test could be administered for schools that were using distance learning and our teachers have taken advantage of the Nonstandard Remote option. This option is similar to the traditional version of the test, however, it makes all of the tasks of the test optional so teachers are able to skip any task that is too difficult to administer remotely. The nonstandard remote option will still give a summed score for each student as long as the teacher enters scores for all screening tasks.

Just like with the STAR test, the PALS test has presented its challenges for our students. Because this test is being administered to our youngest students, they often have the most difficult time staying focused on the task at hand, especially if they have to stay after class and none of the other students do. Our younger students also rely on older siblings and their parents to help them log into their classes each day so remembering to log in at a different time for a separate test session is very difficult so the teachers have to send many, many reminders. PALS testing would normally take just a couple of weeks if we were at school but in this virtual world, it takes 2-3 times as long to 'catch' all of the students and complete the many parts of the PALS test.

In the next several tables, you will see the data for our PALS testing. The data for K5, 1st and 2nd grade students that have completed their testing is displayed up to the point when this report was written.



In K5, 10 out of the 16 (62.5%) students that have been tested have met the winter benchmark for recognizing their lowercase letters. Eight (50%) of the students have met the benchmark for recognizing letter sounds and eight (50%) have also met the benchmark for their winter spelling. Considering the circumstances, these K5 students are making a lot of progress in their virtual classrooms.

PALS Scores-K5 Students										
Student	Fall Group Rhyme (5)	Winter Group Rhyme (9)	Fall Group Beginning Sounds (5)	Winter Group Beginning Sounds (9)	Fall Lowercase Alphabet (12)	Winter Lowercase Alphabet (23)	Fall Letter Sounds (5)	Winter Letter Sounds (17)	Fall Spelling (2)	Winter Spelling (10)
1*	2	5	3	2	19	24	11	15	6	10
2	8	10	9	10	24	26	17	19	10	11
3	9	9	8	NA	3	6	0	1	0	NA
4	9	10	3	5	22	23	9	11	8	9
5	10	10	10	10	24	26	19	22	11	16
6	5	6	7	10	21	25	13	19	10	10
7	10	10	10	9	26	26	23	24	10	13
8	2	3	3	6	12	13	9	8	0	0
9	10	10	9	10	26	26	19	25	14	18
10	1	NA	4	NA	15	21	8	13	1	NA
11	2	NA	3	NA	3	16	2	4	0	NA
12*	10	10	9	10	25	26	22	22	10	14
13	10	10	10	10	26	26	17	19	13	12
14	5	8	5	4	11	9	3	3	1	2
15	4	9	4	NA	21	26	9	21	7	NA
16	5	NA	4	NA	4	6	3	2	0	NA
* Denotes a student that receives ESL services										
** Denotes a student that receives Special Education services										

Our first graders have been actively engaged in class and some have already made some big gains from their fall spelling scores to their winter spelling scores and others are ready to make the leap. Currently, 6 of the 14 (42.9%) students tested have met the winter spelling benchmark but where the first grade teacher has noticed the most growth is in the number of first grade sight words that students are now able to recognize. In the fall, only 4 students recognized any of the words on the first grade list and now in winter, there are 10 (62.5%) of the students that



met the winter benchmark. One of our first graders was able to read 19 words from the third grade list. They are definitely a busy bunch in the first grade classroom!

PALS Scores-1st Grade Students

Student	Fall Spelling (10)	Winter Spelling (24)	Fall First Grade Word List (0)	Winter First Grade Word List (7)	Fall Beginni ng Sounds (4)	Winter Beginnin g Sounds (4)	Fall Ending Sound s (4)	Winter Ending Sounds (4)	Fall Digraph s (4)	Winter Digraph s (4)	Fall Blends (4)	Winter Blends (4)	Fall Short Vowel s (CVC) (4)	Winter Short Vowel s (CVC) (4)	Fall CVC e (4)	Winter CVCe (4)
1*	10	29	10	15	4	4	3	4	1	4	0	1	2	4	0	2
1*	3	20	NA	10	1	4	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	1
2	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4*	21	26	NA	11	4	4	4	4	2	4	1	3	4	4	0	0
5	23	42	17	19	4	4	4	4	3	4	1	4	4	4	0	3
6	12	15	NA	14	4	4	3	4	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
7	24	26	NA	11	4	3	4	4	3	1	2	4	4	4	0	0
8	9	10	NA	9	4	4	3	3	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0
9	0	7	NA	NA	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10*	30	38	9	19	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	2
11**	4	4	NA	NA	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12*	13	16	NA	12	3	4	4	3	1	4	0	2	2	3	0	0
13	16	12	NA	NA	4	3	4	4	0	1	0	1	3	3	0	0
14	39	49	20	19(3rd gr)	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3

* Denotes a student that receives ESL services

** Denotes a student that receives Special Education services

Although 13 of the 15 (87%) second grade students that have been tested have made growth in their overall spelling score, many have started at a very low level. As first graders last year, the classroom was often disrupted by negative behaviors. Students did not come to school ready to learn and it kept others from doing their best. During the second semester, the students had finally found their rhythm and started meeting classroom expectations but then March came and we had to send everyone home. Missing those last months of school plus the difficult start to the school year for them has left them struggling to catch up. All of the students are scheduled for small group sessions with the teacher throughout the week, our ESL students have two sessions per week with our ESL teacher, one student was just identified as needing special



education services so he is now seeing one of our special education teachers and six others meet with our RTI teacher three times per week.

PALS Scores- 2nd Grade Students

Student	Fall Spelling Score (20)	Winter Spelling Score (28)	Fall 1st grade word list (15)	Winter 1st grade word list (16)	Fall 2nd grade word list (0)	Fall Third Grade Word List	Winter Third Grade Word List	Winter 2nd grade word list (12)	Winter pre-primer accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter Primer Accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter 1st Grade Accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter 2nd Grade Accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter 3rd Grade Accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter 4th Grade Accuracy (%) / WPM	Winter 5th Grade Accuracy (%) / WPM
1*	35	52	18	19	20	19	19	20	-	-	-	-	-	97/69	-
2	13	19	19	18	13	15	NA	10	-	-	-	95/42	-	-	-
3	41	52	20	20	20	20	19	19	-	-	-	-	-	97/80	-
4	10	17	11	11	NA	NA	NA	NA	100/87	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6*	8	7	10	18	NA	16	NA	13	-	-	-	92/58	-	-	-
7	6	10	0	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	7	3	0	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9**	12	15	4	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	15	24	0	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	48	54	20	20	20	20	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	98/91
12*	10	11	3	7	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	0	8	0	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	6	13	0	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15*	8	19	5	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* Denotes a student that receives ESL services

** Denotes a student that receives Special Education services

The next assessment that we will tackle is the ACCESS test for our ESL students. Testing will begin on Tuesday, February 23rd. Only 2-3 families will test each day so the maximum number of students in the building on any given day will be eight. ACCESS testing for our 30 students will take about ten total days, unless we have makeup testing to complete.

Even as we finish our preparation for the ACCESS testing, we are already thinking about the logistics for the Forward Exam for our 131 3rd-8th grade students. We will plan to start the Forward Exam on Tuesday, March 23rd so we can check for any technical issues on Monday, March 22nd before bringing any students back to school for testing.



The past 11 months have been anything but easy. Each day is a new challenge when having to make decisions about a situation that no one has ever experienced before. But, it has been beneficial to rely on the connections with other administrators and teachers in the area to see how they are handling things as we all move forward. We want what is best for our students and families, but we also consider what is best for our staff, too. We know that we will get through this together (from a distance) and when we can all be back in the building together, our MMSA family will be much stronger because of what we have all had to endure.

The administration team and staff members of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy have been working very hard during the 2020-2021 school year to engage our students during distance learning, provide them with quality lessons and support families during a difficult time. Our students work hard 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 *Evident Change* 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 2020-2021 school year and what we are still working to achieve with the remainder of the year.

-MMSA and Maestro Administration Team