

**2021–22  
PROGRAMMATIC  
PROFILE AND  
EDUCATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI  
ACADEMY**

September 2022



## **ABOUT EVIDENT CHANGE**

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This report includes text from Downtown Montessori’s parent/student handbook and/or staff handbook. Evident Change obtained permission from the school to use text from the handbook for the purposes of this report.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FOR DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 2021–22

This is the 24th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, one of seven schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee during the 2021–22 school year. It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and Evident Change.

Evident Change has determined the following, based on the information gathered and discussed in the report.

### I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

Downtown Montessori met all the educational provisions in its contract with the City of Milwaukee and subsequent CSRC requirements. See Appendix A for a list of contract provisions and report page references.

### II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

#### A. LOCAL MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

##### 1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

The CSRC requires the school to track elementary student progress in literacy, writing, math, and special education goals throughout the year to identify students who need additional help and to help teachers develop strategies to improve students' academic performance. This year, Downtown Montessori's local measures of academic progress for elementary students resulted in the following outcomes.

##### a. *Literacy*

Downtown Montessori used two different literacy assessments for students in first through eighth grades: a Fountas and Pinnell passage for students in first through third grades, and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) for students in fourth through eighth grades.

- For first through third graders, 24 of 26 (92.3%) students who scored below grade level and 56 of 59 (94.9%) students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level on the spring Fountas and Pinnell assessment. No student was above grade level in the fall. The school's goal was for 75.0% and 80.0% of students below and at grade level, respectively, to gain at least half a grade level by the spring and for 100.0% of students above grade level to remain above grade level.
- Of the 85 fourth- through eighth-grade students who took both fall and spring assessments, 84 (98.8%) met their literacy goal based on their functional and grade-level status using the QRI. The school's goal was that 90.0% would make progress depending on their fall assessment.

Overall, 164 (96.5%) of 170 first- through eighth-grade students who were considered in the school's outcomes made progress on their literacy skills during the school year.

#### b. *Math*

This year, Downtown Montessori had separate assessment methods for first- through sixth-grade students and for seventh- and eighth-grade students. First- through sixth-grade students were assessed on grade-level Montessori sequential math skills. This was supplemented with at least three grade-level Common Core State Standards math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Seventh- and eighth-grade students were assessed using IXL, an evaluation program, resulting in a grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core.

- By the end of the year, 131 (97.8%) of 134 first- through sixth-grade students reached or maintained proficiency or showed improvement in 60.0% of grade-level math skills. The school's goal was 100.0%.
- Of the 36 seventh- and eighth-grade students tested in the fall, 23 (63.9%) either improved by half a grade level if they were below grade level or maintained above-grade-level status in the spring. The school's goal was 80.0% who tested at or below grade level would improve at least half a grade level and 100.0% who tested above grade level would remain above grade level.

Overall, 154 (90.6%) of 170 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math.

#### c. *Writing*

Writing skills were assessed using the Six Traits of Writing. Overall, 132 of 171 (77.2%) first- through eighth-grade students either increased their fall average writing level score by at least a half-point (0.5) on the spring writing sample if they scored below 4.0 or maintained or improved a score of at least 4.0 from the fall to spring. The school's goal was 100.0%.

#### d. *Special Education*

The school's local measure goal for special education was that students would meet at least 60% of their individualized education program goals at the time of their annual review. This year, 57.1% of the students met this goal.

## **2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress**

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, Downtown Montessori identified measurable education-related outcomes in attendance, parental involvement, and special education student records. Of the three goals pertaining to the secondary measures, the school met two (parent participation and special education).

## **B. YEAR-TO-YEAR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ON STANDARDIZED TESTS**

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction allowed parents to “opt their child out” of the requirement to take any standardized tests for the 2020–21 school year. This resulted in varied completion rates across schools and made it difficult to have adequate or comparable cohorts to measure or report year-to-year progress from 2020–21 to 2021–22.

## **C. CSRC SCHOOL SCORECARD**

Because year-to-year student progress was not measured this year, the CSRC scorecard contains partial outcome data. The school's score should not be compared with the score for any previous or subsequent year. Downtown Montessori scored 81.7% of the 59.0 possible scorecard points.

## **III. SURVEY/INTERVIEW RESULTS**

Every other year, Evident Change conducts interviews or surveys with parents, board members, teachers, and students to obtain feedback on their perceptions about the school. Some key results include the following.

- There were 104 surveys completed, representing 101 (63.1%) of 160 families.
  - » Most (89.4%) parents would recommend this school to other parents.
  - » A majority (96.1%) of parents rated the school's overall contribution to their child's learning as excellent or good.
- All five (100.0%) members of the school's board of directors participated in interviews.
  - » All rated the school as excellent or good overall.

- » The main suggestions made by board members for improving the school were to formalize channels of communication between staff, board members, and the community; physically expand the school; and clearly delineate responsibilities within administration.
- A total of 10 instructional staff participated in interviews.
  - » All the teachers who were interviewed rated the school’s progress toward becoming a high-performing school as either excellent or good.
  - » All teachers who were interviewed rated the students’ academic progress as excellent or good.
  - » When instructional staff were asked to rate the importance of various reasons for continuing to teach at the school, educational methodology/curriculum approach was rated the highest, with 90% indicating it as very important.
- A total of 35 seventh and eighth graders (who were present the day the survey was administered) participated.
  - » Most (82.8%) students agreed or strongly agreed that the marks they get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair.
  - » About three quarters (74.3%) of seventh and eighth graders indicated they improved in English/reading, and 71.4% indicated they improved in math.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Downtown Montessori addressed the recommendations from its 2020–21 programmatic profile and educational performance report. On the basis of the results of this report and in consultation with school staff, Evident Change recommends that the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2022–23 school year.

- Continue to support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.
- Continue to maintain accuracy of reporting monitoring data.

## V. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND REPORTING

This report covers the 24th year of Downtown Montessori’s operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements, and this year it has met or substantially met all the applicable contract requirements. Based on contract compliance as well as the school’s trend data, the recommendation from Evident Change is that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting.

Additionally, Evident Change recommends that Downtown Montessori be awarded another five-year contract to operate as a charter school authorized by the City of Milwaukee.



# I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee and Evident Change. 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, Evident Change:

- Conducted an initial session with the school to collect information related to contract requirements and to draft a learning memo for the new school year, and conducted an in-person year-end interview to review progress about recommendations and changes that occurred during the year;
- Visited the school to conduct a random review of special education files;
- Surveyed or interviewed parents, board members, and a sample of teachers and students to gather feedback about the school;
- Attended a school board of directors meeting with CSRC representatives to provide an update regarding compliance with the City of Milwaukee's academic expectations and contract requirements; and
- Collected and analyzed data submitted by the school to complete an annual report.

# II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy

2507 S. Graham St.

Milwaukee, WI 53207

**Telephone:** (414) 744-6005

**Website:** <http://downtownmontessori.com>

**Head of School:** Virginia Flynn

**Executive Director:** Ian Spanic

Downtown Montessori is in the Bay View neighborhood near the Port of Milwaukee on the southeast side of the city.

## **A. DESCRIPTION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY**

### **1. MISSION**

Downtown Montessori's mission is to create a Montessori environment where each child's early experiences with learning will help them become a self-confident, competent, and cooperative adult. The philosophy is based on the belief that children learn best when they are at ease and comfortable. The key is to see the hidden nature of the child at given stages of development and to design an environment that will fulfill the child's innate potential.

### **2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

Downtown Montessori returned to in-person classes this school year. The school delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society. Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities.

Teachers were asked about the methodology/curriculum and program of instruction during year-end interviews. All 10 teachers who were interviewed considered the educational methodology/curriculum approach a very important reason for continuing to teach at the school. Evident Change also conducted a parent survey. One of the things most often identified by parents about what they like most about the school is the educational approach.

Although Downtown Montessori returned to in-person classes this school year, it should be noted that the residual impacts of COVID-19 continue to affect many families, and the school continues to support families through the transition.

## B. SCHOOL STRUCTURE

### 1. LEADERSHIP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS<sup>1</sup>

The school's leadership includes a head of school, principal, and executive director who all manage the school's day-to-day activities.

The Downtown Montessori Academy Board of Directors provides strategic leadership in support of the school's mission, philosophy, and goals. This year, the board had five members: a president, a vice president, a treasurer, and two directors. The board makes long-term decisions, provides financial management, and communicates regularly with the executive director and head of school to ensure the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of the charter and that the school is a viable organization.

The board met with the CSRC program analyst and the Evident Change program specialist regarding a general update, including recent information from the City of Milwaukee and general roles and responsibilities of board members.

This year, Evident Change conducted phone interviews with all five (100.0%) board members. All five said they participated in strategic planning for the school, attended 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. All of them rated the school as excellent or good overall. Some suggestions made by board members to improve the school included formalizing channels of communication between staff, board members, and the community; physical expansion; and clearly delineating responsibilities within the administrative team.

Another survey conducted by Evident Change asked parents to identify what they like least about the school, as a way to inform areas of improvement. One area that parents identified as needing improvement was communication from school leadership about policies and decision making, as well as general responsiveness and presence.

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<sup>1</sup> This information comes from the fall and spring interviews with school leadership and the school's website, <http://downtownmontessori.com>

## 2. AREAS OF INSTRUCTION<sup>2</sup>

Downtown Montessori is divided into four levels of programming. The Children’s House contains the Montessori primary program, which is open to children ages 3 to 6 and covers grades K3, K4, and K5.<sup>3</sup> Children’s House students begin to acquire knowledge through the Montessori Curriculum, which is made up of five areas of study: practical life, sensorial learning, language, mathematics, and culture (science, history, geography, arts, and music). Students also participate in physical education, and the 5-year-old students also participate in the Urban Ecology Center’s Neighborhood Environmental Education Program (NEEP).

The lower elementary program is designed for first through third graders. Normally, the school day allows for blocks of concentrated work (individually, in pairs, or in small groups) in the Montessori Curriculum. Downtown Montessori uses Scholastic’s Guided Reading Program and Writing Workshop. Lower elementary students also participate in physical education, art, music, and NEEP.

The upper elementary program is open to fourth through sixth graders. Materials and group activities develop students’ individual and collaborative skills in biology, math, language, history, geography, music, and visual arts. Upper elementary students also participate in physical education and NEEP.

The adolescent program, for seventh and eighth graders, is an integrative and projects-based learning environment designed to meet students’ social, emotional, and intellectual needs. Each week, students participate in math, language arts, humanities, occupations, academic writing, human growth and development, book group, in-school and out-of-school community service, class council, restorative justice, student-led clubs, art, music, and physical education.

Downtown Montessori provided Chromebooks for all students in fourth grade and above. K4 and K5 students were provided Chromebooks upon request by their parents. The school’s internet use policy requires parent and student signatures on an elementary/adolescent student computer-use contract. The school uses Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and Skyward to collect student data and data related to academic progress.

During the interview and survey process, board members and teachers were asked about the school’s program of instruction. All five (100.0%) board members agreed or strongly agreed that the program of

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<sup>2</sup> Information from the school’s website can be found at <https://downtownmontessori.com/academics>

<sup>3</sup> Students who turn 5 on or before September 1 may attend full-day Montessori sessions. Students who turn 4 on or before September 1 may attend a half- or full-day program for 4-year-olds; this program consists of half-day Montessori and half-day childcare. The charter school program does not include 4-year-olds.

instruction is consistent with the school’s mission, and 90.0% of teachers rated the program of instruction as excellent or good.

### **3. CLASSROOMS**

In the fall of the 2021–22 academic year, the school began the program with nine classrooms: three Children’s House classrooms, four lower elementary classrooms, one upper elementary classroom, and one adolescent program classroom. Each classroom consisted of an average of 23 students.

### **4. TEACHER INFORMATION**

The school employed 24 instructional staff: 11 classroom teachers, a special education director, one part-time social worker, a reading interventionist, a part-time school psychologist, two part-time occupational therapists, one speech and language therapist, a part-time literacy teacher, a part-time visual arts teacher, and four part-time special education aides.<sup>4</sup> Three classroom teachers taught at the Children’s House, five taught lower elementary, one taught upper elementary, and two taught the adolescent program.

At the end of the 2020–21 school year, 20 instructional staff (12 classroom teachers and eight other instructional staff) were employed by the school and eligible to return in the fall of 2021. Of those 20, 17 returned in the fall of 2021, resulting in a return rate of 85.0%.

All instructional staff hold Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) licenses and Montessori certifications.

The Downtown Montessori Academy Employee Handbook, which was revised in February 2022, explains that informal performance evaluation is ongoing. A formal performance evaluation occurs once per year and includes classroom observation and a performance review with the head of school, the executive director, and the teacher.

Regarding professional development, Downtown Montessori instructional staff received training and in-services in the areas of CPR/first aid, mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, mandatory reporting of threats of school violence, bloodborne pathogens, and Effective Educator orientation. The

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<sup>4</sup> The school contracted with MJ Cares for the services of a speech pathologist and, if needed, an occupational therapist. If physical therapy or vision-related services are needed, the school uses First Aid through the Cooperative Educational Service Agency. If nursing care is needed, the school uses First Aid.

school also hosted a “getting to know yourself and coworkers” team-building day and a Dare to Lead book club.

During interviews, teachers were asked about the teacher assessment process. Only 60.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the school has a clear teacher assessment process, and 60.0% were satisfied with the teacher assessment criteria.

Parents were also asked about school staff. Nearly all (95.2%) parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am comfortable talking with the staff,” and 92.4% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with overall staff performance. Most (91.4%) parents agreed or strongly agreed that people in this school treat each other with respect. About two thirds (68.6%) of seventh and eighth graders surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the teachers help them to succeed in school.

## **5. SCHOOL HOURS AND CALENDAR**

The school posted its 2021–22 calendar on its website. A printed calendar also was available in the school’s office. The first day of school was September 7, 2021, and the last day of school was June 3, 2022. The hours of school operation for this year were 8:40–11:45 a.m. each day for K3 and K4, and 8:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for K5 through eighth grade.

## **6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

As described in the parent/student handbook (updated for the 2021–22 school year), Downtown Montessori seeks and relies on the energy and spirit of parents, who are urged to contact their child’s teacher for volunteer opportunities in and out of the classroom. Downtown Montessori’s handbook states that current research, as well as the school’s prior experience, shows a direct relationship between parental involvement and how much the child benefits from the school.

Examples of active parental involvement include accompanying students on field trips; reading stories to the class; volunteering at school events (e.g., hot lunches, Art Gala, family outings, fall parade, bookfair, Fun Friday); assisting in building improvements, such as repairing equipment; organizing and leading afterschool clubs; planning family events; stapling and labeling flyers; making copies for teachers; and donating equipment or other classroom supplies. The school expects all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. The school posts sign-up sheets throughout the year and sends emails and notes home with students to encourage parents to participate. Parents also are encouraged to visit their child’s class at least once a year. To aid parent involvement, the school’s all-volunteer parent group, called the

Parent Engagement Network, is dedicated to supplementing and enriching student education by providing parent involvement opportunities.<sup>5</sup> All parents of enrolled students are members.

Each student has a folder in which schoolwork, notices, and school forms are sent home. The school tries to communicate via email as much as possible to prevent unnecessary paper use in accordance with the principles of being a state-certified Green and Healthy School. Teachers' email addresses are listed in the parent/student handbook and on the school's website, where current information and notices also are available. Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year and upon parental request.

When asked about parental involvement during the survey/interview process, almost all (92.3%) parents indicated that they feel welcome at the school. Many reported that what they like most about the school is the communication between teachers and parents and that they appreciate the school's sense of community and welcoming environment. However, communication from school leadership was an area that parents identified as needing improvement.

All 10 teachers who were interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that staff encourage all families to become involved in school activities, and all 10 rated parent involvement as good or excellent.

## **7. DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The school's code of conduct and discipline policy is stated in the parent/student handbook. The handbook indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is important for all involved adults to deal with the problem the same way.

The method of corrective discipline endorsed by Downtown Montessori is to redirect a student to other activities upon the student's engaging in activity contrary to established rules. The Montessori Method encourages students to make choices and be responsible for their actions. Discipline is used to help students rather than punish them. All staff and parents serve as role models for students through their conduct with students, other staff, and other parents. Each student should be dealt with positively; according to the handbook, parents and staff should avoid showing anger. Quiet time is used only if redirection does not work; students choose when they are ready to rejoin the group.

The school does not tolerate student behavior that is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the student (themselves) or others in the teacher and program director's judgment. Interventions are formulated based on the principles of respect for the student, knowledge and understanding of the student's developmental needs

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<sup>5</sup> The Parent Engagement Network is fully described in the parent/student handbook.

and characteristics, knowledge of the group's needs, and an understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The discipline policy describes specific consequences for older students when other interventions have not worked. These steps, depending on the nature of the offense, range from a review of the school rules and a warning for a first offense to possible consequences for fourth offenses such as in-school suspension, isolation from the group, or temporary suspension from activities. For chronic behavioral problems suspected to be beyond the student's control, a referral is made to support services for evaluation and help. Suspension and expulsion are considered last resorts and are subject to board review.

The school's anti-bullying/peace policy defines bullying specifically with examples and includes procedures for reporting, investigation, prevention, management, nonviolent communication, and student support.

This year, teachers, students, and parents were asked about the discipline policy at Downtown Montessori; they expressed mixed opinions.

- *Teachers:* A majority (90.0%) considered the discipline policy at the school to be a very or somewhat important reason for continuing to teach there, and 80.0% rated the school's adherence to the discipline policy as excellent or good.
- *Students:* Only about one third (34.3%) of seventh and eighth graders agreed or strongly agreed that the rules are fair.
- *Parents:* Just over three quarters (79.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are comfortable with how staff handle discipline. Additionally, many parents identified the school's inconsistent handling of or failure to address discipline as one of the things they liked least about the school.

## **8. GRADUATION AND HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION**

All 19 eighth graders graduated. Beginning the previous spring, school staff informed students and parents of high school options, testing requirements, early admission, and other sign-up dates throughout the year. Individual help was provided to students as needed. At this time, individual Downtown Montessori graduates plan to attend Ronald Reagan, St. Thomas More, Tenor, University School, St. Francis, Greendale, and Bay View high schools.

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



## C. STUDENT POPULATION

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 241 students in K3 through eighth grade.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the year, 10 additional students had enrolled, and eight had withdrawn. To protect student identity, Evident Change does not include results for groups of fewer than 10 students; there were too few withdrawals this year to provide reasons. Of the students who began the year, 236 (97.9%) remained enrolled at the end of the school year.

At the end of the school year, 243 students were enrolled.

- Of these students, 158 (65.0%) were White, 41 (16.9%) were Hispanic, 26 (10.7%) were Black or African American, 12 (4.9%) were Asian, four (1.6%) were Pacific Islander, and two (0.8%) were American Indian.<sup>7</sup>
- There were 127 (52.3%) males and 116 (47.7%) females.<sup>8</sup>
- A total of 19 (7.8%) students had special education needs. Nine had speech and language needs, six had other health impairment, three had autism, two had specific learning disabilities, and two had significant developmental delay.<sup>9</sup>
- There were 37 (15.2%) students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- There were 70 students in the Children’s House, 87 in lower elementary, 50 in upper elementary, and 36 in the adolescent program (Figure 1).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As of September 17, 2021. The third Friday of September is considered the beginning of the school year for student tracking purposes.

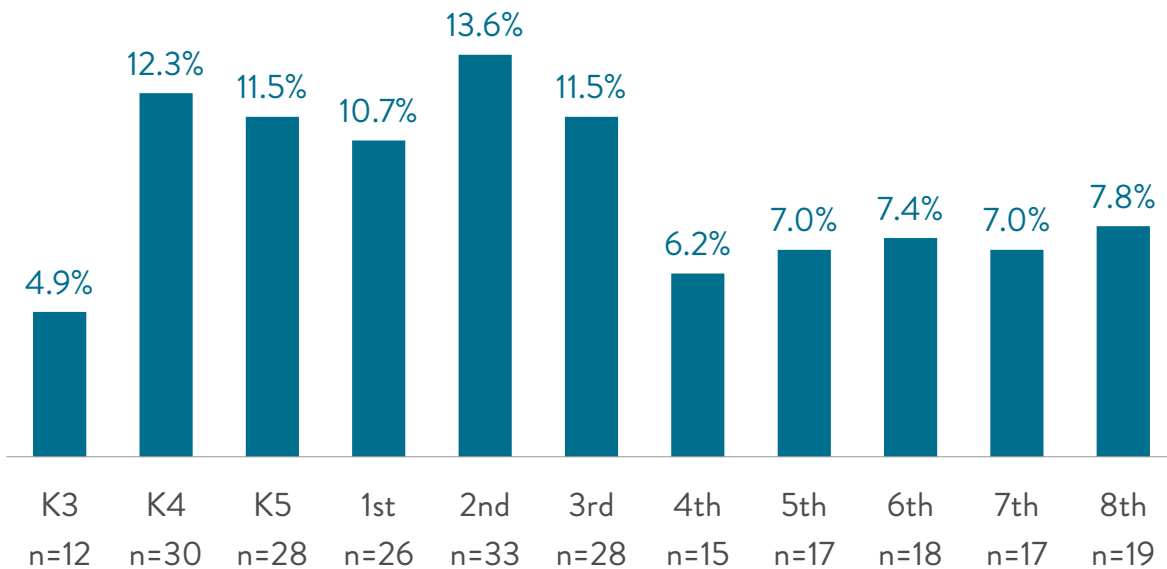
<sup>7</sup> Race/ethnicity categories reflect those reported by the school.

<sup>8</sup> Gender categories reflect those reported by the school.

<sup>9</sup> One student had needs in both specific learning disabilities and other health impairment, and another student had needs in both other health impairment and autism.

<sup>10</sup> The fourth graders stayed in their lower elementary rooms, and the sixth graders were split between upper elementary and the adolescent room.

**Figure 1**  
**Downtown Montessori Academy Enrollment by Student Grade Level, 2021–22**  
**N = 243**



On the last day of the 2020–21 academic year, 268 students attending Downtown Montessori were eligible for continued enrollment for 2021–22 (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 206 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2021. This represents a return rate of 76.9%, considerably lower than the return rate of 91.8% in the fall of 2020.<sup>11</sup>

## **D. ACTIVITIES FOR CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

The following is Downtown Montessori’s response to the activities recommended in the programmatic profile and educational performance report for the 2020–21 academic year. At that time, the recommendation was that the school continue a focused improvement plan by implementing the following activities during the 2021–22 school year. Each recommendation and response by the school follows.

- **Recommendations combined:** Renew the in-person Montessori community (students, parents, and teachers), including the vision and mission of the Montessori approach.

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<sup>11</sup> Two students returned but not until after the start of the school year; therefore, they are not included.

**Response:** The school was able to successfully renew the in-person Montessori community. In addition to having in-person classes all year, the school participated in field trips, family events, and being together as classrooms and staff. Downtown Montessori also resumed parent education and classroom activities that involved parents.

- **Recommendation:** Respond to and support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.

**Response:** Downtown Montessori learned of circumstances as they presented themselves. The school's teachers, social worker, and administration worked together to provide support to parents and students as each circumstance deemed important. Bringing back family events at and away from school also was very supportive in bringing the community back together.

- **Recommendation:** Identify and implement methods of supporting individual student post-pandemic academic and social/emotional needs.

**Response:** Teachers provided instruction based on students' abilities in order to move each child forward academically. When appropriate, the school's Child Study Team supported the teacher through this process. Additionally, Response to Intervention teachers met students in small groups and individually when the need arose. The social worker met students in classes, small groups, and individually to provide social-emotional support in addition to the classroom support provided by teachers.

- **Recommendation:** Maintain accuracy of reporting monitoring data.

**Response:** Being able to administer all assessments in person significantly supported this goal.

After reviewing the information in this report, and in consultation with the school's leader at the end-of-year interview in May 2022, Evident Change recommends the following activities for the 2022–23 school year.

- Continue to support families who have been affected by the overall community needs.
- Continue to maintain focus on accuracy of monitoring data.

### III. EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

To monitor Downtown Montessori's school performance, a variety of qualitative and quantitative information was collected at specific intervals during the past several academic years. This year, the school established goals for attendance, parent-teacher conferences, and special education student records. The school used internal and external measures of academic progress. This section of the report describes the school's success in meeting goals for attendance, parent-teacher conferences, and special education record-keeping. It also describes student progress as measured internally on student report cards and

externally by standardized tests, such as the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment and Wisconsin Forward Exam.

## **A. ATTENDANCE**

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 95.0%. This rate includes all students enrolled at any time during the school year and up until the last day of school. “Present” was defined as being present for at least half the day; the learning memorandum in Appendix H provides more detail on how the school defined attendance during virtual instruction. The school fell short of this goal, with students present, on average, 92.6% of the time this year.<sup>12</sup> When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 100.0%.

By policy, Downtown Montessori does not suspend students.

## **B. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal for parents of all students to participate in scheduled parent-teacher conferences, which may occur in person or by phone. This year, the school scheduled two conference sessions: one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents of all students (100.0%) enrolled at the time of the fall and spring conferences attended. Therefore, the school has met its goal.

## **C. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT RECORDS**

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students, including those who were evaluated but not eligible for services. During the year, 20 students received special education services. One student was reevaluated during the current year and dismissed from special education services. An individualized education program (IEP) was developed for 18 of the 19 new or returning special education students who required one.

In addition, Evident Change staff reviewed a representative number of files in the spring. This review revealed no special education compliance issues.

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<sup>12</sup> Attendance rate is based on all 251 students enrolled at any time during the year. The rate was calculated for each student by dividing the number of days attended by the number of expected days of attendance and averaging across all students.

## D. LOCAL MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula reflecting each school's individual philosophy, mission, and goals. In addition to administering standardized tests, each charter school is responsible for describing goals and expectations for its students in the context of that school's unique approach to education. These goals and expectations are established by each city-chartered school at the beginning of the academic year to measure the educational performance of its students.

Local measures are useful for monitoring and reporting progress, guiding and improving instruction, clearly expressing the expected quality of student work, and providing evidence that students are meeting local benchmarks. The CSRC's expectation is that, at a minimum, schools establish local measures in literacy (i.e., reading), writing, math, and special education.

Results for K3 through K5 are not part of the overall local measure score for the CSRC scorecard because of the students' young age; these results are combined. Where available, results in each academic content area for students in first through eighth grades are illustrated subsequently.

### 1. PROGRESS REPORTS FOR K3 THROUGH K5

Downtown Montessori uses the Montessori Progress reports in K3 through K5 to track students' progress on the following skills in these five areas.

- Language (spoken, written, reading, parts of speech, and word study)
- Mathematical development (numbers, counting, addition, subtraction, and multiplication)
- Sensorial discrimination (visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory)
- Cultural areas (globes, maps, and animals of the world)
- Practical life (care of person, grace, courtesy, and control and coordination)

Students are rated as presented, practiced, improving, or proficient<sup>13</sup> on each skill in each area. This year, the school established a goal that K3 through K5 students who attended all year would be proficient or show improvement (i.e., presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade-level skills in literacy and math. Students who were initially proficient would maintain proficiency.

This year, while the school addressed all aforementioned areas, progress data were provided in the areas of literacy (language) and math (mathematical development). There were 66 students enrolled all year who

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<sup>13</sup> The school's learning memo equates "proficient" with "mastered."

took both fall and spring assessments for literacy and math.<sup>14</sup> Of those enrolled all year who took both assessments, 66 (100.0%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five math skills, and 65 (98.5%) maintained proficiency or showed progress for all five literacy skills (Table 1).

TABLE 1		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY		
K3–K5 FALL-TO-SPRING PROGRESS IN MATH AND LITERACY 2021–22		
N = 66		
SKILL	STUDENTS MET GOAL	%
<b>Math</b>		
Skill 1	66	100.0%
Skill 2	66	100.0%
Skill 3	66	100.0%
Skill 4	66	100.0%
Skill 5	66	100.0%
<b>All five math skills</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Literacy</b>		
Skill 1	66	100.0%
Skill 2	66	100.0%
Skill 3	66	100.0%
Skill 4	66	100.0%
Skill 5	65	98.5%
<b>All five literacy skills</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>98.5%</b>

## 2. LITERACY FOR FIRST THROUGH THIRD GRADERS

This year, first- through third-grade students were administered a grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage in the fall of 2021 and again in the spring of 2022.<sup>15</sup> The score consisted of a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade and third month of instruction would be 4.3).

The school established the following goals.

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<sup>14</sup> This excludes one student who took both assessments but was not enrolled all year.

<sup>15</sup> First-grade students were administered a passage by the end of November 2021 and second- through third-grade students by the end of October 2021; all were administered the spring assessment in May 2022.

- At least 75.0% of students who were below grade level in the fall would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) on the spring Fountas and Pinnell.
- At least 80.0% of students who were at their current grade level in the fall (e.g., a fourth-grade student in the fall at or above 4.1) would gain at least half a grade level (0.5) at the time of the spring test.
- Any student scoring at least one grade level above the student’s current grade level in the fall would maintain above-grade-level status in the spring (e.g., a fourth-grade student must have a score of 5.1 or higher to be above grade level).

A total of 85 first- through third-grade students took the literacy assessment in both the fall and spring. Of the 26 students who were below grade level in the fall, 24 (92.3%) gained at least a half a grade level by the spring; 56 (94.9%) of the 59 students at grade level in the fall gained at least half a grade level by the spring; no student was above grade level in the fall (Table 2).

<b>TABLE 2</b> <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b> <b>1ST – 3RD GRADE STUDENTS GRADE-LEVEL LITERACY SCORE</b> <b>WITH RESPECT TO CURRENT GRADE 2021–22</b> <b>N = 85</b>			
FALL STATUS	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
Below Grade Level	26	24	92.3%
At Grade Level	59	56	94.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>94.1%</b>

### 3. LITERACY FOR FOURTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Literacy skills for students in fourth through eighth grades were measured in the fall using the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI), which helps teachers assess student skills in a variety of areas. All students in fourth through eighth grades were administered components of the QRI in the fall of 2021 (no later than November) and again in the spring of 2022.

Student scores for all subtests are averaged and result in a QRI-tested grade level and a functional level of learning for that tested grade level (frustration, instructional, or independent) for the fall and spring assessments. Progress was measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement were based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in Table 3. The school’s goal was that at least 90.0% of students would make progress as described in the table.

TABLE 3			
SPRING GOALS BASED ON THE FALL GRADE-LEVEL AND FUNCTIONAL-LEVEL STATUS			
FALL FUNCTIONAL LEVEL	FALL GRADE- LEVEL STATUS		
	BELOW GRADE LEVEL	AT GRADE LEVEL	ABOVE GRADE LEVEL
Frustration	Frustration at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	Remain above grade level, regardless of functional level
Instructional	Instructional at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	
Independent	Independent at the next grade level	Instructional at the next grade level	

A total of 85 students were assessed in both the fall and spring. Of them, 17 tested at the frustration level, 36 tested at the instructional level, and 32 tested at the independent level in the fall. (All were at grade level; none was below or above grade level in the fall.) Of the 85 students considered in the school’s outcomes, 84 (98.8%) met or exceeded their literacy goals during the school year (Table 4).

TABLE 4			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY			
4TH – 8TH GRADE STUDENTS LITERACY GOALS 2021–22			
N = 85			
FALL FUNCTIONAL LEVEL (ALL AT GRADE LEVEL)	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
Frustration	17	16	94.1%
Instructional	36	36	100.0%
Independent	32	32	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>98.8%</b>

#### 4. LITERARY PERFORMANCE FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Overall, 164 (96.5%) of 170 first- through eighth-grade students met their literacy local measure goal.

#### 5. WRITING SKILLS FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

Students were assessed on two or more of the Six Traits of Writing. First through third graders focused on organization and conventions; fourth through sixth graders focused on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions; and seventh and eighth graders focused on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence



fluency, voice, and conventions. Student skills on each trait were assessed on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced), and the total for all traits was averaged and converted into an overall writing level.

The school set a goal that all students who received an average score below 4.0 in the fall would increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2022, and students with an average of 4.0 or higher in the fall would score 4.0 or higher in the spring.

This year, 171 first- through eighth-grade students were tested in the fall and the spring. Of 26 students who received an average score of 4.0 or higher in the fall, 22 (84.6%) maintained an average score equal to or above 4.0 in the spring. Of 145 students who received an average score below 4.0 in the fall, 110 (75.9%) improved by at least 0.5 in the spring. Overall, 132 (77.2%) of 171 students demonstrated progress, falling short of the school’s goal of 100.0%.

## 6. MATH SKILLS FOR FIRST THROUGH SIXTH GRADERS

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. Each math skill was rated as “Minimal: Needs Support,” “Basic: Progressing,” “Proficient: Meets Expectation,” and “Advanced: Mastery.” The school’s goal was that all students enrolled for the year would maintain proficiency (if proficient or above in the fall) or show improvement in at least three (60.0%) out of five grade-level math skills (if minimal or basic in the fall).

Fall and spring scores were provided for 134 first through sixth graders who attended all year. By the end of the year, 131 (97.8%) students maintained proficiency or showed progress in 60.0% of skills (Table 5).

TABLE 5			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY MATH			
1ST – 6TH GRADES 2021–22			
GRADE	STUDENTS	MET GOAL	% MET GOAL
1st	25	25	100.0%
2nd	32	32	100.0%
3rd	28	28	100.0%
4th	15	14	93.3%
5th	17	17	100.0%
6th	17	15	88.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>97.8%</b>

## **7. MATH SKILLS FOR SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS**

Math progress for seventh and eighth graders was examined using IXL, an evaluation program that determines grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards. Grade level is established when a student demonstrates proficiency in required grade-level standards using a 75.0% threshold. By the end of spring, 80.0% of the seventh- and eighth-grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall were expected to improve at least half a grade level. Students above grade level in the fall were expected to maintain above-grade-level status in the spring.

Of the 36 students tested in the fall and spring, 23 (63.9%) improved by half a grade level or maintained their grade-level status in the spring, falling short of their goal of 80.0%. Due to the small number, results are not reported out by fall performance group.

## **8. MATH PERFORMANCE FOR FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS**

Overall, 154 (90.6%) of 170 first- through eighth-grade students met the school's local measures in math.

## **9. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT PROGRESS**

The school set a goal for special education students to demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals. To measure this goal, the school decided that students with active IEPs who had been at the school for one entire IEP year would demonstrate progress by meeting 60% of their IEP goals at the time of their annual review or reevaluation. (Note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports that are attached to the regular report cards.) There were 14 students with active IEPs for an entire IEP year at the school, and eight (57.1%) met or exceeded 60.0% of their IEP goals at the time of the annual review or reevaluation, falling short of the goal.

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

These tests and results are described in the following sections.

## 1. PALS<sup>16</sup>

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

PALS-PreK includes five required tasks (name writing, uppercase alphabet recognition, beginning sound awareness, print and word awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness). Two additional tasks (lowercase alphabet recognition and letter sounds) are completed only by students who reach an adequate score on the uppercase alphabet task.

PALS-PreK does not have a summed score benchmark because the purpose is to learn students' abilities as they enter K4 in the fall. In the spring, developmental ranges for each PALS task indicate whether the student is at the expected developmental stage for a 4-year-old. There is no summed score benchmark for the PALS-PreK.

A total of 29 K4 students enrolled since the beginning of the year completed the five required tasks of the PALS-PreK in the spring; the number of students above the spring developmental range for each is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6		
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PALS-PREK FOR K4 STUDENTS STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE THE SPRING DEVELOPMENTAL RANGE 2021–22		
N = 29		
TASK	STUDENTS	%
Name writing	26	89.7%
Uppercase alphabet recognition	23	79.3%
Lowercase alphabet recognition <sup>17</sup>	21	100.0%
Letter sounds <sup>18</sup>	20	95.2%

<sup>16</sup> Information about the PALS assessments comes from <https://palsresource.info/wisconsin> and <https://pals.virginia.edu>

<sup>17</sup> Students who score 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task complete the lowercase alphabet recognition task; 21 students qualified. Three students had scores for the lowercase task in the spring despite not scoring 16 or higher on the uppercase alphabet recognition task; these students are not included in the results.

<sup>18</sup> Students who score 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task complete the letter sounds task; 21 students qualified. Three students had scores for the letter sounds task in the spring despite not scoring 9 or higher on the lowercase alphabet recognition task or a 16 or higher on the preceding uppercase alphabet task. These students are not included in the results.

**TABLE 6**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PALS-PREK FOR K4 STUDENTS  
STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE THE SPRING DEVELOPMENTAL RANGE 2021-22**

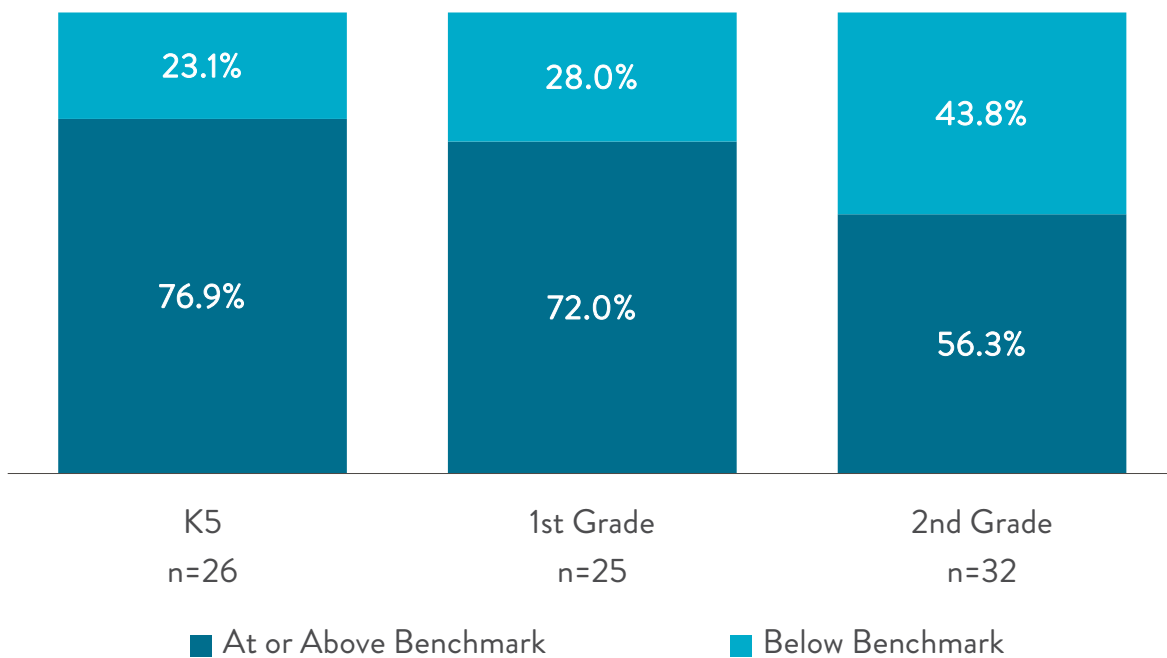
**N = 29**

TASK	STUDENTS	%
Beginning sound awareness	27	93.1%
Print and word awareness	27	93.1%
Rhyme awareness	27	93.1%

**b. PALS-K and PALS Plus**

The PALS-K and PALS Plus are administered in the fall and spring. Both tests result in a summed score that can be compared to a reading readiness benchmark set for each of the test administrations. Evident Change examined spring reading readiness for students who were enrolled for the entire year and completed the spring tests. At the time of the spring assessment, 76.9% of 26 K5 students, 72.0% of 25 first graders, and 56.3% of 32 second graders were at or above the spring summed score benchmark for their grade level (Figure 2).

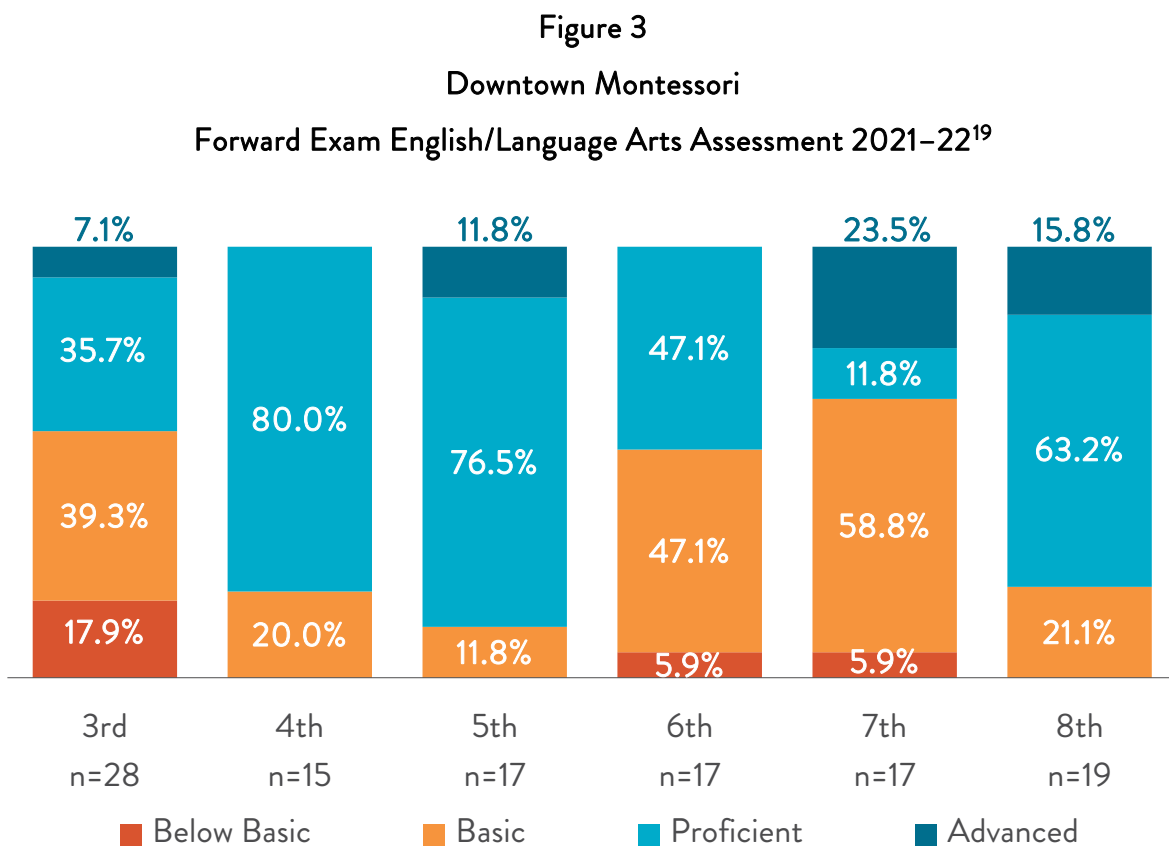
**Figure 2**  
**Downtown Montessori Spring 2022 PALS Results**  
**N = 83**



## 2. WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM FOR THIRD THROUGH EIGHTH GRADERS

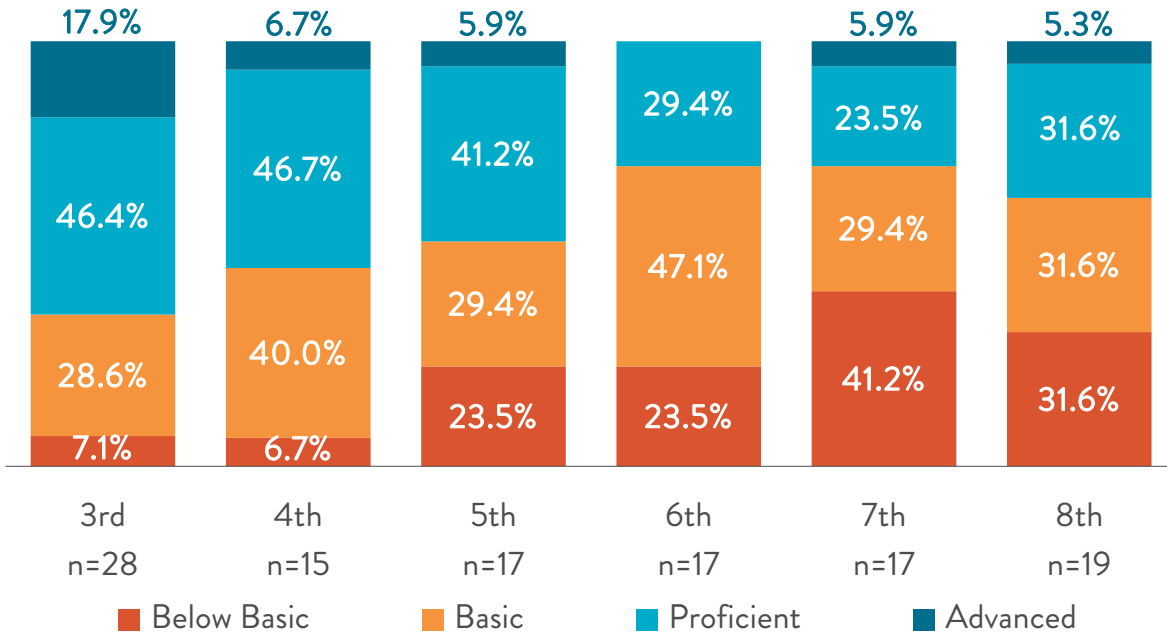
The Wisconsin Forward Exam was implemented as the state’s standardized test for English/language arts (ELA) and math for third through eighth graders; science for fourth and eighth graders; and social studies for fourth, eighth, and tenth graders. Scores for each test are translated into one of four levels: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. The Forward Exam is administered in the spring of each school year.

In the spring of 2022, 113 students in third through eighth grades who were enrolled since the start of the year (third Friday in September) completed the ELA and math assessments. Of these students, 68 (60.2%) were proficient or advanced in ELA, and 51 (45.1%) were proficient or advanced in math. Results by grade level are presented in Figures 3 and 4.



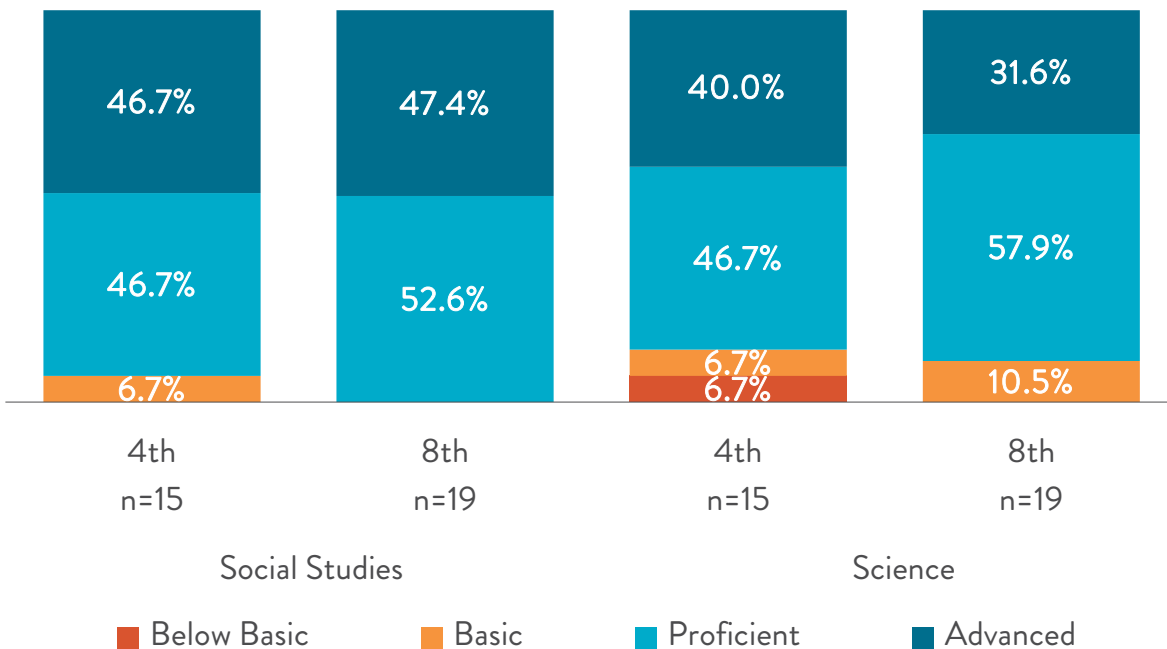
<sup>19</sup> Percentages in Figures 3–5 may not total 100% due to rounding.

**Figure 4**  
**Downtown Montessori**  
**Forward Exam Math Assessment 2021–22**



Among 34 fourth and eighth graders, 33 (97.1%) were proficient or advanced in social studies, and 30 (88.2%) were proficient or advanced in science. Results by grade level appear in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**  
**Downtown Montessori**  
**Forward Exam Social Studies and Science Assessment 2021–22**



## 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 whether a student needs additional reading assistance, not that the student is reading at grade level. Additionally, 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, Evident Change typically examines only 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 that at least 75.0% of students 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. The exam results from two consecutive school years are typically used to assess student progress. Expectations for year-to-year progress on the exam were adopted by the CSRC for the 2020–21 school year. The CSRC's performance expectation is that at least 60% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in ELA the prior year would maintain proficiency, and at least 50% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year would maintain proficiency.

DPI allowed parents to “opt their child out” of the requirement to take any standardized tests for the 2020–21 school year. This resulted in varied completion rates across the schools and made it difficult to have adequate or comparable cohorts to measure or report year-to-year progress from 2020–21 to 2021–22.

## G. CSRC SCHOOL SCORECARD

In the fall of 2012, after a three-year pilot, the CSRC adopted its first school scorecard. It included multiple measures of student academic progress, including performance on standardized tests 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.<sup>20</sup> 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 C for detailed information on the revised scorecard.

Because data to examine year-to-year student progress were not available, the CSRC scorecard contains partial outcome data this year. The school's score should not be compared with the score for any previous or subsequent year. Downtown Montessori scored 81.7% of the 59.0 possible scorecard points. These results should not be compared with scores in previous or subsequent school years.

## IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 24th year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. Downtown Montessori has consistently complied with past contract requirements, and this year it has met or substantially met all the applicable contract requirements. Evident Change recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting, based on contract compliance as well as the school's trend data.

Evident Change recommends that Downtown Montessori be authorized for an additional five-year contract as a charter school authorized by the City of Milwaukee and continue annual monitoring.

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<sup>20</sup> 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 were 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 Aspire were merged, two items related to grade promotion were given 2.5 extra points, and point-in-time measures on Aspire in English and math were decreased by 2.5 points each.



# **APPENDICES**

- A. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CHART**
- B. TREND INFORMATION**
- C. CSRC 2021–22 SCHOOL SCORECARDS**
- D. PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY RESULTS**
- E. BOARD INTERVIEW RESULTS**
- F. STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS**
- G. TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS**
- H. STUDENT LEARNING MEMORANDUMS**

# APPENDIX A: CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CHART

TABLE A			
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY			
OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2021–22			
SECTION OF CONTRACT	CONTRACT PROVISION	REPORT REFERENCE PAGE	CONTRACT PROVISION MET OR NOT MET
Section I, B	Description of educational program of the school and curriculum focus.	p. 2	Met
Section I, V	The school will provide a copy of the calendar prior to the end of the previous school year.	p. 6	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods.	p. 2	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests.	pp. 18–22	Met
Section I, D	<b>Academic criterion #1:</b> Maintain local measures, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals in reading, math, writing, and special education.	pp. 12–18	Met
	<p><b>Academic criterion #2:</b> Year-to-year achievement measures for students who are proficient. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 60% will maintain proficiency.</p> <p>a. 4th – 8th grade students at or above proficient on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 50% will maintain proficiency.</p> <p>b. Second-grade students at or above summed score benchmark in reading (PALS): At least 75.0% will remain at or above.</p>	N/A	<p>a. N/A</p> <p>b. N/A</p>

**TABLE A**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE FOR EDUCATION-RELATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS 2021–22**

<b>SECTION OF CONTRACT</b>	<b>CONTRACT PROVISION</b>	<b>REPORT REFERENCE PAGE</b>	<b>CONTRACT PROVISION MET OR NOT MET</b>
Section I, D	<p><b>Academic criterion #3:</b> Year-to-year achievement measures: progress for students below proficient.</p> <p>a. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in ELA the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.</p> <p>b. 4th – 8th grade students below proficiency on the Forward Exam in math the prior year: 35% will demonstrate progress.</p>	N/A	<p>a. N/A</p> <p>b. N/A</p>
Section I, E	Parental involvement.	pp. 6–7	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach.	pp. 5–6	Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education needs students.	pp. 9–10, 12	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures	pp. 7–8	Met

N/A: Not applicable this year due to the lack of year-to-year data because of early school closure in spring of 2020 as a result of the pandemic. Also, not all student were required to take standardized tests in 2020–2021, so representative cohorts could not be created.

## APPENDIX B: TREND INFORMATION

The following tables present five-year trends for enrollment and measure of academic progress. In 2019–20, 2020–2021, and 2021–22, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of student education, including attendance, enrollment, and academic assessment. Therefore, while data from these two years are included in the trend tables, results should not be compared with results from previous or subsequent years.

TABLE B1					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY ENROLLMENT					
YEAR	ENROLLED AT START OF SCHOOL YEAR	ENROLLED DURING YEAR	WITHDREW	NUMBER ENROLLED AT END OF YEAR	RETENTION (ENROLLED FOR ENTIRE YEAR)
2017–18	286	2	2	286	284 (99.3%)
2018–19	299	2	7	294	292 (97.7%)
2019–20	313	2	4	311	309 (98.7%)
2020–21	292	0	9	283	283 (96.9%)
2021–22	241	10	8	243	236 (97.9%)

TABLE B2	
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT RETURN RATES	
SCHOOL YEAR	RATE
2017–18	90.5%
2018–19	91.4%
2019–20	94.4%
2020–21	91.8%
2021–22	76.9%

<b>TABLE B3</b>	
<b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATES</b>	
<b>SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>RATE</b>
2017-18	95.5%
2018-19	95.6%
2019-20	94.2%
2020-21	96.8%
2021-22	92.6%

<b>TABLE B4</b>	
<b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PARENT PARTICIPATION</b>	
<b>SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>% PARTICIPATED</b>
2017-18	100.0%
2018-19	
2019-20	
2020-21	
2021-22	

<b>TABLE B5</b>	
<b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETENTION</b>	
<b>SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>RETENTION RATE: EMPLOYED ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR</b>
2017-18	100.0%
2018-19	
2019-20	
2020-21	
2021-22	

**TABLE B6**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
TEACHER/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF RETURN RATES**

<b>TEACHER TYPE</b>	<b>NUMBER AT END OF PRIOR SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>RETURNED FIRST DAY OF CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>RETURN RATE</b>
<b>2017-18</b>			
Classroom teachers	13	13	100.0%
All instructional staff	16	16	100.0%
<b>2018-19</b>			
Classroom teachers	14	14	100.0%
All instructional staff	19	19	100.0%
<b>2019-20</b>			
Classroom teachers	12	12	100.0%
All instructional staff	20	19	95.0%
<b>2020-21</b>			
Classroom teachers	13	11	84.6%
All instructional staff	21	19	90.5%
<b>2021-22</b>			
Classroom teachers	12	9	75.0%
All instructional staff	20	17	85.0%

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


# APPENDIX C: CSRC 2021–22 SCHOOL SCORECARD

## CITY OF MILWAUKEE CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE SCHOOL SCORECARD


r: 06/20

### K–8TH GRADE


#### STUDENT READING READINESS: GRADES 1–2

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


#### STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3–8

• Forward Exam reading—% maintained proficient	5.0	 35.0%
• 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	


#### LOCAL MEASURES

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

#### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3–8


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

#### ENGAGEMENT


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

### HIGH SCHOOL


#### 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	 35.0%
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	7.5	
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	7.5	
• DPI graduation rate	5.0	


#### POSTSECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 AND 12

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


#### LOCAL MEASURES

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

#### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 9 AND 10

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

#### ENGAGEMENT

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

\*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, Evident Change 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 C**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
CSRC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K THROUGH 8TH GRADE) SCORECARD REVISED FOR 2021-22**

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%	72.0%	2.9
	% 2nd graders who maintained spring summed score benchmark two consecutive years	6.0		N/A	N/A
Student Academic Progress: 3rd – 8th Grades	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0	35.0%	Not available	
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % maintained proficient/advanced	5.0			
	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % below proficient who progressed	12.5			
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % below proficient who progressed	12.5			
Local Measures*	% met reading	6.25	25.0%	96.5%	6.0
	% met math	6.25		90.6%	5.7
	% met writing	6.25		77.2%	4.8
	% met special education	6.25		57.1%	3.6
Student Academic Achievement: 3rd – 8th Grades	<i>Forward Exam English/language arts:</i> % at/above proficient	2.5	5.0%	60.2%	1.5
	<i>Forward Exam math:</i> % at/above proficient	2.5		45.1%	1.1
Engagement	Student attendance rate	5.0	25.0%	92.6%	4.6
	Student return rate	5.0		76.9%	3.8
	Student retention	5.0		97.9%	4.9
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		85.0%	4.3
<b>Total Possible Points</b>		<b>59.0</b>			<b>48.2</b>
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCORECARD PERCENTAGE</b>					<b>81.7%</b>



# APPENDIX D: PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY RESULTS

Parents’ opinions are qualitative in nature and provide a valuable measurement of school performance. To determine their 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 allowed parents to complete the survey online.

Evident Change made at least two follow-up phone calls to parents who had not completed a survey. If these parents were available and willing, Evident Change completed the survey with them over the phone. In all, 104 surveys, representing 101 (63.1%) of 160 Downtown Montessori families, were completed and submitted to Evident Change.

Most parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child is safe in school (98.1%), that they are comfortable talking with staff (95.2%), and that the staff recognize their child’s strengths and weaknesses (95.1%) (Table D1).

TABLE D1						
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY						
PARENT SATISFACTION WITH SCHOOL 2021–22						
(N = 104)						
STATEMENT	RESPONSE					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
I am comfortable talking with the staff.	70.2%	25.0%	3.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The staff keep me informed about my child’s academic performance.	48.1%	44.2%	6.7%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I am comfortable with how the staff handle discipline.	47.1%	32.7%	14.4%	2.9%	2.9%	0.0%
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the staff.	58.7%	33.7%	1.0%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%
The staff recognize my child’s strengths and weaknesses.	53.8%	41.3%	3.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
I feel welcome at my child’s school.	67.3%	25.0%	5.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%
The staff respond to my worries and concerns.	52.9%	33.7%	7.7%	4.8%	1.0%	0.0%

TABLE D1						
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PARENT SATISFACTION WITH SCHOOL 2021–22 (N = 104)						
STATEMENT	RESPONSE					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
My child and I clearly understand the school’s academic expectations.	45.2%	40.4%	11.5%	1.9%	1.0%	0.0%
My child is learning what is needed to succeed in life.	51.9%	39.4%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
My child is safe in school.	68.3%	29.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
People in this school treat each other with respect.	63.5%	27.9%	5.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
The school offers a variety of courses and afterschool activities to keep my child interested.	19.2%	39.4%	21.2%	16.3%	3.8%	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) read to or with their children (100.0%), participated in activities outside of school with their children (87.7%), worked on arithmetic or math (85.4%), and worked on homework with their children (66.3%).

TABLE D2					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY PARENT PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES K4 – 5TH GRADE 2021–22 (N = 89)					
ACTIVITY	RESPONSE				
	NEVER	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	DAILY	NO RESPONSE
Read with or to your child(ren)	0.0%	0.0%	12.4%	87.6%	0.0%
Work on arithmetic or math	5.6%	9.0%	60.7%	24.7%	0.0%
Work on homework	22.5%	11.2%	36.0%	30.3%	0.0%
Participate together in activities outside of school	3.4%	9.0%	65.2%	22.5%	0.0%

Parents of older children (sixth through eighth grade) engaged in similar activities during the week. For example, 78.8% of 33 parents monitored homework completion and participated in activities with their children outside of school while 36.4% discussed their children’s progress toward graduation, and 27.3% discussed plans for education after graduation.

<b>TABLE D3</b> <b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b> <b>PARENT PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES</b> <b>6TH – 8TH GRADE 2021–22</b> <b>(N = 33)</b>					
ACTIVITY	RESPONSE				
	NEVER	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	DAILY	NO RESPONSE
Monitor homework completion	6.1%	15.2%	48.5%	30.3%	0.0%
Participate together in activities outside of school	3.0%	18.2%	51.5%	27.3%	0.0%
Discuss with your child their progress toward graduation	15.2%	48.5%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Discuss plans for education after graduation	3.0%	69.7%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%

Parental satisfaction was also evident in the following results.

- Most (89.4%) parents would recommend this school to other parents; 10 (9.6%) would not recommend the school, and one person did not respond.
- Most (85.6%) parents will send their child to the school next year. Seven (6.7%) parents said they will not send their child to the school next year, and eight (7.7%) were not sure. One person did not provide a response.
- When parents were asked to rate the school’s overall contribution to their child’s learning, a majority (96.1%) rated the school’s overall contribution to their child’s learning as excellent or good.

When parents were asked what they liked most about the school, the most common responses included the following.

- Small size allows for individual attention and fosters close interactions and relationship building with teachers, among students, with other parents, etc.
- The academics and teaching philosophy, structure, and values (i.e., Montessori Method).
- Great teachers and staff who focus on the needs of the child and maintain strong communication with parents.

- Community-oriented and welcoming environment; child(ren)'s happiness at the school and sense of safety.

When parents were asked what they like least about the school, the most common responses included the following.

- Lack of communication from school leadership/administration about school policies, lack of responsiveness and visibility, and lack of transparency in decision making.
- Lack of language classes and extracurricular activities.
- Need more time and space for physical activity, need for better amenities to promote physical activity.
- Need more communication from the classroom on how academic progress is measured, how students are performing, and what is going on in the classroom.

# APPENDIX E: BOARD INTERVIEW RESULTS

Board member opinions are qualitative in nature and provide valuable, albeit subjective, insight about school performance and organizational competency. Downtown Montessori’s board of directors consists of five members. Evident Change conducted phone interviews using a prepared interview guide with all five (100.0%) members.

The board members have served for an average of nine years. Their backgrounds include financial experience, education, and real estate. The five board members said they participated in strategic planning for the school, received a presentation on the school’s annual academic performance report and reviewed the school’s annual financial audit, and received and approved the school’s annual budget.

Rating on a scale of excellent to poor, three of the board members rated the school as excellent; two rated the school as good; and none rated it as fair. Four members either agreed or strongly agreed that the school was making progress toward becoming a high-performing school, and all five members either agreed or strongly agreed that board members took their responsibilities seriously.

TABLE E					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW RESULTS 2021–22 (N = 5)					
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESPONSE				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teacher–student ratio/class size at this school is appropriate.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
Program of instruction (including curriculum, equipment, and building) is consistent with the school’s mission.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Students make significant academic progress at this school.	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%
The administrator’s financial management is transparent and efficient.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
This school is making progress toward becoming a high-performing school.	80%	0%	0%	0%	20%
This school has strong links to the community, including businesses.	0%	80%	0%	0%	20%
The administrative staff’s performance meets the board’s expectations.	20%	60%	0%	0%	20%

TABLE E					
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW RESULTS 2021-22 (N = 5)					
PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESPONSE				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The majority of the board of directors take their varied responsibilities seriously.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
This school has the financial resources to fulfill its mission.	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%
The environment of this school ensures the safety of its students and staff.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%

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

- The Montessori learning environment;
- Staff dedication; and
- Strong community ties.

Regarding things they like least, the board members mentioned:

- Financial challenges stemming from the small size of the school;
- Uncertainty with organizational structure; and
- Disconnect between administration and faculty.

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

- Formalizing channels of communication between staff, board members, and the community;
- Physical expansion; and
- Clear delineation of responsibilities within the administrative team.

# APPENDIX F: STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

At the end of the school year, 35 students in seventh and eighth grades completed an online survey about their school. Survey responses were generally positive.

- Most (82.8%) students said the marks they get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair.
- Almost three quarters (74.3%) of students said their reading ability improved, and 71.4% said their math abilities improved.
- More than two thirds (68.6%) said the teachers help them succeed in school.
- Most (68.6%) indicated that they feel safe in school.
- Most (68.6%) said their school has afterschool activities (Table F).

Some areas that deserve attention from school leadership and staff include the following.

- Only 31.4% of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that students at Downtown Montessori respect each other and their different points of view.
- About one third (34.3%) of students said that the school rules are fair.

TABLE F						
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY						
ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT SURVEY 2021-22						
(N = 35)						
QUESTION	ANSWER					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
I like my school.	22.9%	37.1%	34.3%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%
My reading/writing skills have improved.	25.7%	48.6%	14.3%	5.7%	0.0%	5.7%
My math skills have improved.	17.1%	54.3%	17.1%	8.6%	2.9%	0.0%
The school rules are fair.	11.4%	22.9%	25.7%	31.4%	8.6%	0.0%
The teachers at my school help me to succeed in school.	28.6%	40.0%	22.9%	5.7%	2.9%	0.0%
I like being in school.	11.4%	31.4%	34.3%	17.1%	5.7%	0.0%
I feel safe in school.	34.3%	34.3%	14.3%	8.6%	8.6%	0.0%
The marks I get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair.	31.4%	51.4%	17.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**TABLE F**

**DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY  
ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT SURVEY 2021–22  
(N = 35)**

QUESTION	ANSWER					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
My school has afterschool activities (e.g., field trips, clubs, computers).	25.7%	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	2.9%	0.0%
My teachers/school staff talk with me about high school plans.	14.3%	37.1%	31.4%	8.6%	8.6%	0.0%
The students at my school respect each other and each other’s different points of view.	5.7%	25.7%	25.7%	25.7%	17.1%	0.0%
Teachers/staff at my school respect students and their different points of view.	28.6%	37.1%	14.3%	17.1%	2.9%	0.0%

When asked what they liked best about the school, students said:

- Their friends, teachers, and classmates;
- The welcoming and safe environment and respect for students’ individuality and creativity; and
- Classes, schedule, and other programming (e.g., recess).

When asked what they liked least, students said:

- Inconsistent and unfair disciplinary response and lack of school response to certain types of behavior;
- Communication with leadership/administration; and
- The dress code.



# APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS

In the spring of 2022, Evident Change interviewed 10 teachers about why they teach at Downtown Montessori and solicited feedback on their overall satisfaction with the school. Interviews included a variety of classroom teachers from K4 through eighth grade.

The teachers interviewed had been teaching for an average of 12.9 years. The number of years teaching at Downtown Montessori ranged from one year to over 20 years.

Five teachers rated the school’s overall progress in contributing to students’ academic progress as excellent; four teachers rated school’s progress as good; and one teacher rated the school’s progress as fair.

Over half (six, or 60%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the school has clear teacher performance assessment processes, and 60% were satisfied with the performance assessment criteria (Table G1).

<b>TABLE G1</b>					
<b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b>					
<b>TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2021–22</b>					
<b>(N = 10)</b>					
<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
The school has a clear teacher performance assessment process.	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%
I am satisfied with my school’s teacher performance assessment criteria.	10.0%	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Student academic performance is an important part of teacher assessment.	10.0%	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%

Teachers have a favorable view of school climate. All (100.0%) staff agreed or strongly agreed that staff typically work well with one another, that staff encourage all families to become involved in school activities, and that adults who work in the school respect students and their different points of view (Table G2).

<b>TABLE G2</b>					
<b>DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY</b>					
<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE 2021–22</b>					
<b>(N = 10)</b>					
<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
Staff who work in this school respect students and their different points of view.	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff at this school typically work well with one another.	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff at this school encourage all families to become involved in school activities.	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

When teachers were asked to rate the importance of various reasons for continuing to teach at the school, all (100.0%) staff rated educational methodology/curriculum approach and general atmosphere as somewhat important or very important for teaching at this school (Table G3).

<b>TABLE G3</b>				
<b>REASONS FOR CONTINUING TO TEACH AT DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY 2021–22</b>				
<b>(N = 10)</b>				
<b>REASON</b>	<b>IMPORTANCE</b>			
	<b>VERY IMPORTANT</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT</b>
Financial considerations	20.0%	50.0%	10.0%	20.0%
Educational methodology/ curriculum approach	90.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Age/grade level of students	70.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Discipline practices/procedures	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%
General atmosphere	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Class size	30.0%	50.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Administrative leadership	70.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Colleagues	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%

Evident Change asked teachers to rate the school’s performance related to class size, materials and equipment, and student assessment plan, as well as shared leadership, professional support and development, and the school’s progress toward becoming an excellent school. Teachers most often rated progress toward becoming a high-performing school, students’ academic progress, parent–teacher relationships, collaboration among teachers on planning learning experiences, parent involvement, their performance as a teacher, and administrative staff’s performance as excellent or good. Professional support/development opportunities and adherence to discipline policy were most often rated as fair (Table G4).

TABLE G4				
DOWNTOWN MONTESSORI ACADEMY				
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RATING 2021–22				
(N = 10)				
AREA	RATING			
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Class size/student–teacher ratio	50.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Program of instruction	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Shared leadership, decision making, and accountability	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Professional support/development opportunities	30.0%	40.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Progress toward becoming a high-performing school	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Students’ academic progress	30.0%	70.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Adherence to discipline policy	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Instructional support	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Parent–teacher relationships	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Collaboration among teachers on planning learning experiences	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Parent involvement	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Your performance as a teacher	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrative staff’s performance	30.0%	70.0%	0.0%	0.0%

When asked to name two things they liked most about the school, teachers noted:

- Strong sense of community among staff, children, and families;
- Adherence to Montessori theory and child-centered approach; and
- Autonomy and trust from administration.

Things teachers liked least about the school include:

- Certain supports and resources for teachers lacking or in need of improvement: transportation, evaluation and performance review, student discipline, and pay/benefits;
- Overall, communication needs improvement; and
- Size constraints limit extracurricular activities and amenities.

# APPENDIX H: STUDENT LEARNING

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Evident Change and the CSRC  
**FROM:** Downtown Montessori Academy  
**SUBJECT:** Learning Memo for the 2021–22 Academic Year  
**DATE:** October 12, 2021

This memorandum of understanding includes the minimum measurable outcomes required by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) to monitor and report students' academic progress. These outcomes have been defined by the leadership and/or staff at the school in consultation with staff from Evident Change and the CSRC.

The school will record student data in Skyward or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and provide them to Evident Change, the educational monitoring agent contracted by the CSRC. Paper test printouts or data directly from a test publisher or the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will be provided to Evident Change for all standardized tests. All required elements related to the outcomes below are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

Evident Change requests electronic submission of year-end data by the fifth business day following the last day of student attendance for the academic year, or June 10, 2022.

### ENROLLMENT

Downtown Montessori Academy will record enrollment dates for every student. Individual student information and actual enrollment dates will be added to the school's database upon admission. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the "Learning Memo Data Requirements" section.

### TERMINATION/WITHDRAWAL

For every student who leaves the school, the exit date and reason will be determined and recorded in the school's database. A specific reason is 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 an average daily attendance rate of 95%.

During regular in-person instruction, any student who attends school for at least half of the day will be counted as present.

If a student stays home due to COVID-19 quarantine, the school will choose from the following activities as demonstration of learning and mark the student present for the day.

- Evidence of daily work
- Submission or completion of assignment, module, or exam
- Google Classroom login
- Weekly progress reports
- Attendance taken in synchronous event(s)
  - » Student is present during event
  - » Educator collects evidence that student accessed the event (if recorded)
- Contact or activity logs
- Pacing charts or adequate course progress
- Daily check-in with student (virtual meeting, email connection, phone)
- Regular weekly check-ins with parents/guardians

A student is considered present for the entire day if they attend school between 8:40 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. If a student is at home due to quarantine and/or a positive COVID-19 test, the school will administer a plan (varied by age group) that includes web-based learning. Parents can access the plan and communicate with instructors through email. This is the plan when specific students or an entire class are quarantined.

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

## PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

A parent or guardian of every student enrolled at the time of each scheduled parent–teacher conference will participate in that conference, which may occur in person, virtually, or by phone. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENTS

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

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: LOCAL MEASURES<sup>21</sup>

### CHILDREN’S HOUSE: LITERACY AND MATH

Students attending the Children’s House (K3, K4, and K5) will demonstrate progress in acquiring skills in the areas of literacy and math. Each student’s development will be reported to the student’s parents/guardians on report cards, and this information will be collected in Skyward.

**The following scale will be used to track skill levels and changes in skill acquisition.**

1. Presented
2. Practiced
3. Improving
4. Mastered/Proficient

Students will be assessed on all five math skills and five literacy representative skills in the fall. Students who attend all year will be proficient or show improvement (Presented to Practiced, Practiced to Improving, or Presented to Improving) in grade-level skills in each of the areas by the end of the year. Students with initial proficiency in a skill will maintain proficiency. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

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

## ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: LITERACY

Second- through third-grade students will be administered one grade-level Fountas and Pinnell passage by the end of October 2021 and another one in May 2022. First graders will be tested by the end of November 2021 and again in May 2022. The score will be reported as a grade-level score with the whole number as the grade and the number after the decimal as the month (e.g., fourth grade, third month of instruction = 4.3). Any student scoring below the first-grade level will have a score of “K” for kindergarten without a month indicator.

- At least 75% of the students below grade level in the fall will gain at least half a grade level (0.5) on the spring Fountas and Pinnell.
- At least 80% of the students who are at their current grade level in the fall (e.g., a fourth-grade student in the fall at or above 4.1) will gain at least half a grade level (0.5) at the time of the spring test.
- Any student who scores at least one grade level above their current grade level in the fall will remain above grade level in the spring (e.g., a fourth-grade student must have a score of 5.1 or higher to be above grade level).

All fourth- through eighth-grade students will be administered components of the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) no later than the end of the first quarter (November 2021) and again in the spring. Progress will be measured by comparing the fall functional level with the spring functional level. Expectations for functional level advancement will be set based on whether the student was below, at, or above grade level at the time of the fall test. Expectations for each grade-level status/functional level are shown in the following table; at least 90% of students will make progress as described.

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

FALL FUNCTIONAL LEVEL	FALL GRADE LEVEL STATUS		
	BELOW GRADE LEVEL	AT GRADE LEVEL	ABOVE GRADE LEVEL
Frustration	Frustration at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	Remain above grade level, regardless of functional level
Instructional	Instructional at the next grade level	Independent at the same grade level	
Independent	Independent at the next grade level	Instructional at the next grade level	



## ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: WRITING

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

The six traits are scored on a five-point rubric (1 = experimenting, 2 = emerging, 3 = developing, 4 = capable, and 5 = experienced). Different grades have a different number of traits. Grade levels and the number of traits chosen for them follow.

- First through third graders will focus on organization and conventions. (Scores of these two traits will be averaged.)
- Fourth through sixth graders will focus on sentence fluency, organization, ideas, and conventions. (Scores of these four traits will be averaged.)
- Seventh and eighth graders will focus on word choice, organization, ideas, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. (Scores of these six traits will be averaged.)

The average score of these traits for each sample will be used to measure student progress toward the goal.<sup>24</sup>

All students who receive an average score below 4 in the fall will increase their overall average score by 0.5 on a second writing sample taken in May 2022. Students with an average of 4 or above in the fall will score 4 or above in the spring.

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

## ELEMENTARY AND ADOLESCENT PROGRAM: MATH

### First Through Sixth Graders

First- through sixth-grade students will demonstrate progress in acquiring the grade-level Montessori sequential math skills, supplemented by at least three grade-level Common Core math skills not reflected in the Montessori sequence. The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition.

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

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

<sup>24</sup> Note: The highest possible average score is 5.0.

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

Students will be assessed on all five representative skills by the end of November 2021. Students who attend all year will show improvement (from Minimal to Basic or Basic to Proficient in at least three out of five grade-level indicators of math growth) by the end of the year. Students with initial proficiency in a skill will maintain proficiency or improve to Advanced.

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

### **Seventh and Eighth Graders**

All seventh- and eighth-grade students will be given a benchmark assessment in the fall, by the end of October 2021; and in the spring, by the end of May 2022. This benchmark assessment will be completed using IXL, an evaluation program, resulting in a grade-level equivalency based on performance according to Common Core State Standards. Grade-level equivalency is established when the student demonstrates proficiency in the required standards for a particular grade level. The assessment uses a 75% threshold to determine proficiency.

By the end of spring, 80% of the seventh- and eighth-grade students who tested at or below grade level in the fall will improve at least half a grade level. For example, a seventh-grade student who receives a grade-level equivalency score of 6.3 will improve to a score of at least 6.8.

Students who test above grade level in the fall will remain above grade level in the spring.

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

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENTS**

Students with active individualized education programs (IEPs) who have been at the school for one entire IEP year will demonstrate progress by meeting 60% of their IEP goals at the time of their annual review. Please note that ongoing student progress on IEP goals is monitored and reported throughout the academic year through the special education progress reports attached to the regular report cards.

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

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: STANDARDIZED MEASURES

### PALS FOR K4 THROUGH SECOND-GRADE STUDENTS

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) will be administered to all K4 and K5 students in the spring and first- and second-grade students in the fall and spring of each school year within the timeframe required by DPI. Required data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

### WISCONSIN FORWARD EXAM FOR THIRD- THROUGH EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS

The Wisconsin Forward Exam will be administered annually within the timeframe specified by DPI. This standardized assessment will produce an English/language arts (ELA) score and a math score for all third through eighth graders. Fourth- and eighth-grade students will also complete the science and social studies tests. Data elements related to this outcome are described in the “Learning Memo Data Requirements” section.

## YEAR-TO-YEAR ACHIEVEMENT<sup>25</sup>

1. Evident Change will report results from the 2021–22 Forward Exam. In addition, progress will be reported for students who completed the Forward Exam in two consecutive years at the same school.
2. Evident Change will report the DPI-required assessment results in each school’s annual report. Evident Change will report year-to-year progress for students who completed the assessments in consecutive school years at the same school.
3. The CSRC expects at least 75% of first graders who met the summed score benchmark for reading readiness in the spring will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of the subsequent year.
4. At least 60% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in ELA the prior year will maintain proficiency. At least 50% of fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year will maintain proficiency. At least 35% of fourth through eighth graders who were

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<sup>25</sup> The CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 and K5.

below proficiency in ELA the prior year will demonstrate progress. At least 35% of fourth through eighth graders who were below proficiency in math will demonstrate progress.

5. 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 2020–21 school year and met the summed score benchmark in the spring of 2021 will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of 2022.